

# 2019

Dept. for  
Correctional  
Services

Offender  
Development  
Directorate (DCS)

***Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways:  
Women Offender Framework & Action Plan 2014-2019***

***Five Year Outcomes***

***&***

***Consultation on a new Action Plan 2019-2024***



**Government of South Australia**

Department for Correctional Services

## **Executive Summary**

When the *Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework & Action Plan 2014-2019* was formally launched in 2015 there was considerable good will and a high level of expectation about what could be achieved. The development of a new action plan in 2019 presents an opportunity for the Department to reflect on achievements and showcase activity undertaken to improve our response for women. It also presents an opportunity to consult on our future direction and seek feedback; to further consolidate actions and initiatives.

Development of a further five year action plan signifies both the Department's and South Australian Government's commitment to this work, with recognition for the need to continue to progress activity and service approaches that meet the unique needs of women intersecting with the correctional system.

DCS highly values its partnership with community, government and private sectors, and recognises the contribution partners have made in recent years, to drive activity and seek 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 their feedback and participate in this consultation.

Your reflection and experience is important to our planning and to us having a comprehensive understanding of what has worked well over the last five years, as well as areas for further improvement and new initiative. DCS ultimately seeks to maximise rehabilitation outcomes for women, which in turn contributes to our vision, for a safer community by protecting the public and reducing reoffending.

**David Brown, Chief Executive**  
**Department for Correctional Services**  
**March 2019**

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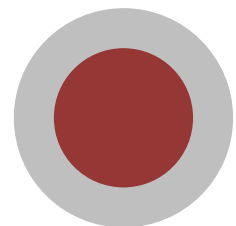
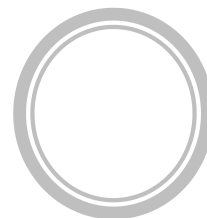
## Introduction

In recent years the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) has significantly increased its focus on women offenders; a Principal Advisor for Women Offenders was appointed in 2013 and ***Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019*** was launched in December 2015.

*Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019* was developed following extensive stakeholder consultation. In April 2014 DCS released a consultation paper *Improving responses to women offenders and prisoners involved in correctional settings (March 2014)*. 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, 108 individuals and 19 groups responded.

In May 2015, DCS released *Phase 1 Consultation Report Women Offender Development Project* and outlined key priorities that would be covered in the framework and action plan. Governance processes were established to oversee the *Strong Foundation & Clear Pathways* initiative, which included a Departmental governance committee and a Ministerial appointed working group.

The interest shown by stakeholders in this initiative demonstrated broad support and enthusiasm across the state for implementation of a gender and culturally informed approach to management of women within the South Australian correctional service system. With 84 actions in total, the plan has proved to be realistic in scope and has served to embed a gendered policy framework within the DCS correctional service system as a standard operating consideration.



**Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019** is in its final months. DCS is undertaking a consultation April-June 2019 to inform the development of a new five year ***Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework Action Plan 2019-2024***.

***The Strong Foundations and Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework*** established a policy direction and change agenda for DCS in its work with women intersecting with prisons and community correctional centres.

At 30 June 2019 the five year action plan that has driven the Women Offender Framework (WOF) comes to a close and DCS is consulting on the next action plan.

This paper 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 2014-2019;
- future areas of demand and proposed priorities for a new WOF Action Plan 2019-2024.

DCS is seeking feedback from partners and stakeholders on what achievements and improvements have worked well over 2014-2019, as well as feedback on proposed priorities and future areas of activity for the new Action Plan 2019-2024.

A series of workshops and consultation sessions will occur April-June 2019 with both internal DCS and external stakeholders and partners. Workshops will 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:**

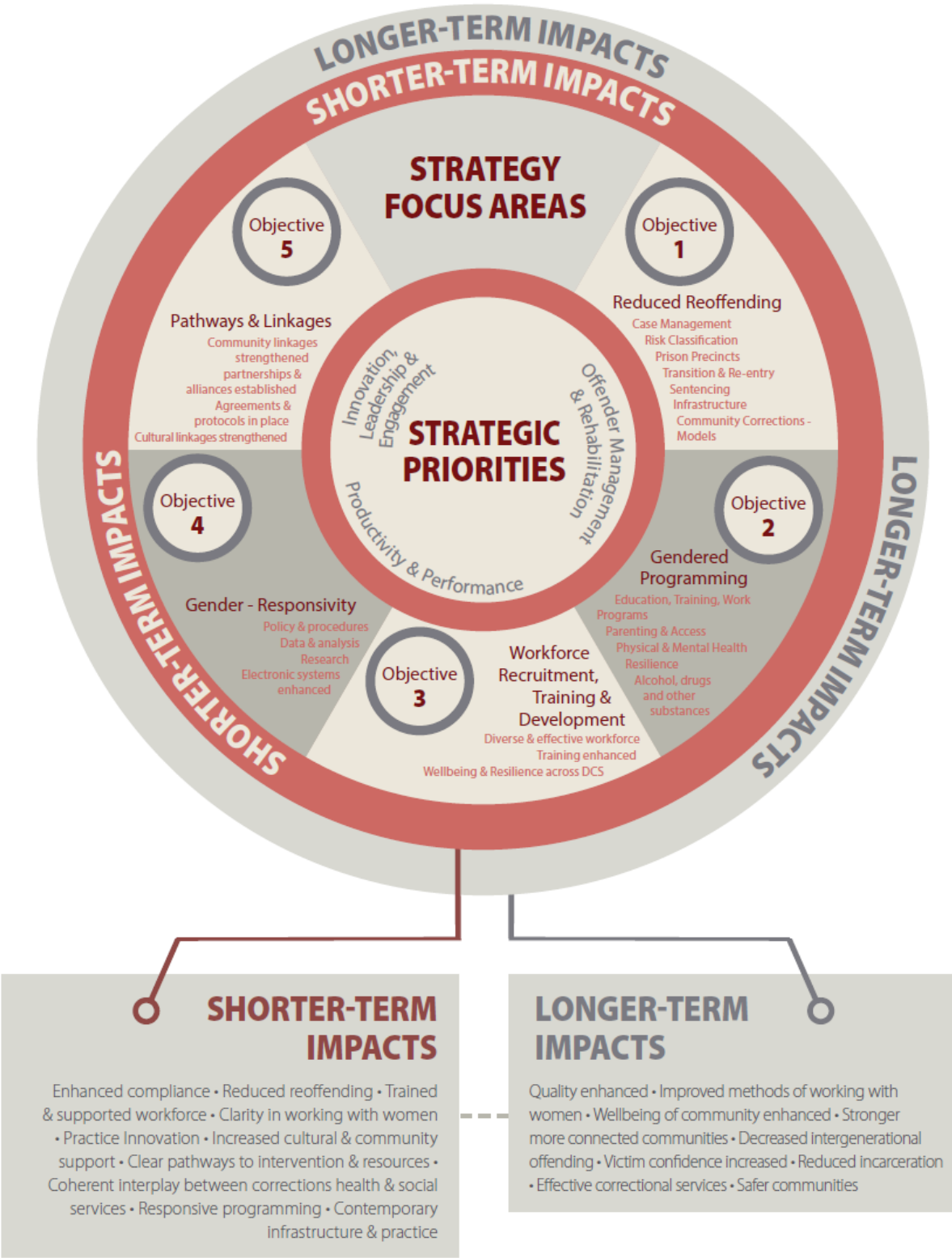
DCSWomenOffenderFramework@sa.gov.au

**Or write to:**

Jo McFarland  
A/Principal Advisor Women Offenders  
Offender Development Directorate  
Department for Correctional Services  
GPO Box 1747  
Adelaide SA, 5001

Strong Foundations and Clear Pathways at a Glance

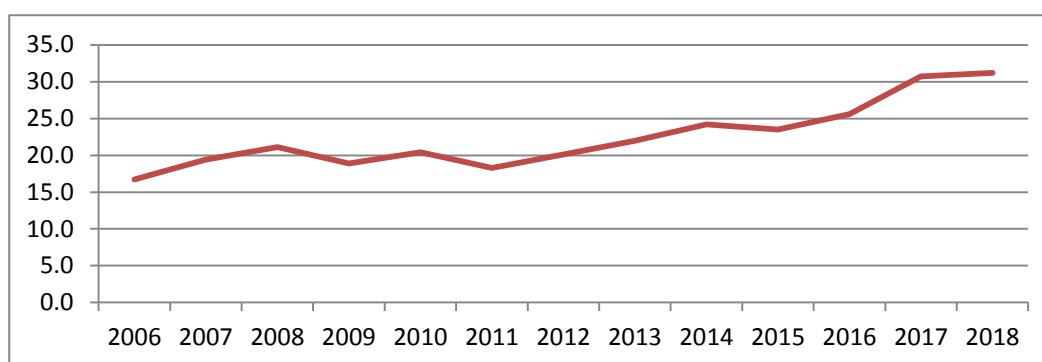
Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework & Action Plan is framed by strategic priorities and key objectives. The key objective areas outlined below will continue to frame future areas of activity in the new action plan, informed by what we know about women intersecting with DCS and the criminal justice system.



## What do we know about women intersecting with DCS?

*Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019* was launched at a time when the number of women intersecting with South Australia's (SA) justice system was increasing dramatically, aligning with a similar national trend. On 30 June 2018 7.5% (230) of SA prisoners were women;<sup>1</sup> an increase of almost 7.9% since the same time in 2017 and a 71% increase since 2012.<sup>2</sup> The rate of female incarceration in SA is the highest it has been within the last decade. Across the Western world women represent the fastest growing section of the prison population.<sup>3</sup>

**Women's incarceration rate in South Australia**



Across Australia in 2018 women prisoner numbers increased at a faster rate than male prisoner numbers, up 10% (326 prisoners) from 30 June 2017.<sup>4</sup> Between 2007 to 2017 women in prison in Australia has increased by 77%. The increase in Indigenous women prisoners is accounting for much of the growth;<sup>5</sup> the over representation of Aboriginal women in prison remains alarmingly high. SA data indicates Aboriginal women in custody equate to approximately 35% of the SA women's prison population.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the increase in numbers across jurisdictions women comprise only a relatively small portion of prisoner and offender populations. Nationally males comprise the majority of the Australian prison population accounting for 92% of total prisoners.<sup>7</sup> In SA in 2018, 7% of sentenced prisoners (219) and 19% of community-based offenders (679) were women.<sup>8</sup> Women's smaller numbers have resulted in correctional service responses historically being informed by knowledge about male prisoners.

### Women's common pathway into crime

There are notable differences between men and women in the types of offence that result in imprisonment and the unique pathways into criminal behaviour. The broad presentation of women intersecting with the correctional service system is one of 'high need' and 'lower risk'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, December 2018

<sup>2</sup> DCS data, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Casey et al, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, December 2018

<sup>5</sup> Russell & Baldry, 2017

<sup>6</sup> DCS Data March 2019

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Dec. 2018.

<sup>8</sup> DCS Data October 2018

<sup>9</sup> Ney et al, 2012; Stathopoulos & Quadara, 2014



- Women in prison report high rates of sexual victimisation, domestic/family violence and trauma.
- Women in prison are assessed with high rates of mental illness, behavioural disorders and drug addiction, commonly associated with their higher than average histories of past and current trauma.
- Women's offending often occurs in association with intimate relationships - family, friends and significant others.
- Social alienation is common - arising from factors such as low socio-economic background, discrimination, victimisation, mental illness, lifestyle and substance use.
- Women's socioeconomic disadvantage is frequently compounded by women's relative poorer education, training and work histories, compared to men.
- Many women have dependent children.
- All these issues can have particularly compounding influences in the lives of Aboriginal women.

The increase in women's numbers over the last decade has been attributed by some analysts to be due to increased numbers of women remanded into custody or given a prison sentence, as well as increased policing and tougher sentencing regimes.<sup>10</sup> Others attribute additional factors, such as the majority of women in prison are victims of domestic violence,<sup>11</sup> which can lead to a cycle of offending, criminalization and recidivism.

With improved understanding of the needs of women, correctional services nationally and internationally are designing approaches within their service systems that are specific to women. *Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019* has been instrumental in embedding a targeted women's centred approach within the South Australian Department for Correctional Services.

### **Women's offence profile**

Women's offence profile is very different to male offenders, with acquisitive crime (theft,) the most common type of crime committed by women rather than serious violence or professional crime. Across Australia, illicit drug offences and acts intended to cause injury are offences on the increase for women;<sup>12</sup> research is suggesting that women may be using violence, primarily as a strategy to deal with their own high levels of victimization.<sup>13</sup> In SA, DCS data<sup>14</sup> also indicates high rates of 'Offences Against Justice Procedures' by women (i.e. breaches of order conditions).

Increasing numbers of women on community based orders such as Release Ordered Home Detention has been a positive shift in recent years in SA, as a result of the 2016 amendments to the *Criminal Law (Sentencing Act) 1988* and the *Correctional Services Act 1982*. Sixty six women were released onto Release Ordered Home Detention in 2018. DCS has also increased availability of targeted and individualised community packages that seek to provide wrap-around support to prisoners on release, through the Home Detention Integrated Support Service Program. These figures of 'Offences Against Justice Procedures' highlight the complexities and struggle many women

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<sup>10</sup> Russell & Baldry, 2017

<sup>11</sup> Gleeson, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, December 2018

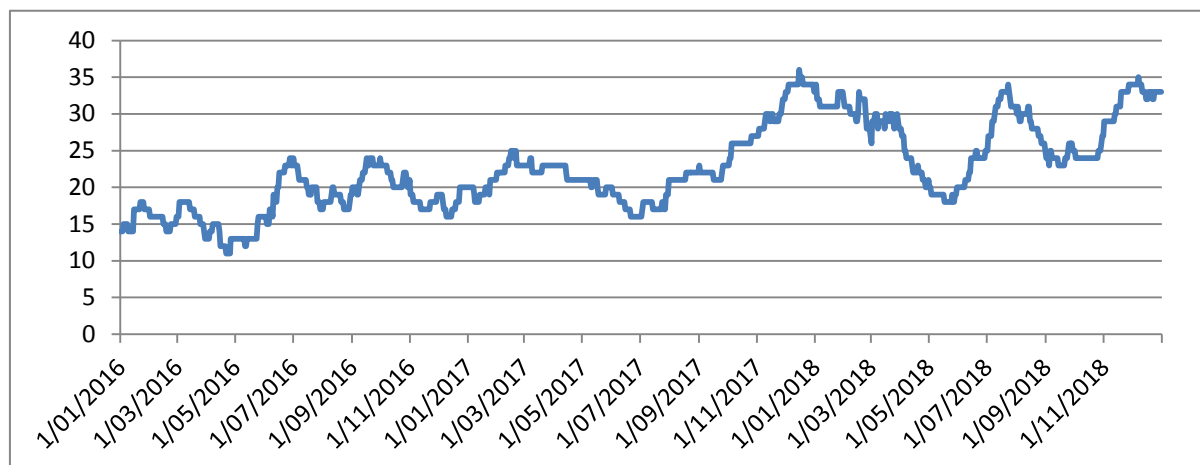
<sup>13</sup> Wilson et al, 2017

<sup>14</sup> DCS, 2019



have in community and reinforce the ongoing need for a range of available community pathways of support, as well as the need to engage women meaningfully in the case management process and with the conditions of their orders.

### Increased rates of women on Home Detention in South Australia



### Women's custodial status

In SA, there are significant numbers of women on remand - that is charged with an offence, yet to be sentenced and who are refused police and court bail. At March 2019 43% of women in custody were on remand.<sup>15</sup> A high proportion of women are released after serving a relatively short period on remand with 22% released within 30 days and 48% released between three to six months. Only a small portion of women are convicted and sentenced in the courts with serious category offences. At March 2019 only 6% of the women's prison population were serving sentences of five years or more.<sup>16</sup>

The DCS Bail Accommodation Program (BASP), opened in Port Adelaide in 2017 as a part of the Department's '10 by 20'<sup>17</sup> strategy, has diverted both men and women from the prison system and provides them with intensive supports to maintain links to family, employment and other services whilst transitioning to long term accommodation. Despite this strategy, the ongoing high remand rates of women still creates challenges; particularly in terms of establishing effective brief interventions for women in custody as well as supporting them to sustain community services, relationships and connections while incarcerated.

### Women's ages in custody

Since 2014, there has been an increase in the number of women in prison who are under 25 years of age, with this age range for the first time making up the highest percentage of women discharged from prison in 2016.<sup>18</sup> Significant population spikes were also seen in the 30 to 34 age ranges in 2015 and 2016 respectively and the 35 to 39 age range, especially in 2016. In March 2019, 14% of women in custody were under 25 years and 33% were in 30-39 age bracket. Four women were 65+.<sup>19</sup>

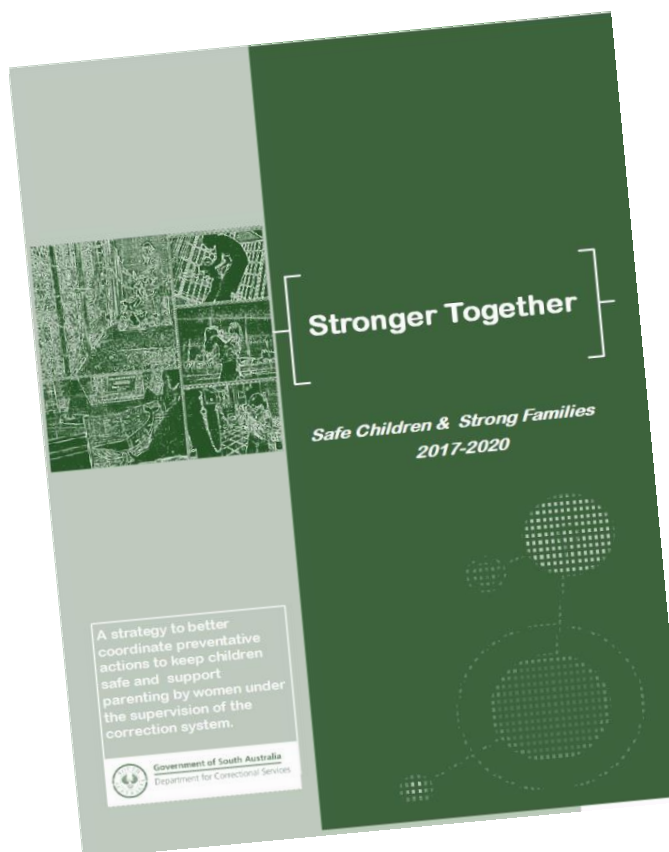
<sup>15</sup> DCS data, 2019

<sup>16</sup> DCS data, 2019

<sup>17</sup> DCS data, 2016

<sup>18</sup> DCS data, 2016

<sup>19</sup> DCS data, 2019

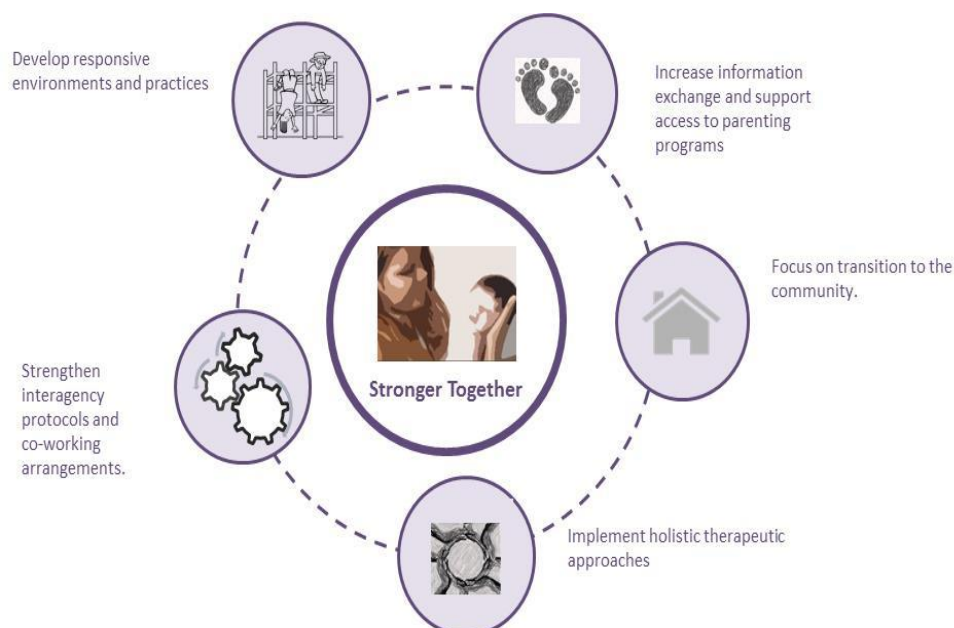


***Stronger Together: Safe Children & Strong Families (2017-2020)*** forms a project outcome of the Women Offender Framework and has become a separate strategy in its own right, launched in December 2017. *Stronger Together* was developed with the knowledge that children of criminalised women are at heightened risk of poorer life outcomes across a range of domains including education, employment, health and future criminal justice system involvement.

*Stronger Together: Safe Children & Strong Families (2017-2020)* is designed to better coordinate actions to keep children safe and support parenting by women under the supervision of the correctional system; and to contribute to improving life outcomes for children.

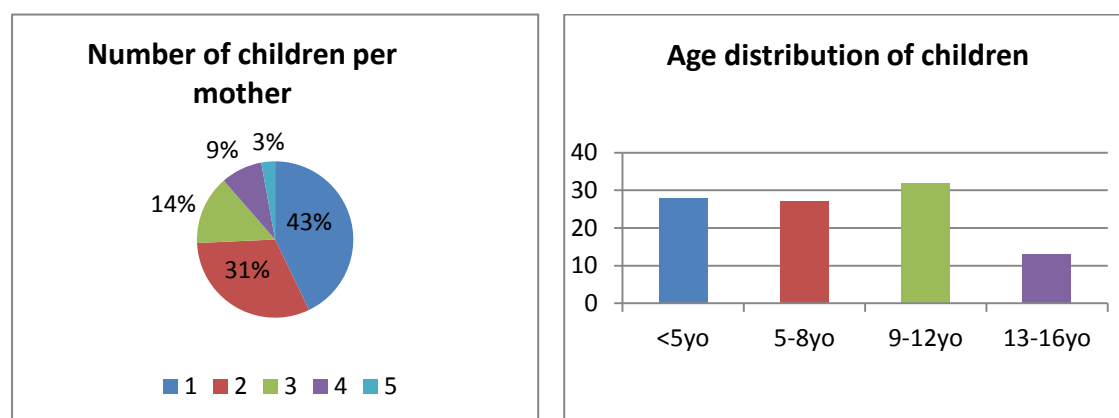
Given the potential overlap of actions with new or continuing work under the WOF, the strategy has been included in the consultation, to update stakeholders on current activity in the area of mothers and children.

*Stronger Together* incorporates the following five priorities:



## What do we know about mothers and children intersecting with DCS?

Approximately 40% of women at the Adelaide Women's Prison (AWP) identify as a primary carer to a dependent child.



Approximately 30 pregnant women annually cycle through the AWP. A small number of women give birth in custody; an even smaller number are deemed suitable to retain the care of their child.

Prison entry is often cited as the reason for removal of a new born infant with a mother in custody; removal is more directly linked to factors such as drug and alcohol addiction, unstable home environment and domestic violence.

Pregnancies and Births	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (March YTD)
Number of women entering AWP pregnant	N/A	N/A	31	30	6
Births while in custody (AWP)	1	0	3	3	1

### Key current activity under Stronger Together:

- Activity underway to make the AWP/APC Reception more welcoming and child friendly.
- The new AWP Health and Wellbeing Centre will incorporate a short stay live in section for women who give birth in custody or enter with a very young baby.
- A parenting room will be established in the new Offender Development Building that will provide a specialist space to facilitate Mother's Voice readings and for provision of information and education on parenting.
- The DCS external Home Page now provides links to women and families about operation of the correction (especially prison) system and impacts for women and children.
- DCS is part of the government's Multi-Agency Protection Service (MAPS) and the Multi-Agency Assessment Unit (MAUU).
- DCS has formed a Stronger Together inter-Departmental Advisory Group to drive partnered approaches and improve interagency protocols relevant to incarcerated mothers and children.
- DCS is partnering with the Commissioner for Children and Young People on a project to better understand and respond to the needs of children with parents in custody.

### Infrastructure Development at the Adelaide Women's Prison

Throughout the life of *Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019* significant infrastructure development and upgrade has occurred at the AWP both complementing and enhancing activity. This included a new 20 bed high security unit (Opal Unit), construction and operation of a new industrial kitchen, and a new visit centre with outdoor play area, completed in 2014. In 2017, a program and education hub was created in the Living Skills Units (LSU) precinct, through construction of a new Community Centre and women in LSU building the Healing Circle.

Infrastructure improvements continue at the AWP, with the current redevelopment of the Women's Centre dormitories to create two refurbished secure units with a combined capacity of 53 beds (Ruby and Coral Units). Extending the eastern perimeter fence of the prison, work has also commenced on the two 40 bed secure and residential units. A new Health and Wellbeing Facility and Offender Development Building (Education and Programs) are also under development and are due to be commissioned in July 2019.



#### Future planned infrastructure at AWP includes:

- A new gatehouse;
- An improved family friendly visits area.



#### Women at the AWP have contributed to the construction projects under the U-Turn Construction Pathway Program

A ten woman work team has received ongoing instruction from MOSSOP Construction + Interiors, Total Space Design and TAFE SA, gaining accredited training and white cards, and forming a key part of the build and refurbishment.

Six women engaged in the project have successfully transitioned into community and are employed within the construction industry.



## **Achievements/ Proposed Future Activity / Consultation Questions**

**Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework and Action Plan 2014-2019** 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 five year action plan provides opportunity to build on and further refine reforms, to consolidate activity, while also providing scope for new initiatives.

Key achievements under the 2014-2019 Action Plan are discussed in the following pages, as are future priority areas to initially inform a new action plan. Future activity will continue to be framed by current strategy and objective areas:

**Objective 1: Deliver a correctional service for women**

**Objective 2: Deliver programs to meet the diverse needs of women**

**Objective 3: Workforce recruitment, training, development**

**Objective 4: Gender responsiveness in correctional policy and planning**

**Objective 5: Pathways and linkages**

DCS is seeking feedback from partners and stakeholders, consulting on the following:

### **Key consultation questions:**

#### **Welcomed achievements over 2014-2019**

What activity has occurred during the 2014-2019 Action Plan that you think has been particularly worthwhile and produced positive change or outcomes?

#### **Prioritised future areas of need for 2019-2024**

Do you agree with the proposed future activity? Do you have specific ideas that could support delivery of activity areas?

#### **Gaps/unidentified activity for consideration**

Are there particular gaps, suggested changes or conversely areas you think may need greater attention or emphasis in respect to women intersecting with the correctional service system?

## **Strategy: Offender Management and Rehabilitation**

### **Objective 1: Deliver a correctional service for women**

There is growing evidence that services for women intersecting with the correctional system should be based on the principles of effective correctional programming while also being holistic and addressing a range of traditional and gender-specific risk factors. Evidence suggests that women are particularly likely to respond to gender informed approaches if their backgrounds and pathways to offending are associated with gendered issues.<sup>20</sup> The overall picture suggests the Risk Need Responsivity model can apply to women<sup>21</sup> but that women offenders may be more complex or diverse to treat than men. This complexity does not appear to come from greater criminal risk or different criminogenic needs but rather is a reflection of needs and issues that may impact responsivity and the woman's ability to engage in the change process.<sup>22</sup>

The way women see themselves and their past and current relationships and the extent to which they feel equipped to deal with challenges in their lives is important to informing the design of interventions for them. Understanding and responding to criminogenic need is important as well as engaging with women in ways that enable them to define the problems or blocks to change in their lives. Women can have limited prosocial relationships and can be very socially isolated, so the quality and support they receive through formal relationships, such as with prison staff, parole officers and community agencies, can have an influence on their change process. Strong working alliances are found to promote crime-avoidance and self-efficacy in women. Problem solving and strengths focused skills appear to be at least as important as the nature of intervention.<sup>23</sup>

### **Key Achievements 2014-2019**

- **Women's movement through the system and access to a range of sentencing options**

Timely transition of women through prison precincts and to community has been a focus during the course of the WOF action plan. Analysis of security risk classifications found that women can be at risk of over classification throughout their prison sentence and prompts for review were addressed. A review of security classification tools did not identify any targeted women offender tools and supported current processes at AWP, which bring an individualised approach to internal placement of women based on their risk, behaviour and daily engagement. Release Ordered Home Detention (HD) numbers for women have also more than doubled. 66 women accessed HD in 2018 and are proportionally well represented in Court Ordered Home Detention numbers.

- **Expanded AWP/Adelaide Pre-Release Centre (APC) precincts, supported by a structured day**

In line with expanded units and precincts for women at AWP/APC, significant work has progressed on the development of a structured day within precincts at AWP/APC. From as low as 10% of women in education, training and work when the plan commenced (in the Living Skills Units), today as high as 80% are now occupied in a constructive day in LSU. 100% of women at the Pre-Release Centre also now have access to education, training, employment or re-entry activities. Ongoing effort is

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<sup>20</sup> Gobeil, Blanchette & Stewart, 2016

<sup>21</sup> Bonta, Andrews, 2016; Polaschek, 2018

<sup>22</sup> Van Voorhis, 2012

<sup>23</sup> Trotter, Flynn, 2016

placed on the identification of partnership opportunities for pre-release women with Expos at AWP/APC held in 2017 and 2018.

Informed by a multidisciplinary team approach and best practice for working with women, at AWP in 2018-2019 workshops have occurred with staff to define AWP operational principles and to bring greater clarity to the role and function of new and existing units. Workshops have discussed models for admission/induction, a complex needs unit and a short stay section within the new Health and Wellbeing Facility for mothers with new born infants.

- **Introduce gendered and culturally responsive management practices for women in prison**

An Emergency Response Group (ERG) has been established for AWP that includes female staff. The team received a DCS Service Excellence Award in 2019 for effective de-escalation and communication in managing a particularly high/complex situation. Alternatives to strip searching have also been researched as well as a 'two stage' strip search trialled at AWP. This has occurred alongside DCS enhancing drug detection security measures and a zero tolerance approach towards attempts to introduce drug and other illicit contraband into prisons, to be implemented across 2019.

The AWP site became smoke free in February 2019. The engagement of a fitness instructor in 2018 promoted a healthy lifestyle for all women across the site, and nicotine replacement therapy and patches on prisoner buys is now providing women with a choice about their future health. Women in all precincts have increased access to either exercise equipment and sporting areas including a walking track (with all-weather exercise equipment) in LSU. To support women in their fitness activity at AWP improved standard issue bras and sneakers have replaced previous crop tops and DCS issued generic sneakers, and purchase of sports sneakers is now an option on the buy.

- **Tailor service delivery practices to meet the needs of women in community corrections**

A Women's Supervision Unit was established at Port Adelaide in 2016. Co-located with SA Health (women's health) the model is producing effective engagement of women in the community. A 12-month review of operations has been undertaken. A new MOAA has been signed taking the partnership up to 2020. Initial conversations are also underway to scope a targeted women's regional service in Port Pirie in partnership with a non-government organisation.

The Bail Accommodation Support Program (BASP), opened in May 2017, is a diversionary community pathway for men and women, providing short term accommodation for alleged offenders who lack accommodation and as an alternative to being remanded in custody. 10 of the 30 self-contained units at BASP are reserved for women. 362 offenders have accessed the BASP since its opening, with a portion of these being women. The Home Detention Integrated Support Service Program (HISSP) is another DCS initiative, introduced in November 2017, providing a reintegration and support service for offenders in the community on Court Ordered Home Detention, Release Ordered Home Detention and Intensive Correction Orders. The program was also expanded for women on Parole and Intensive Bail Supervision. In the first year 99 women were referred for a HISSP package and over this period, of the 59 women due to complete their order, 49 women did so successfully.

Is there specific activity that has occurred to improve delivery of a correctional service for women that you think has been particularly worthwhile and produced positive change or outcomes?



## **Proposed Future Activity 2019-2024**

- **Enhanced case management of women in prison and community**

With current projects underway in DCS to improve assessment and case management across prisons and community corrections it is important that focus is maintained on ensuring the timely transition of women through prison precincts and between AWP/APC and to community, and that case management practice has a holistic, individualised focus. Case managers having the tools to undertake short and long term goal setting with women, and linkage to relevant community services and supports, is crucial to this process.

- **Partnered community models similar to the Women's Supervision Unit**

The Women's Supervision Unit at Port Adelaide has highlighted the benefits for women under community supervision. The model exposes women to a range of services and supports and enables them to engage in a therapeutic, women's centred environment. With increased numbers of women exiting custody on Home Detention, and with growing indicators that women are struggling to adhere to conditions, there is opportunity to further understand and explore partnered strategies to assist women in community, to not return to prison and to re-establish themselves in community. An expansion of the Women's Supervision Unit model is one option as well as greater targeted support, accommodation and community connection pathways.

- **Progression of women through the prison system and community, timely and meaningful**

An analysis of security risk classifications found that women are at risk of over classification throughout their time in custody. It is recommended that a whole of site AWP/APC review is undertaken that ensures systems are in place that further formalises movement of women according to behaviour, need and risk. This review could also scope a specific low security/transitional guideline for women that account for the lack of low security placement options currently available for women, but also to ensure that women have timely transition into onsite and offsite employment options once placed at APC. Significant achievement has been made in terms of women accessing a range of vocational and employment opportunities in community via their APC placement. However the small numbers of women at APC (24) and the need to have women working in the Northern Distribution Centre, risks an inability to fill established community placements but also for women to have reduced access to a range of vocational, training and employment opportunities that will set them up for future employment on release.

Do you agree with the initial proposed future areas of activity to continue to improve delivery of a correctional service for women?

Do you have specific ideas that could support delivery of activity areas?

**Strategy: Offender Management and Rehabilitation**

**Objective 2: Deliver programs to meet the diverse needs of women**

Significant progress has been made in defining program priorities for women in prison and in partnering with a diversity of agencies to meet women offender program needs. Two streams of programming are required for women in prison:

**Criminogenic Rehabilitation Programs**

Criminogenic programs that draw on several theoretical models including Risk Needs Responsivity Model, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Motivational Interviewing. For optimum impact criminogenic programs are required to be delivered at different levels of intensity and on a longer and more intensive basis. For these reasons, in general, criminogenic programming is delivered by the Department's specialist staff including psychologists and social workers.

**Developmental, social, health and transitional support programs**

Developmental, social, health and transitional support programming is designed to help women:

- develop existing or new competencies and skills
- address substance or lifestyle issues
- enhance resilience and wellbeing
- support reconnection and reintegration into the community.

Resulting from the DCS Community Grants Program, funded and in-kind partnerships, as well as the DCS Volunteer Service, there has been significant expansion in the range of programs available at AWP in the last five years (see Appendix 1- Programs delivered at AWP 2015-2018). A diversity of programming, community relationships and in-reach into the prison has become an embedded aspect of AWP culture, assisted by the introduction of two ongoing Activities Coordinator positions at the site from 2016. A concerted effort has been made to ensure there is program coverage across all areas of the prison and targeting particular cohort needs; it is not unusual for three to five programs a day to be offered across the prison, in addition to daily employment, educational activity and yard time.

At APC, women have a greater range of training and employment opportunities, with women gaining work experience through the Northern Distribution Centre (NDC) as well as having a greater diversity of community work experience and study opportunities, as well as some gaining employment. In 2018 two women (out of 24) were attending University. The creation of an Industry Manager and Vocational Coordinator position in 2017 and a Vocational Expo in 2018 has dramatically increased vocational opportunities for women at APC.

DCS seeks programs that are best practice and of an equivalent standard to those delivered in community, as well as those that are cognisant of the unique challenges and complexities experienced by women in custody. DCS recognises the critical value of collaboration between government and community sectors to support rehabilitation opportunities and development of relationships and community linkages while in custody, but also to encourage continuity of these linkages on transition back to community.

## Key Achievements 2014-2019

- **Expansion of women's education, training and work opportunities**

Women have experienced increased training and vocational opportunities in custody, with the upgrade of AWP/APC educational computer facilities in 2018 and a TAFE partnership and new MOU in 2017. Work Ready Release Ready was also launched in 2017 providing job readiness training and post release employment support and the U Turn Infrastructure Project has provided employment and training in custody and on release.

- **Develop gender and culturally responsive programs for women to reduce offending**

A stakeholder guide developed: 2015-2017 *Program priorities for women in prison: A Guide* informed a range of programs and projects delivered across 2015-2019 in partnership with a diversity of agencies (see Appendix 1), inclusive of the build and launch of the LSU Healing Circle in 2017 in partnership with Seeds of Affinity. OARS Smart Recovery drug and alcohol program was also delivered at AWP across 2017 and 2018. The Aboriginal Services Unit (ASU) delivered Drum Beat and Sista Girls 2 in 2017-2018 and following evaluation developed Our Way Our Choice and contributed to the development of the Wellbeing and Resilience program for Aboriginal women implemented in 2019. Stepping Stones, a trauma informed program developed by the Rehabilitation Programs Branch, was also trialled in 2018 at AWP. From 2016 the DCS Psychological Skills program became more accessible to a broader cross section of women in custody and a contract with Women's Safety Services SA in 2019 will provide services and programs to women in custody who are victims of domestic violence.

- **Increase and support women's access to their children**

*Stronger Together: Safe Children & Strong Families (2017 to 2020)* was released March 2018 following a review of approaches to the management of women and children across Australian jurisdictions and informed by data collected on women entering custody pregnant from 2017. Women's access to their children has increased, including increased case by case arrangements to enhance child/mother visits and arrangements for women giving birth while in prison.

- **Improve the Health and Wellbeing of women in prison**

Extensive numbers of women enter custody with a range of behavioural and mental health needs; while the Complex Needs Unit at Port Augusta Prison continues to operate, planning has commenced to provide a more targeted response to these needs via a designated unit at AWP. Referrals to NDIS are closely monitored by the Principal Advisor Offender Services and a specific initiative for high/complex Aboriginal women is being progressed with Exceptional Needs Unit/Aboriginal Sobriety Group modelling a supported accommodation option for Aboriginal women with lengthy criminal justice involvement and high/complex need. More broadly, a Wellbeing and Resilience Program for women in prison, developed in partnership with SAHMRI and delivered at AWP/APC in 2018/2019, has produced significant results in terms of improved wellbeing and reduced psychological distress for participants.

Is there specific activity that has occurred to improve delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of women that you think has been particularly worthwhile and produced positive change or outcomes?

## Proposed Future Activity 2019-2024

- **Consolidation of quality, targeted programs and stakeholder in reach into prison**

The participation of stakeholders and service providers at AWP is highly valued. Bringing an increased targeted and planned approach to the delivery of programs at AWP/APC in accordance with defined program priorities for women is needed; to ensure quality is sustained and activities and programs available are relevant and targeted to cohort needs. Bringing program parity for women at Port Augusta Prison can be challenging given its regional location but is an area requiring focus.

- **Structured day across AWP and to compliment the new units coming on line**

Significant work has progressed on the development of a structured day within a variety of precincts at the AWP/APC. The development of an additional prison industry to compliment the growing infrastructure at the AWP is an ongoing need at the site. A new industry is one aspect to ensure women in the future secure and residential units can engage in meaningful activity throughout the week, whether it is vocational training, employment, or programs to address therapeutic needs and daily living skills. Motivating women in specific areas to engage in activities can be problematic at times; developing strategies that support staff in this area is needed, as well as ensuring that there is clarity of role, function and activity within units.

- **Culturally specific programs and supports for Aboriginal women**

The numbers of Aboriginal women interfacing with the criminal justice system continue to rise; targeted cultural responses need to be ongoing, both within custody and in community and for Aboriginal women in both metropolitan and regional communities.

- **Culturally specific programs and supports for women from CALD backgrounds**

Identification of community and support pathways for women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds is needed, given that women from cultural minorities within custody can be isolated and often present with limited advocacy or informal supports. Religious and cultural customs and limited English, while supported and addressed by DCS, can also contribute to their isolation in custody.

- **Programs for mothers in custody and women transitioning to community pregnant**

The short stay facility within the Health and Wellbeing Centre, to come on line mid-late 2019, is in its early planning stages and will provide an initial four month mother/infant live-in option at the AWP. The anticipated interagency partnership and learning that will result from this initiative will contribute to the direction of future activity and will be considered in the context of the Stronger Together inter-Departmental Advisory Committee. Actions for mothers with children and for women entering and exiting custody pregnant will be progressed in keeping with the *Stronger Together* strategy.

Do you agree with the initial proposed future areas of activity to continue to improve delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of women?

Do you have specific ideas that could support delivery of activity areas?

## **Strategy:      Productivity & Performance**

### **Objective 3:    Workforce recruitment, training, development**

Education and training of staff on working with women offenders has been a key feature over the course of the action plan. Training packages have been developed informed by pathways theories and a trauma informed approach. Training has targeted new recruit correctional officers and community correctional staff and particularly emphasises the role and contribution staff can make to a woman's process of change. Working with the woman's definition of the problem<sup>24</sup> is critical to good practice. DCS recognises the need to understand and respond to criminogenic need but also that, how women are engaged, is just as important; relationship style, communication and engagement skills matter.

More broadly, within DCS, women play a vital role and make important contributions across all levels of the Department. Women represent approximately 41.4 % of the DCS workforce and there are internal strategies in place promoting equal representation of genders in front line leadership positions. DCS also has a whole of agency approach to recruitment of Aboriginal staff.

### **Key Achievements 2014-2019**

- **Recruit, develop and retain a diverse and effective workforce**

Succession planning is occurring at AWP/APC with improved opportunities for correctional staff to experience a diversity of roles and there is increased gender balance in key roles at the AWP (i.e. Case Management Coordinators, Management positions) and recruitment processes place greater emphasis on a gendered approach.

- **Implement gender specific training and in-service**

New officers receive a training session on working with women. A two day workshop was also delivered to new staff at AWP in mid-2018 and will be replicated for new and existing staff, incorporating a trauma informed approach. An accredited training package for staff on working with women in prison is under development and will be implemented mid-2019 as will an E-Learning Package on working with women

- **Build individual and collective wellbeing and resilience across DCS.**

The partnership with SAHMRI will continue into 2021. With over 600 staff trained in the Resilience and Wellbeing program there is already evidence of improved wellbeing for staff at AWP.

Is there specific activity that has occurred to improve workforce recruitment, training, development that you think has been particularly worthwhile and produced positive change or outcomes?

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<sup>24</sup> Trotter 2013; Robinson et al, 2011

## Proposed Future Activity 2019-2024

- **Staff Training, engagement and consultation at AWP**

Staff workshops at AWP held in 2018/2019 have commenced the process of defining specialist operational principles for the AWP, which capture best practice for working with women. Ongoing training and engagement of staff at AWP/APC is needed to improve and enhance practice for working with women and to upskill staff in their day to day interactions with women. Workshops at AWP have highlighted that many staff have an interest in expanding their knowledge and are keen to be engaged and contribute to future planning for the site; regular processes of consultation, engagement and training need to continue with staff at AWP/APC.

- **Expansion of training for staff in community**

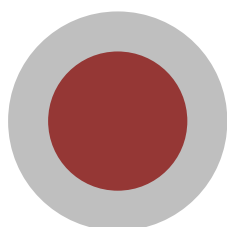
Training on assessment and case management with women under community supervision is provided to case managers in Community Corrections, however it is not currently delivered to a broader cross section of staff such as Intensive Compliance Officers and Community Service staff. Given women on Home Detention is a growing area, training in the future is recommended to be inclusive of these staff.

- **Recruitment processes**

Recruitment processes for staff at AWP/APC are generic and do not currently reflect the specialist status of the prison. While at interview emphasis is placed on having knowledge and skills for working with women, this is not formalised. Induction and training of new staff to the site on working with women is a current strategy; further strategies at recruitment could be an additional consideration.

Do you agree with the initial proposed future areas of activity to continue to improve workforce recruitment, training, development?

Do you have specific ideas that could support delivery of activity areas?

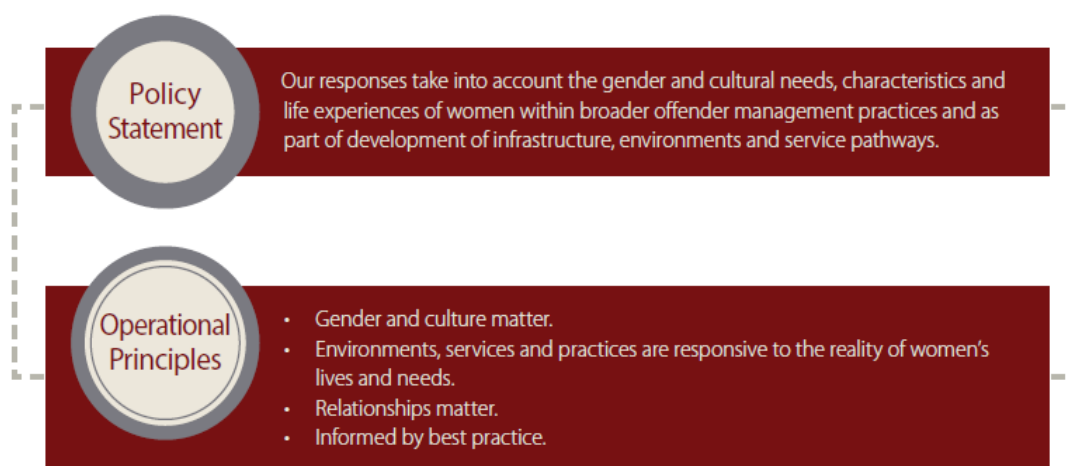


## Strategy : Productivity & Performance

### Objective 4: Gender responsiveness in correctional policy and planning

*Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework* established a policy context requiring a gendered and culturally informed approach to management of women in prison and community corrections. The framework has served to embed a gendered policy framework within the DCS system as a standard operating consideration.

#### Strong Foundations & Clear Pathways: *Women Offender Framework*



### Key Achievements 2014-2019

- **Enhance policy and procedures to ensure women's needs are identified and addressed**

*Policy 02 Working with Women in Prison and Community Corrections* released in 2016 and DCS strategy *Stronger Together: Safe Children & Strong Families 2017-2020* released in 2018. The *Women Offender Impact Statement* and *Guideline 26: Women Offender Impact Statement* was also developed and must be completed when developing or reviewing all DCS policy, procedures, programs, services, strategy or projects.

- **Enhance research capacity**

Women are a DCS research priority. Research activity undertaken on women since 2015 includes: Understanding the needs of female prisoners in SA (Deakin), Women in prison with DV histories (ANROWS), Women with cognitive disability (Flinders Uni PHD), and the U-Turn Project.

- **Enhance data sets, data extraction and analysis capacity**

The external DCS web page has been upgraded and provides greater accessible information about women and the role and function of AWP. Analysis of data is also regularly occurring to inform future activity.

Is there specific activity that has occurred to improve gender responsiveness in correctional policy and planning that you think has been particularly worthwhile and produced positive change or outcomes?



## Proposed Future Activity 2019-2024

- **Data on women and children**

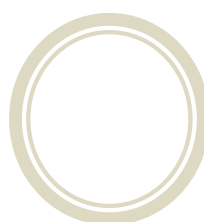
Work is progressing on seeking funding for a new IT system for DCS to support an improved case management system. Data gaps remain, particularly on women and children, and opportunities will continue to be sought to capture this information.

- **Expand information for stakeholders on the external DCS web page**

The DCS web page has significantly improved in terms of relaying information regarding the AWP and provision of information for families; there is opportunity for additional information in terms of current strategies, research and data sets on women offenders as well as expanded information for children.

Do you agree with the initial proposed future areas of activity to continue to improve gender responsiveness in correctional policy and planning?

Do you have specific ideas that could support delivery of activity areas?



## **Strategy: Innovation, Leadership & Engagement**

### **Objective 5: Pathways and linkages**

Interagency and regional partnership is an ongoing focus for the department for both prisons and community corrections. Funded partnerships through the '10 by 20' strategy and the DCS Community Grants program have resulted in a diversity of prison and community based initiatives.

#### **Key Achievements 2014-2019**

- **Establish strong pathways to community and cultural linkage and support**

DCS investment in the Home Detention Integrated Support Service Program (HISSP) has expanded support for women on discharge as has DCS involvement in the ASPIRE Pilot. The expansion of agencies and services in-reaching into AWP/APC has also established relationships and support for women exiting custody inclusive of consistent referrals from AWP to APOSS and Aboriginal Sobriety Group (ASG). The Grannies Group remains pivotal in supporting and advocating for Aboriginal women and participating in Court processes. DCS grant funding has also targeted a range of Aboriginal arts and cultural initiatives.

- **Develop and maintain formal relationships with Aboriginal communities**

The DCS Aboriginal Services Unit (ASU) undertakes a range of activities across the Department including assisting Elders to visit the AWP on a regular basis, arranging the annual Prevention of Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (PADIC) forums held at AWP, chaired by the Chief Executive and involving key Aboriginal agencies as well as providing annual funding and support for NAIDOC week celebrations.

- **Strengthen cross agency agreements and protocols**

The TAFE partnership and new MOU in 2017, is providing increased training and vocational opportunities in custody. Similarly the DCS 2018 MOAA with Aboriginal Legal Rights Service (ALRM) seeks to increase access to legal representation and support for Aboriginal women in custody.

The Stronger Together Interagency Advisory Committee has been established, involving key government and Aboriginal agencies, to progress the needs of women and children intersecting with DCS and improved protocols between agencies in this area.

Is there specific activity that has occurred to improve pathways and linkages between DCS and other agencies that you think has been particularly worthwhile and produced positive change or outcomes?

## Proposed Future Activity 2019-2024

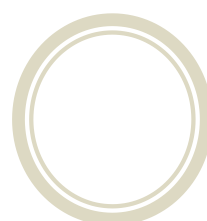
- **Targeted approaches for women with mental health and cognitive disability**

While some work has progressed to ensure more streamlined approaches to the management of women with mental health issues, there remain significant gaps in service delivery, coordination and community supports. Many women are held in prison exhibiting significant behavioural issues with limited availability of community support pathways to specialist housing and services. The introduction of a unit at the AWP that targets these needs, will seek to provide an improved tailored response while in custody. Further work needs to occur in partnership with government and community agencies to improve service and support pathways on discharge for women with these specialist needs.

- **Community transition planning and discharge**

Exit from custody can be an anxious and vulnerable time for women and even with thorough through care and discharge planning, a predictable, timely exit from custody can be difficult to arrange. Delays in receiving paper work from the Courts can disrupt the best made plans and can result in late discharges, with limited availability of after hour resources. Opportunities to improve this process are likely to improve the likelihood of success for women when discharged from custody.

Do you agree with the initial proposed future areas of activity to continue to improve pathways and linkages between DCS and other agencies?  
Do you have specific ideas that could support delivery of activity areas?

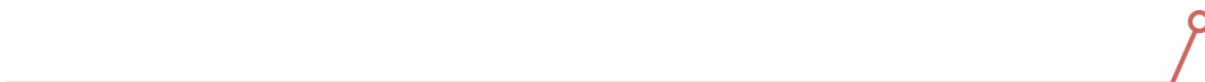
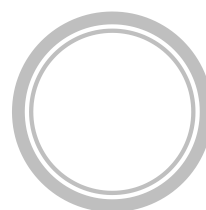
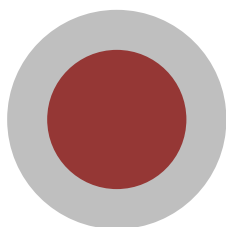


### **Gaps / Unidentified Activity for Consideration**

In addition to feedback on achievements and future activity, DCS welcomes feedback on other areas.

Are there particular gaps, suggested changes or conversely areas you think may need greater attention or emphasis in respect to women intersecting with the correctional service system?

Alternatively, do you have specific ideas for future innovation and partnership?



### Consultation Form / Feedback Guide

<b>Strong Foundations &amp; Clear Pathways: Women Offender Framework</b>			
<b>Achievements 2014-2019 and Proposed Future Activity 2019-2024</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Welcomed achievements 2014-2019</b>	<b>DCS prioritised future areas of need 2019-2024</b>	<b>Identified gaps/suggested activity requiring greater attention</b>
<b>1. Deliver a correctional service for women</b>			
<b>2. Deliver programs to meet the diverse needs of women</b>			
<b>3. Workforce Recruitment, Training, Development</b>			
<b>4. Gender Responsive Correctional Policy and Planning</b>			
<b>5. Pathways and Linkages</b>			
<b>6. Any other comments</b>			

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## Appendix 1: Programs delivered at the Adelaide Women's Prison

