



Government of South Australia
Department for Correctional Services

CONSULTATION PAPER: THE NEXT STEPS IN STRATEGY & ACTION FOR WOMEN

FIVE YEAR OUTCOMES & CONSULTATION ON A
NEW ACTION PLAN

OFFENDER
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTORATE





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women's needs and the complexity in the lives of many of the women entering DCS cannot be ignored. Our approach for women seeks to enhance women's self-efficacy and personal development. We strive to support women to address the significant interplay between their offending and their common experience of accumulative trauma, mental health issues, substance dependence, unhealthy relationships and poverty.

During the last 5 years, many policy and operational changes have occurred within DCS, notably expansion of home detention, pre-release and front-end sentencing. This has been complemented by a comprehensive suite of rehabilitative programming, reintegration support services, as well as cultural supports and gender centric supervision models. Informed by theories on what works for women, the underlying drivers to women's incarceration and criminal justice involvement have been targeted.

Key partnerships between DCS and a range of services and agencies have become integral to assisting us in achieving many outcomes for women. Our relationships with community, government and private sector organisations are highly valued by the Department, as we recognise that the contributions made continue to drive activity and achieve better outcomes for women with criminal justice involvement. I encourage all partners and stakeholders - internal and external staff, community groups, as well as women with lived experience, both in custody and community, to provide feedback and participate in this consultation.

Your reflections and experience are a vital part of our planning, to understand what has worked well over the last five years, as well as to provide inspiration for further improvement and new initiatives. As we move to our next Women's Framework and Action Plan, evaluation of the achievements of the last five years will provide a strong platform for future-focused activity for women within DCS.

**David Brown, Chief Executive
Department for Correctional Services
February 2024**

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 10 years the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) has utilised strategy to raise the profile of the needs of women who become involved in the criminal justice system. The Department has embedded the role of Principal Advisor for Women Offenders, and the first strategic framework was launched in 2015.

Governance processes which were established to oversee the Strong Foundation & Clear Pathways initiative, which included a Departmental governance committee and a Ministerial appointed working group, continue to provide strategic guidance, oversight and input to planning.

Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways2: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2019-2024 was developed following extensive stakeholder consultation. Responses to the consultation were received from justice sector partners, correctional service staff, allied government and community service agencies, peak bodies, culturally specific service providers and groups, victim and offender advocates, women offenders and ex-offenders. In all, over 100 individuals responded, and 20 groups were consulted.

The interest shown by stakeholders in this initiative demonstrated broad support and enthusiasm across the state for the continuation of a gendered and culturally

informed approach to management of women within the South Australian correctional service system.

It was concluded that the priorities and action areas detailed within the first framework in 2014 provided a solid platform from which to focus activity for the next 5 years. Once synthesised, this became the Strong Foundations and Clear Pathways2: Women Offender Framework 2019-2024.

With 14 actions in total, the plan has served to provide a continuation of gendered policy framework within the DCS correctional service system as a standard operating consideration. It has continued the policy direction for the Department in its work to create downward pressure on the incarceration rates of women.

At 30 June 2024, the five year action plan driving the Women's Offender Framework (WOF) comes to a close and DCS is consulting on the next action plan.

This paper is the first step in the consultation process and provides an overview of:

- the current profile of women offenders in South Australia;
- key activity and outcomes of the Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2019-2024;
- future areas of demand and proposed priorities for a new WOF Action Plan.



CONSULTATION FEEDBACK PROCESS

DCS is seeking feedback from partners and stakeholders on what achievements and improvements have worked well over 2019-2024, as well as feedback on proposed priorities and future areas of activity for the new Action Plan. This document provides a snapshot of previous outcomes and ideas for consideration during the consultation process.

A series of workshops and sessions will occur March-May 2024, with both internal DCS and external stakeholders and partners. Workshops will be held to discuss the content of this paper and seek feedback on achievements and future activity. Alternatively, we are happy to receive written feedback from both internal DCS and external stakeholders and partners.

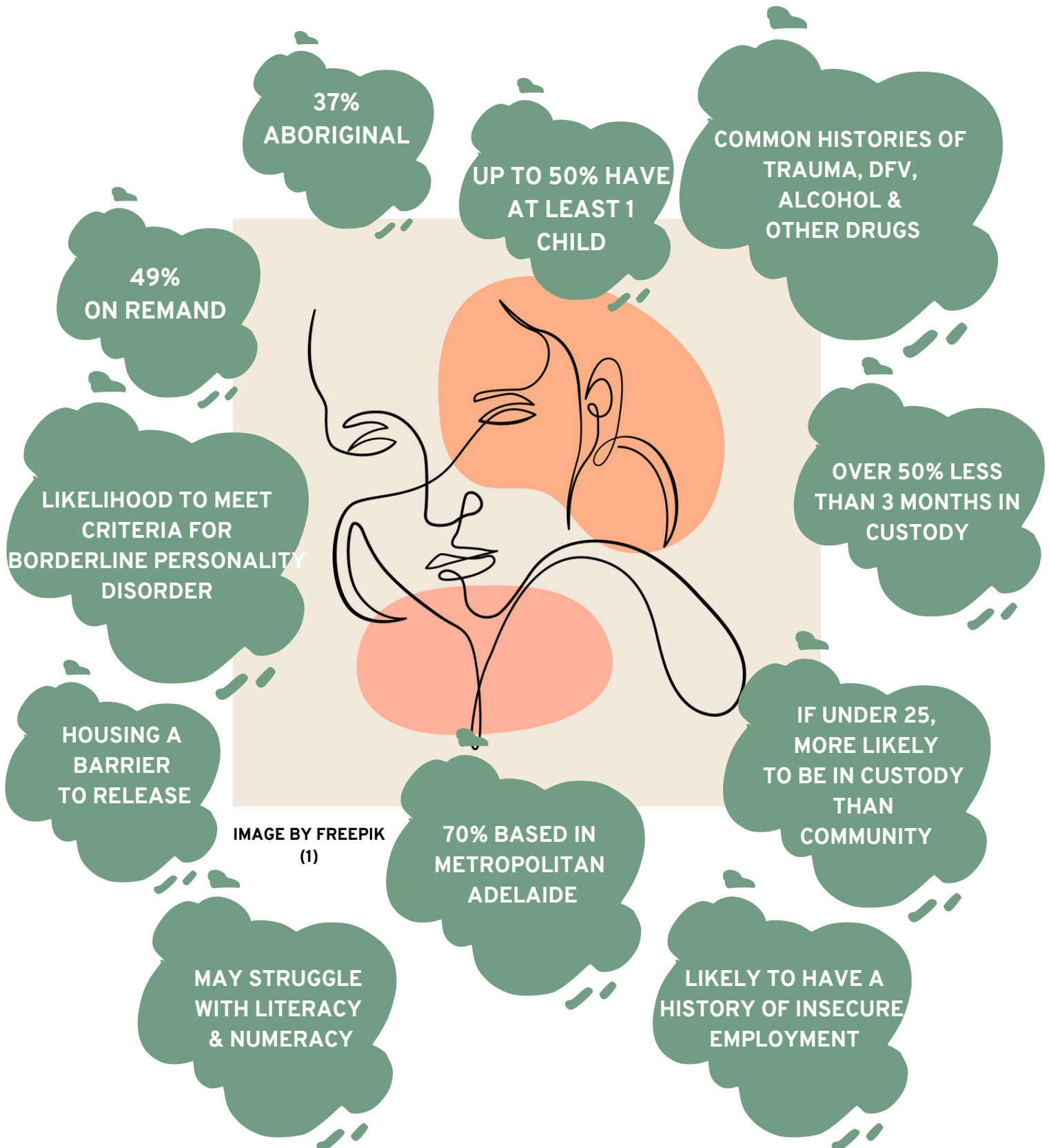
Please send your feedback to:
DCSWomenOffenderFramework@sa.gov.au

Complete the feedback survey at:
<https://forms.office.com/r/qF3Zw8JaQ0> or use the QR Code:

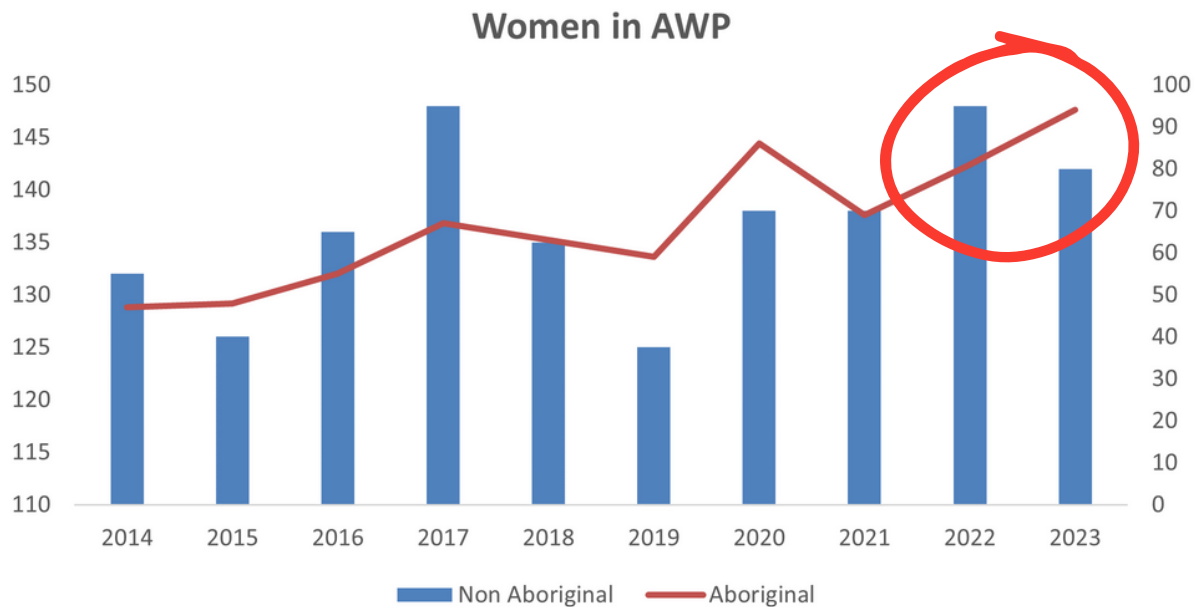
Or write to:
Kate Holland
Principal Advisor, Women Offenders Offender Development Directorate
Department for Correctional Services
GPO Box 1747, Adelaide SA, 5001



PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

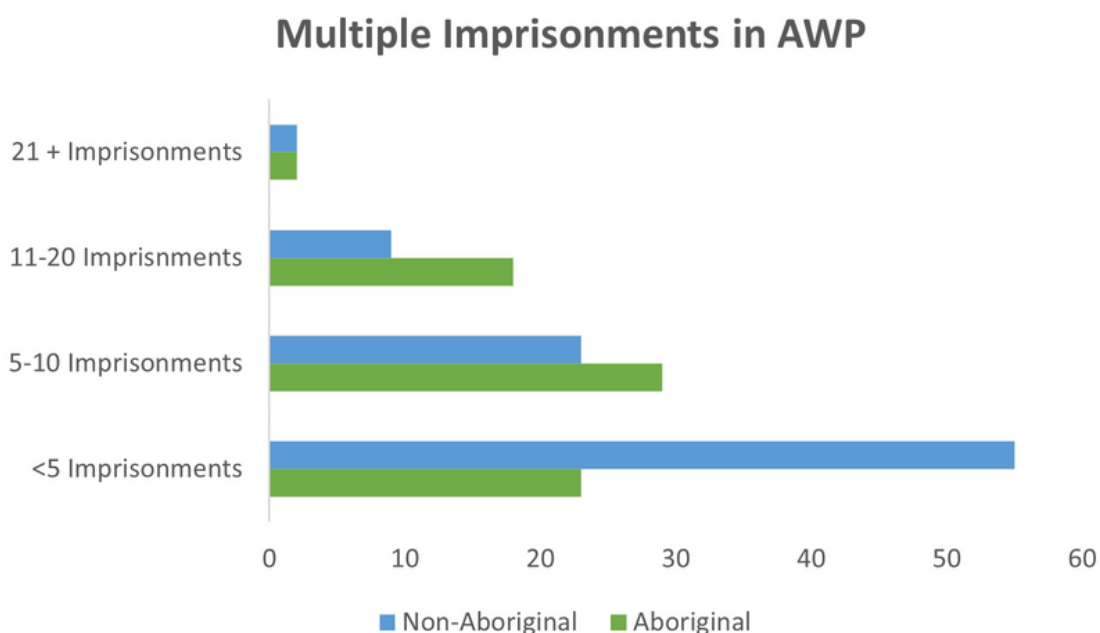


HOW ARE WOMEN INTERSECTING WITH DCS?



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD 2023 - SOURCED 1 SEPTEMBER EACH YEAR

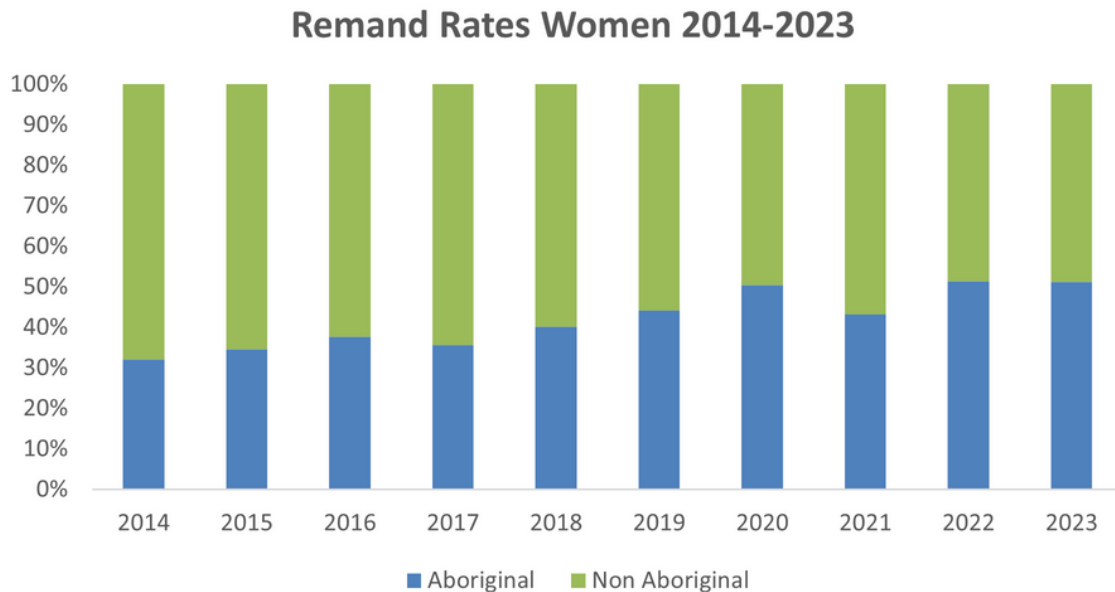
- Nationally, the numbers of women offenders has decreased, however the number of women incarcerated has increased by 75% since 1994 (1).
- Female incarceration in SA is the highest it has been within the last decade.
- Aboriginal women represent over 34% of current SA prison population.
- A small number of offenders within AWP have 21+ imprisonments.



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD 2023 - SOURCED 30 JANUARY, 2023

REMAND

- Of all adult prisoners nationally, 38% were unsentenced. (2)
- In SA, the rate of remand was 45%.
- For SA women, the number was 49%.
- Of the SA remand population for women, 65% were Aboriginal.

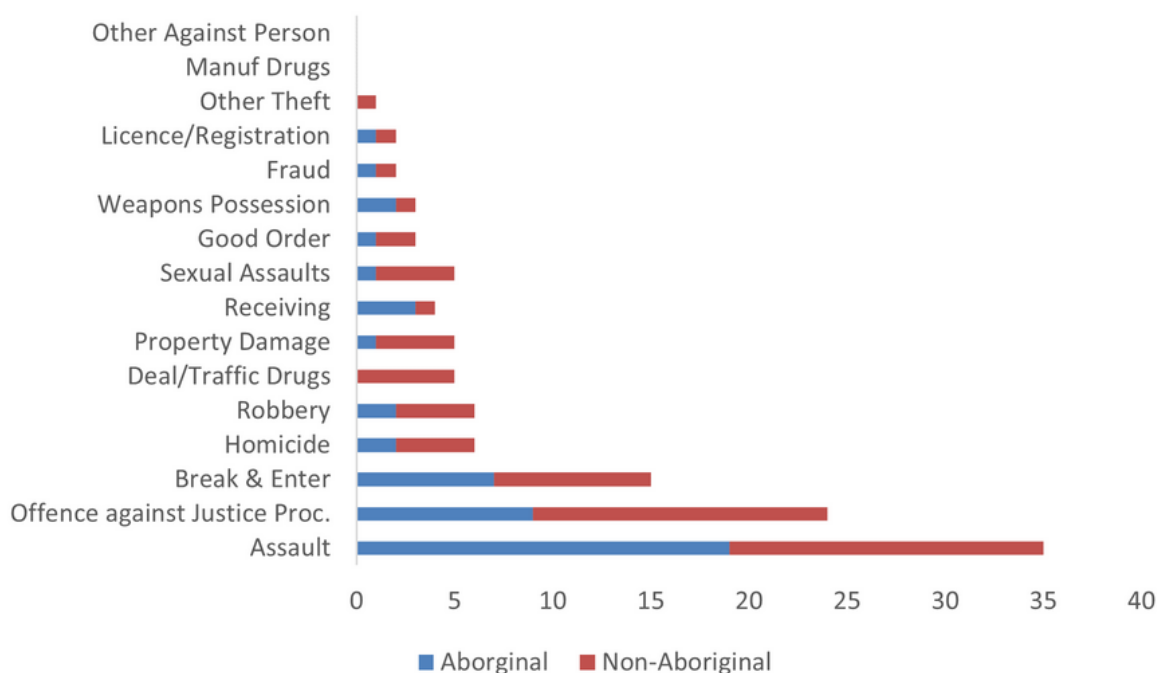


DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED 1 DECEMBER EACH YEAR

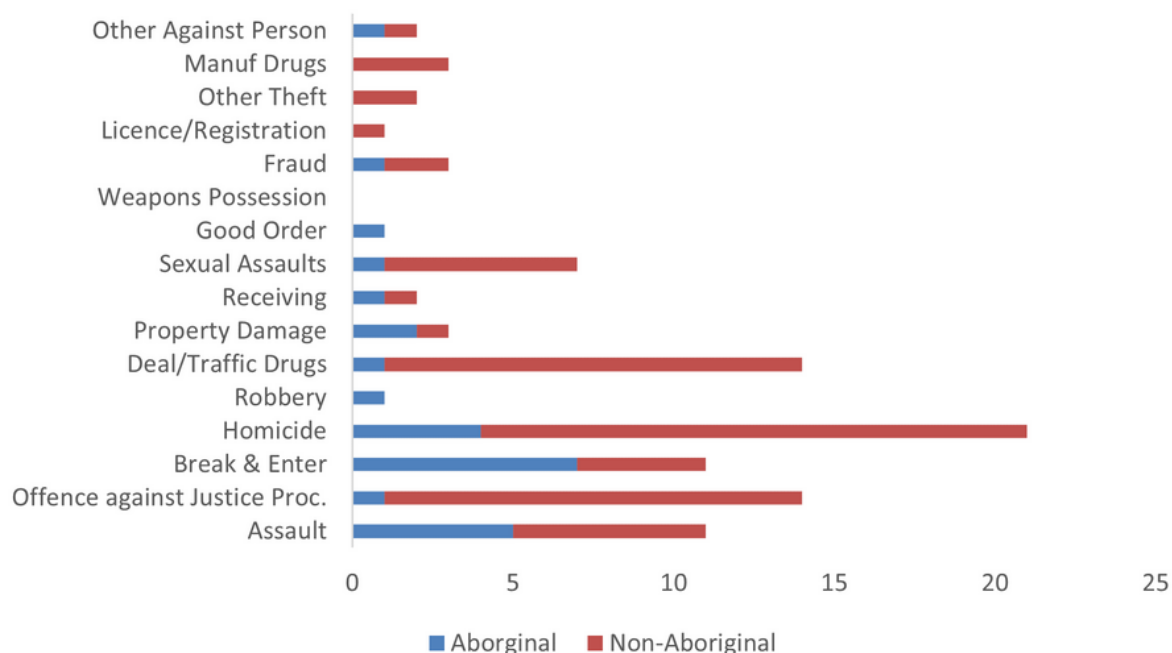
WOMEN'S OFFENCE PROFILES

- Over the last 5 years, women's offence profiles have changed.
- Acts Intended To Cause Injury has become the most common crime committed by women. (3)
- Research suggests that women are primarily using violence to deal with their own high levels of victimization. (4)
- SA data indicates high rates of Offences Against Justice Procedures (breaches of order conditions) by women. (5)
- Changes to bail laws have widened the net to require exceptional circumstances to meet the threshold required for the granting of bail. (6)

Charge Type - Remand

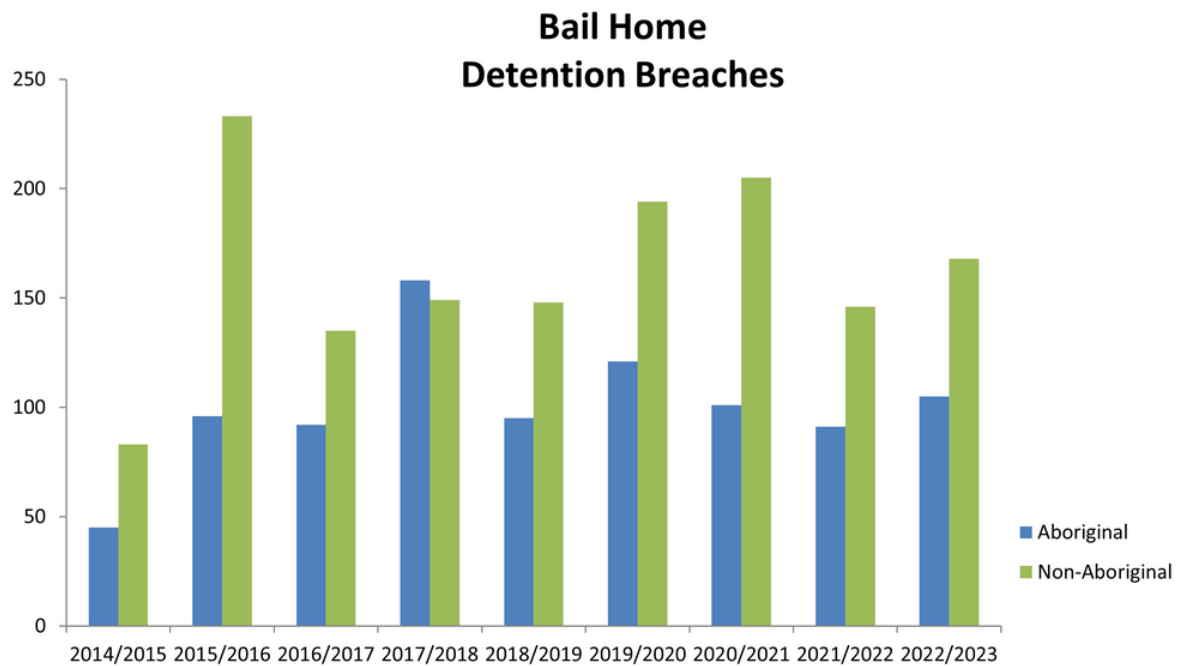


Charge Type - Sentenced

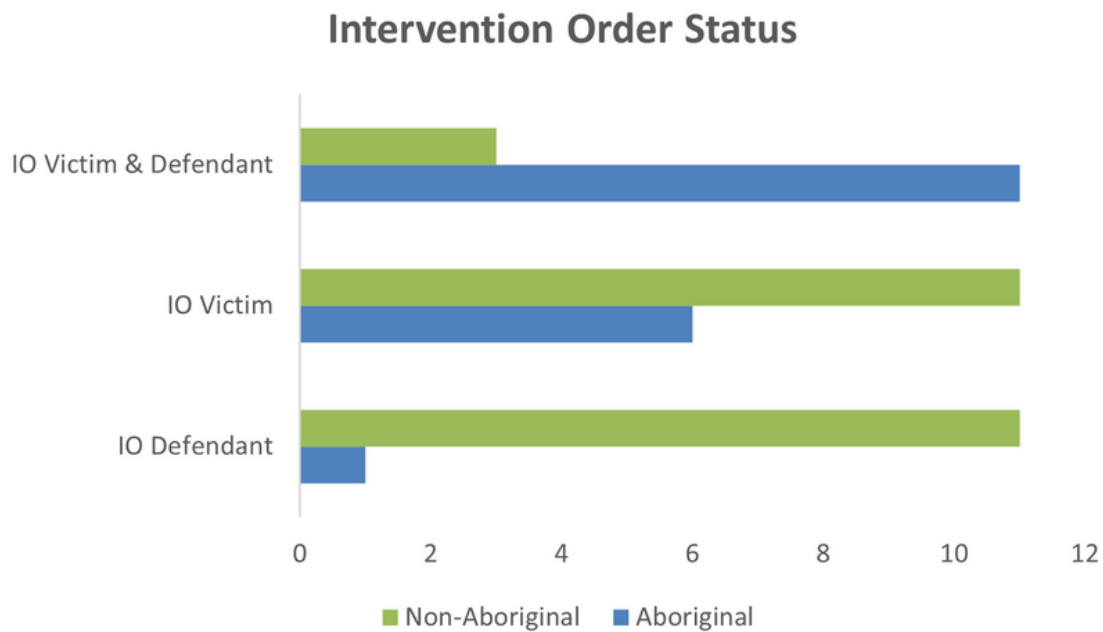


DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED 28 JANUARY 2024

Note: offences against justice procedures include breach of pre-existing conditions and failure to comply with an intervention order. These offence types are significant as a total when considering charge categories for women.



DCS DATA - FINANCIAL YEAR BREAKDOWN



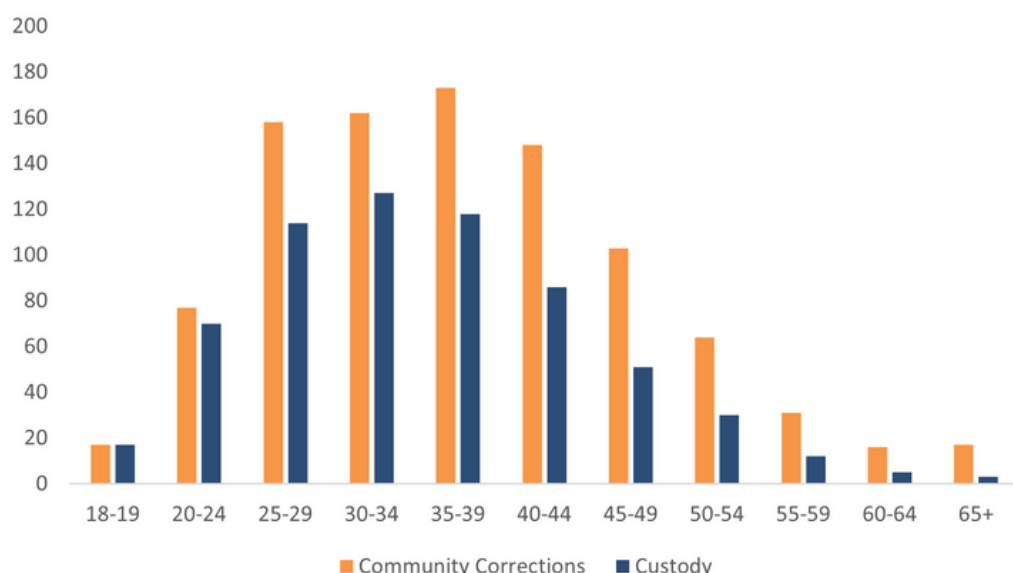
DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED 28 JANUARY 2024

- The data above highlights the complexities and struggles women face.
- It reinforces the need for a range of available community pathways of support.
- It highlights the need to engage women in their case management process and with the conditions of their orders.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

With a focus on driving down incarceration rates of women, DCS has increased availability of community packages that seek to provide wrap-around support to prisoners on release, through the Home Detention Integrated Support Service Program and alternative reporting options.

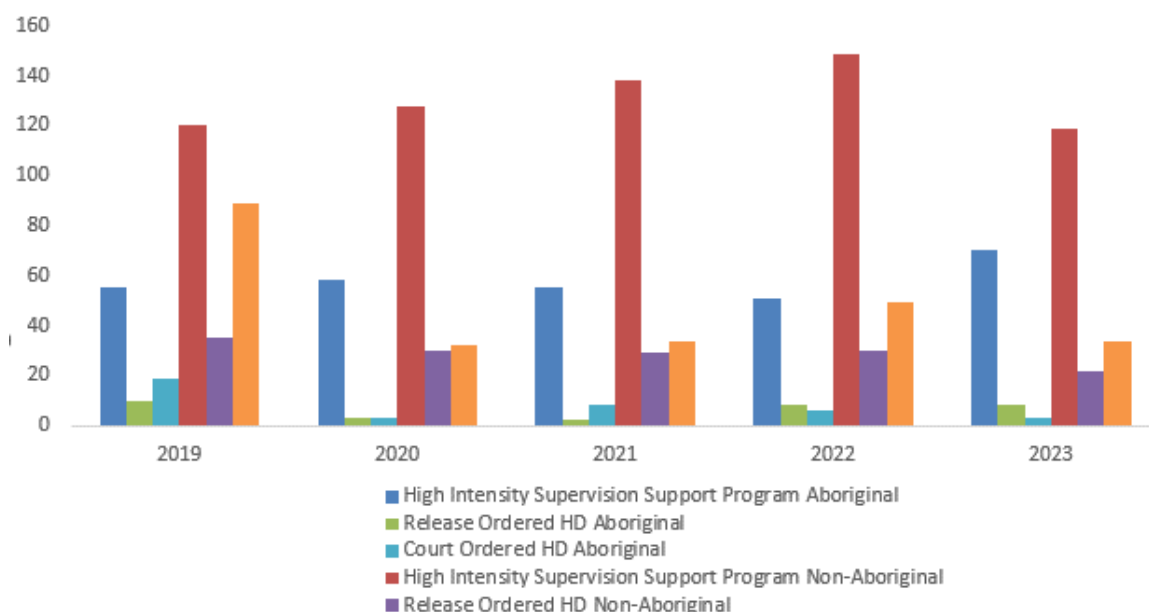
Custody v Community Corrections by Age Group



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED DECEMBER 2023

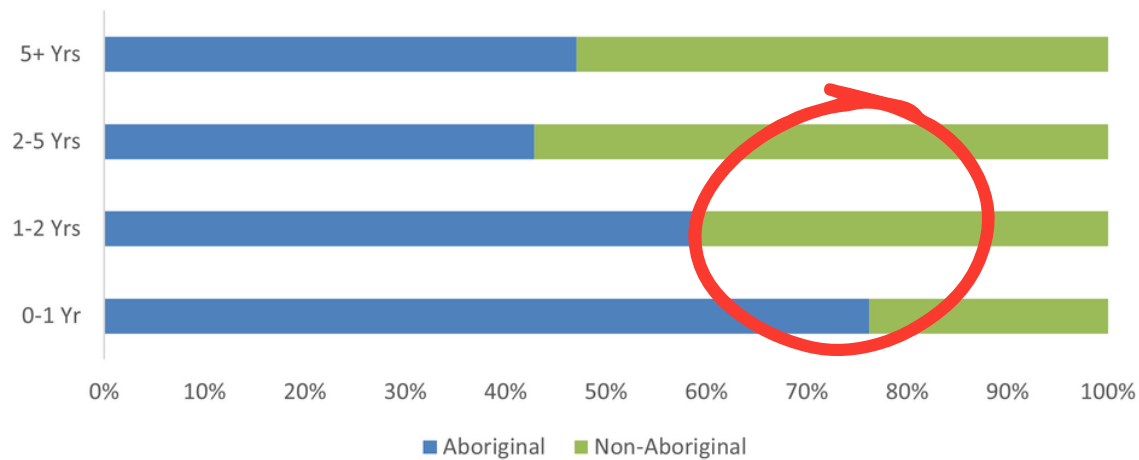
- Women under 25 are more likely to be in custody rather than in community.
- The largest group of women in both custody and community are aged 25 to 45.

Home Detention Orders for Women in SA



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED DECEMBER 2023

Sentence Length AWP



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED DECEMBER 2023

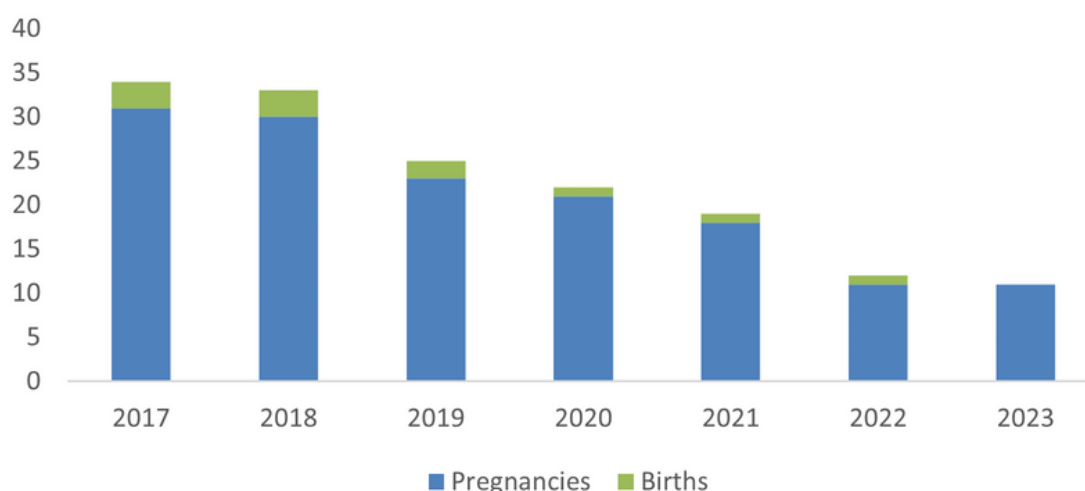
- Shorter periods in custody impacts the ability to provide rehabilitative programs and supports which will lower risks of recidivism.
- The impact of short custodial sentences on women has lasting and negative impacts on family, children, employment, study and mental & physical health. (7)
- There are limited rehabilitative outcomes associated with short custodial sentences. (8)
- Aboriginal women are receiving shorter sentences than Non-Aboriginal women.

Time in Custody



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED DECEMBER 2023

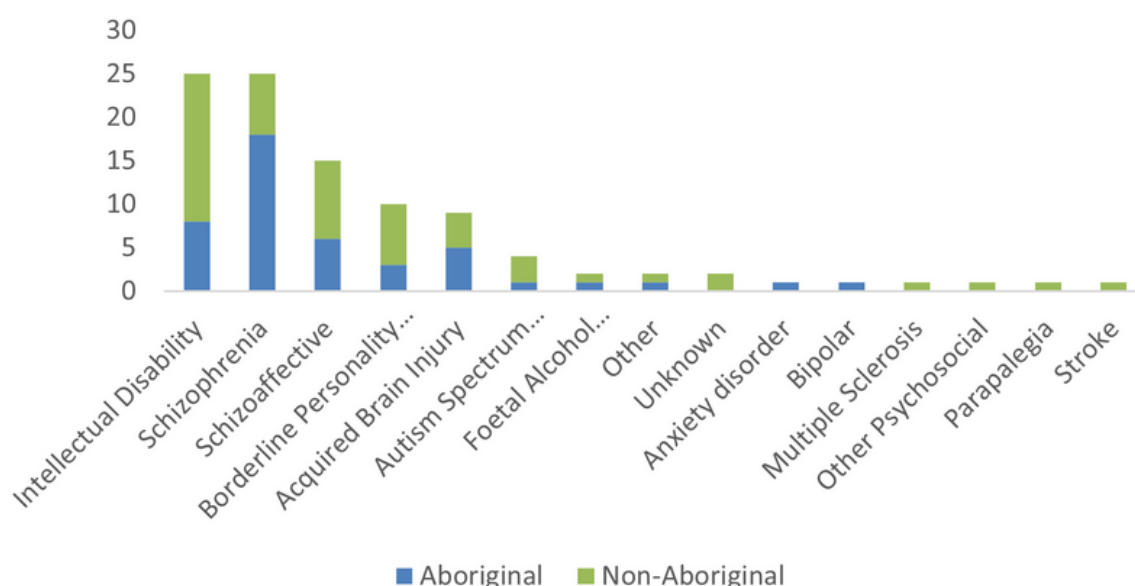
Pregnancies & Births In Custody



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED 18 JANUARY 2024

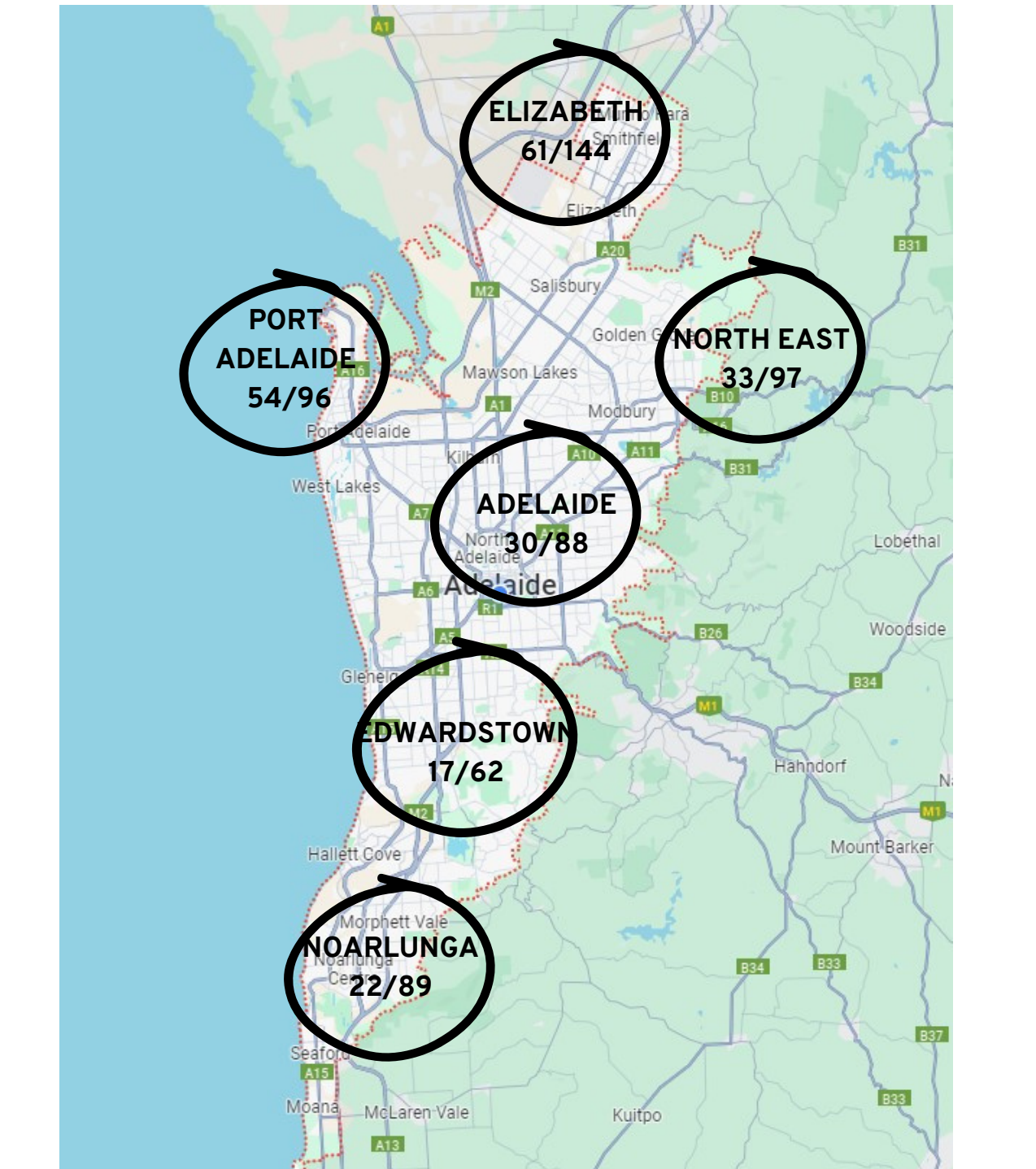
- The number of women who enter AWP whilst pregnant has been steadily decreasing, as have births in custody.
- A community-based arrangement will always be the preferred living option for a mother with a new-born baby and will be sought over a custodial live-in option if possible.

NDIS Participants AWP & Community



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED 4 FEBRUARY 2024

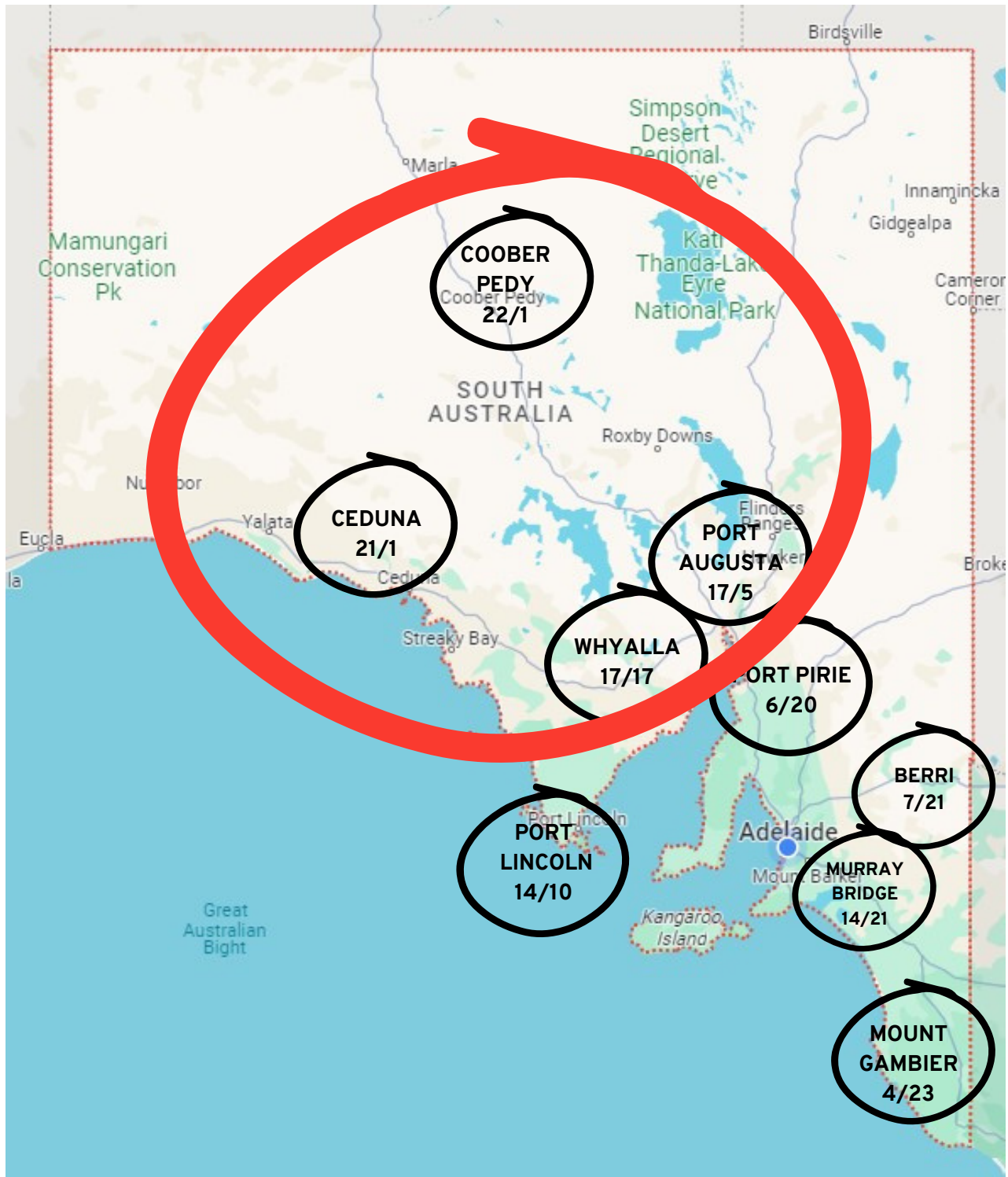
- Women's complexities are becoming more visible, and demand a complex needs focus. (9)



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD -SOURCED 28 JANUARY 2024

- Above numbers are Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal eg: 54/96
- 77% of women on Community Corrections Orders live in metro Adelaide.

WHERE DO THE WOMEN LIVE IN REGIONAL SA?



DCS WOMEN'S DATA DASHBOARD - SOURCED 18 JANUARY 2024

- Above numbers are Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal eg: 54/96
- 23% of women on Community Corrections Orders live in regional SA.

FUTURE FOCUS

'20 BY 26' ALIGNMENT

Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways²: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2019-2024 has driven extensive activity, at both strategic and operational levels, embedding a gendered approach in DCS and resulting in new initiatives and outcomes for women.

The next Action Plan provides opportunity to build on and further refine current programs, to consolidate activity and provide scope for new initiatives.

Concepts and recommendations which will be considered during the consultation process are detailed in the following pages. These recommendations are a starting point for discussion and consideration by stakeholders.

Future activity will be underpinned by the overall objectives of DCS Strategy '20by26: Reducing Reoffending by 20% by 2026'

01

Closing the Gap

02

Focus on Remand

03

Reintegration

04

Education, Training & Employment

05

Targeted & Gender Responsive Programs



CLOSING THE GAP

35% women in prison are Aboriginal, but only
3% of our population

2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Record numbers of women moving to the Adelaide Pre-Release Centre to transition to community.
- Partnership with Catherine House to provide supported housing for women on remand.
- Nancy Bates' Songs Inside music program provided music and song writing skills workshops, to develop creativity, confidence and tap into personal journeys of healing.
- Tiraapendi Wodli's 20 Steps program, providing transitional support for Aboriginal women in western suburbs.
- Implementation of the Marni Tapa program as part of Yalikiana Tapa, providing supported bail for Aboriginal people through partnership with Incompro.
- Yakanarna & Sista's Healing, programs with a focus on trauma and healing. The program is designed for Aboriginal women to come together in a safe learning environment to reconnect their cultural strengths.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Regional programs for specific areas such as the western regions of SA for Anangu women, through partnerships with local providers and ACCOs
- Offer more alternative reporting options through partnership for women located in metropolitan and regional areas with cultural supports and wrap-around services.
- Ongoing development of culturally appropriate programs for parenting, domestic and family violence and alcohol and other drugs.



FOCUS ON REMAND

How do we place downward pressure on incarceration and improve community supports?

2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Implementation of alternative reporting models for women in Northern and Southern suburbs, partnering with OARS and RASA to provide safe environments with wrap-around supports.
- Partnership with Catherine House to provide supported housing for women on remand.
- Implementation of the Marni Tapa program as part of Yalikiana Tapa, providing supported bail for Aboriginal people through partnership with Incompro.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Investigate further options & partnerships for safe housing provision approved for bailed accommodation.
- Offer shortened interventions and programs which can be modularised and then even completed in community.
- Work with training and education partners to ensure there is a greater provision of modular programs and courses which can be commenced during shorter periods in custody and then completed in community.
- Through partnership, continue to develop employment options which consider the different needs of women, including children and housing challenges.
- Continue to provide advocacy regarding the many negative impacts on women of multiple, short term custodial periods.
- Develop referrals and scope of the Marni Tapa Program for Aboriginal Women on supported bail.



REINTEGRATION

Supporting successful reintegration into community

2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Work Ready, Release Ready delivered in partnership with Workskil Australia, has seen over 131 women placed into jobs. Evaluations show that women in the program have lower recidivism rates than men.
- Implementation of the Marni Tapa program as part of Yalikiana Tapa, providing supported bail for Aboriginal people through partnership with Incompro.
- Mothers Matter, a program co-created with DHS, continues to offer mothers in AWP tools to improve relationships with children whilst in custody and a better understanding of the child protection system, to facilitate family reintegration upon release.
- Implementation of alternative reporting models for women in Northern and Southern suburbs, partnering with OARS and RASA to provide safe environments with wrap-around supports.
- Tiraapendi Wodli's 20 Steps program, providing transitional support for Aboriginal women in western suburbs.
- Peers4Good Pilot has commenced, working with up to 20 women transitioning into the community, with a mentored approach to transition.
- Sisters Alongside Sisters (SASS), facilitated by the Australian Red Cross, provided peer support and community development principles for women in transition to community.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Create a peer support program with structured skills development, where women can learn how to mentor and support others, both in custody and in community.
- Continue to develop new and existing partnerships with organisations in community to provide employment opportunities to women beyond construction & manufacturing.



EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Equipping women with in-demand skills & training to turn their lives around

2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Work Ready, Release Ready -a partnership with Workskil Australia, has seen over 131 women placed into jobs. Evaluations show that women in the program have lower recidivism rates than men.
- Carey Training provides opportunities for Aboriginal women to obtain qualifications and improve chances of successful employment. This group has completed a Healing Circle at AWP.
- The Women's Infrastructure Program has now completed the construction process at AWP and has now transitioned into the Handy Person Program.
- An expanded list of vocational opportunities are now available for women at AWP, including civil construction, cookery, horticulture and vocational preparation.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Investigate a supported employment model, with connected relationships to manage the early days of a new job.
- Increase the number and variety of programs for women through providers such as TAFE and Carey Training, which offer a broader scope for learning and vocational choice. This should provide for pathways beyond custody through certificates of attainment.
- Continue to develop industry opportunities for women gain suitable skills & experience for future employment in community.
- Develop relationships with partners who can offer training and supported employment opportunities for women as they transition from custody.
- Provide tertiary education options for those who intend to pursue longer term educational attainment.



TARGETED & GENDER RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

Gender, culture & relationships matter. High intensity programs for those in greatest need

2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Mothers Matter parenting program is now being regularly delivered in AWP and is planned for community facilitation in 2024.
- What's Love Got to Do With It, the DFV program by Women's Safety Service is a regular program at AWP.
- Stepping Stones, which covers trauma, relationships, thinking, emotions, substance abuse and goal setting, continues to be delivered in AWP.
- Yakanarna and Sista's Healing are now regularly facilitated for Aboriginal women in AWP, focusing on trauma and cultural identity.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Ongoing training and skills development for staff in both custody and community, in complex needs and trauma informed practice.
- Development of a Complex Needs Framework for the custodial space, with provision for service in-reach from specialist providers of mental health services.
- Inform efforts to prevent female recidivism through continual development of relevant data and research.
- Development of gender & culturally appropriate strength-based assessment tools for women, for utilisation during custody, transition and community.
- Expansion of the community-based supervision model throughout Adelaide and regional South Australia to provide safe and supported options for women.

2019-2024 PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS

CUSTODIAL INTERVENTIONS

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT
& REHABILITATION

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES &
PROGRAMS MEET WOMEN'S
DIVERSE NEEDS & REDUCE
REOFFENDING

PRODUCTIVITY &
PERFORMANCE

CORRECTIONAL POLICY &
PLANNING IS GENDER
RESPONSIVE

INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP
& ENGAGEMENT

PATHWAYS TO
COMMUNITY, CULTURAL
LINKAGE & SUPPORT ARE
ESTABLISHED FOR WOMEN

SMART RECOVERY

AOD Program

STRUCTURED DAY

increased movements for women to programs, education & employment

STEPPING STONES

criminogenic program in AWP

MOTHERS MATTER

parenting skills, connection to children, systems navigation & peer support

MOTHER & INFANT
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

interagency cooperation to facilitate provision of birth in custody if necessary

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO
WITH IT

DFV Program

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER
TRAINING PROGRAM

intensive focus on women during intake program &
ongoing training

SUCCESSION PLANNING

improved opportunities for staff & gender balance in
key roles

WORK READY RELEASE
READY

skills development &
supported employment

YAKANARNA

Aboriginal women's preparatory & wellness program

SISTA'S HEALING

Aboriginal women's self-awareness & self esteem program

MEASUREMENT &
EVALUATION

WRRR, Stepping Stones, Mothers Matter, CBHFA

COMMUNITY BASED
HEALTH & FIRST AID

capacity & confidence
building

transition to a
community group

2019-2024 PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS

TRANSITIONAL & COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

	OFFENDER MANAGEMENT & REHABILITATION CORRECTIONAL SERVICES & PROGRAMS MEET WOMEN'S DIVERSE NEEDS & REDUCE REOFFENDING	PRODUCTIVITY & PERFORMANCE CORRECTIONAL POLICY & PLANNING IS GENDER RESPONSIVE	INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS TO COMMUNITY, CULTURAL LINKAGE & SUPPORT ARE ESTABLISHED FOR WOMEN
MARNI TAPA	culturally responsive support service for Aboriginal women exiting custody onto bail		
20 STEPS TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT	transitional support for aboriginal women		western suburbs
PEERS4GOOD TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT	transitional support for women		peer-led support
NORTHERN & SOUTHERN ALTERNATIVE SUPERVISION	alternatives to reporting for women in safe & strengths-based environments		
HOME DETENTION INTEGRATED SUPPORT SERVICES	supported home detention for women in community		
ASPIRE HOUSING PROGRAM	supported housing program		supported housing program
DCS INTENSIVE HOUSING SUPPORT TEAM	housing support during transition period from custody		

DCS & PARTNERS

ONGOING PROGRAMS & IN-REACH

DCS VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM	KNITTING FOR CHARITY	RED CROSS FOOD REDI
HEPATITIS SA PROGRAM	EVENING FITNESS PROGRAM	YOGA ON THE INSIDE
SEEDS OF AFFINITY PATHWAYS	TPRF PEACE EDUCATION	DCS CHAPLAINS PROGRAM
FLINDERS WELLBEING & COUNSELLING	ABORIGINAL WEAVING GROUP	NANCY BATES SINGING & SONGWRITING
ABORIGINAL LEGAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT	DCS VOLUNTEER LIBRARY SERVICES	AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS CBHFA
MOTHERS VOICE	GREYHOUND ADOPTION PROGRAM	DCS COMPUTER SKILLS
EDGE CHURCH FAMILY VISITS	SAHMRI WELLBEING & RESILIENCE PROGRAM	DCS BUSINESS STUDIES
RASA HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS	ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID	DCS LITERACY & NUMERACY
SECOND CHANCES	OARS GAMBLING PROGRAM	TAFE VOCATIONAL TRAINING
LETTER WRITING PROGRAM	ABORIGINAL SOBRIETY GROUP	CAREY TRAINING ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS
RASA MOSAICS PROGRAM	ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS	AWP HANDY PERSON INITIATIVE

FEEDBACK FORM



NAME

ORGANISATION

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING WOMEN ENMESHED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol & Other Drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intergenerational Trauma
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Literacy & Numeracy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic & Family Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Issues (custody etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial Hardship	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other - please list		

WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR REPORT?

FEEDBACK FORM



NAME

ORGANISATION

WHAT PROGRAM/SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN ADELAIDE WOMEN'S PRISON OR COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS DURING THE 2019-24 PERIOD WAS MOST WORTHWHILE IN PRODUCING POSITIVE CHANGE & OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN?

HOW DO YOU BELIEVE WE KEEP WOMEN OUT OF PRISON?

HOW DO WE BEST SUPPORT REINTEGRATION FOR WOMEN?

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESPONSES ARE REQUIRED FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN?

FEEDBACK FORM



NAME

ORGANISATION

HOW DO WE BEST SUPPORT LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS?

HOW DO YOU BELIEVE WE CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT WOMEN IN REGIONAL AREAS?

WHAT SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD IMPROVE OR SUPPORT THE AREAS OF FOCUS IN THE CONSULTATION PAPER?

WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU MAKE TO HOW WE WORK WITH WOMEN IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA?

FEEDBACK FORM



NAME

ORGANISATION

HOW ARE YOU ENGAGED WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female Prisoner - Adelaide Women's Prison
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff - Adelaide Women's Prison
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female Offender - Community Corrections
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff - Community Corrections
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Woman with Lived Experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A DISCUSSION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEW ACTION PLAN?

YES/NO (CIRCLE ONE)

IF YOU ANSWERED YES, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

REFERENCES

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