

# Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia

Revised 2025





Justice  
and Community  
Safety



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Justice  
Corrective Services



#### *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia*

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The Corrective Services Administrators' Council (CSAC) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, seas and waterways of Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is founded on a strong social and cultural order that has sustained over 60,000 years of existence. While the impacts of colonisation are deeply felt, CSAC acknowledges the dedication, strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commits to working together in the spirit of self-determination to drive change to reduce overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia's correctional service systems.

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## Introduction and context

The *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia* ('the Principles') represent a statement of national intent, around which each Australian state and territory will develop its practices, policies, and performance standards.

The Principles are high-level, outcomes focused statements, reflecting the diverse challenges and priorities of correctional services in Australia. At their core, the Principles are a collective statement of what is important for Australian correctional services to achieve best practice across the areas of:

- Respect
- Safety and security
- Health and wellbeing
- Rehabilitation and reintegration
- Governance and system improvement

The Principles in their different iterations date back to 1978 when the first version was published as the *Minimum Standard Guidelines for Australian Prisons* (see Document history). In 2018, a substantially revised version was published, adopting the outcomes-focused approach continued in this current version. Updates from the 2018 edition have been made to continue to assist jurisdictions to craft policies and practices aligned to contemporary best practice.

Particular consideration has been given to:

- **Collective commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap** and the need to provide culturally safe and appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contact with correctional service systems
- **The importance of person-centred service delivery**, with responsive and tailored approaches to different cohorts (including people with disability and complex mental health, LGBTIQA+,<sup>1</sup> women, multicultural and multifaith cohorts)
- **The opportunities technology presents to modernise correctional practices**, including for accessibility and connectivity, trauma-informed practice, and more data driven and intelligence-led system insights
- **Complex, higher-risk practices** the focus of scrutiny by existing or future National Preventive Mechanisms set up in line with Australia's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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<sup>1</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer and questioning, Asexual and other sexually or gender diverse.

- **System ambition and developments in theories of correctional practice,** including increased understanding of the importance of strengths-based approaches, positive prison climates and the “working alliance” between staff and prisoners/offenders in promoting safety and rehabilitation outcomes.

Targeted stakeholder input has informed the development of these revised Principles. Broader engagement with stakeholders by jurisdictions is envisaged to help translate these Principles into policies and procedures at the jurisdictional level, including with people with lived/living experience of correctional service systems.

The Principles should also be considered together with:

- *Indigenous Strategic Framework*, developed by the CSAC Indigenous (since renamed Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori) Working Group
- *Principles of Youth Justice in Australia*, developed by the Australasian Youth Justice Administrators
- Recommendations of relevant Inquiries, Commissions and Inspectorates
- Initiatives underway across jurisdictions to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, including work on Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and to grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-community controlled sector
- Relevant international frameworks, including the Mandela Rules<sup>2</sup>; Bangkok Rules<sup>3</sup>; Tokyo Rules;<sup>4</sup> the Yogyakarta Principles,<sup>5</sup> the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

### **Note on terminology**

The terms ‘prisoner’ and ‘offender’ are used throughout the Principles. This aligns with relevant international rules and current practice among several Australian jurisdictions. Research increasingly demonstrates the tangible impacts of language and labels on rehabilitative outcomes – both positive and negative. Jurisdictions are invited to consider opportunities to realise the positive benefits of person-centred language in their own correctional practices.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Noncustodial Measures for Women Offenders.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Noncustodial Measures.

<sup>5</sup> Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

# Guiding principles

## *Outcome 1: Respect*

*Respect for human dignity is reflected in the values, beliefs and practices of correctional services in Australia and is recognised as critical to achieving positive rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes.*

### **1.1 Equality, diversity and fairness**

- 1.1.1 Custodial environments provide safe and humane containment of prisoners, commensurate with the assessed risk, in recognition that the deprivation of liberty is punishment.
- 1.1.2 Prisoners are accommodated in a safe, clean and liveable environment which considers both risk and individual needs, particularly the needs of those who are most vulnerable.
- 1.1.3 Individual prisoners/offenders are managed and supervised in a manner that responds to their particular risk and needs, including the impacts of victimisation and trauma.
- 1.1.4 Prisoners with disability are supported to access the necessary adjustments, aids, technology, and supports required to place them in the same position, so far as feasible, as other prisoners.
- 1.1.5 All information provided to prisoners/offenders is delivered in a form they can understand, taking into account any accessibility or interpreter needs.
- 1.1.6 Female prisoners are placed separately to male prisoners, and due regard is had to the unique needs of transgender and gender diverse prisoners when making placement decisions.
- 1.1.7 Prisoners/offenders of all cultural backgrounds are treated and managed within the principles of substantive equality and according to their individual needs.
- 1.1.8 Prisoners are provided the opportunity to practice the religion, cultural or spiritual expression of their choice safely, and in line with the good order and management of the prison.
- 1.1.9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners are supported to maintain or re-establish their connections to community and are provided access to

Elders, to receive cultural and spiritual support while in prison.

- 1.1.10 Any device worn by prisoners/offenders that is used to monitor their compliance with conditions is as unobtrusive as practicable, allowing them to be able to perform normal physical activity, maintain a reasonable level of privacy and use home amenities.
- 1.1.11 Restrictions placed on prisoners/offenders are the minimum necessary to maintain safety and security, based on individual assessment of risk and needs.
- 1.1.12 Prisoners/offenders are provided with information about their sentence, its requirements and their management in a timely manner.
- 1.1.13 Visit facilities provide help to normalise contact arrangements and cater for the diverse needs of visitors to prisons.

## **1.2 First contact**

- 1.2.1 Prisoners are informed of their rights and obligations upon admission to a correctional facility.
- 1.2.2 Offenders are informed of their rights and obligations while subject to community corrections management, including the consequences of non-compliance.
- 1.2.3 Prisoners are provided with timely opportunities and support to inform their families or other approved people of significant changes in their circumstances, location and the visiting procedures which apply, and make arrangements regarding their children where safe and relevant to do so.
- 1.2.4 Upon reception or transfer, prisoners undergo an initial assessment to identify any immediate needs and facilitate access to appropriate services, including health, interpreters, disability services and/or cultural supports.

## **1.3 Legal rights and entitlements**

- 1.3.1 Staff demonstrate respect for prisoners'/offenders' individual needs and rights to health and wellbeing.
- 1.3.2 Prisoners are provided a minimum of one hour out of cell per day, and in fresh air (weather permitting).

- 1.3.3 Prisoners/offenders are informed of their legal rights to privacy and confidentiality of personal and health information, including any limitations, at their first point of contact with corrections.
- 1.3.4 Policies and procedures establish clear expectations for service delivery and are readily available to relevant staff, prisoners/offenders and the public, and are only withheld where security is compromised.
- 1.3.5 Access to lawyers, legal guardians, consular support and legal resources is provided to all prisoners in a manner consistent with security requirements.
- 1.3.6 All prisoner property and money is managed in a lawful, effective and accountable manner that respects prisoners' entitlements.
- 1.3.7 Prisoners are provided with library services for legal, recreational and educational needs, with support or technology provided to prisoners with disability and/or literacy difficulties to make equal use of the services, so far as feasible, as other prisoners.
- 1.3.8 Access to interpreting and translation services is provided to any prisoner/offender who advises of, or is observed to have, difficulties in understanding or communicating in English.
- 1.3.9 Guardians authorised to make personal, health and lifestyle decisions on behalf of a prisoner/offender are informed of significant changes to the prisoner's/ offender's circumstances as soon as practicable.
- 1.3.10 Remand prisoners are subject to fewer restrictions than sentenced prisoners provided the conditions under which they are managed do not adversely affect good order, security and safety.
- 1.3.11 Post sentence detention is managed in accordance with applicable legislation of the jurisdiction.
- 1.3.12 Prisoners who engage in work, rehabilitation programs or full-time education are remunerated in line with the applicable policy/legislation.
- 1.3.13 Staff, prisoners and visitors are searched lawfully, in the least invasive manner possible and with due regard to their rights and dignity.
- 1.3.14 Alternative screening methods, such as scans, are used in preference to strip searches. Strip searches are:
  - used only where an individualised assessment identifies a

compelling need to locate or retrieve concealed contraband.

- performed by a staff member of the same gender as the person searched (or nominated by a prisoner who is transgender, gender diverse or intersex) wherever possible.
- conducted in a trauma-informed way that maintains dignity and privacy, with due regard to minimise any risk of re-traumatisation for cohorts known to experience sexual assault and violence at higher rates (including women, people with disability, LGBTIQA+).

1.3.15 Staff performing strip searches consider and make any reasonable modifications to account for a prisoner's background, gender identity, religion, cultural identity, or disability.

#### **1.4 Compassionate response**

1.4.1 Appropriate and timely notifications are made in the event of a prisoner's death, life threatening injury or illness, admission to hospital or transfer to a mental health facility.

1.4.2 Immediate notification is made to the family (or other such nominated people) and the appropriate Aboriginal Legal Service in the event of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's death.

1.4.3 Protocols following the death of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander prisoner/offender are culturally appropriate, with due regard to the cultural needs of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the location, and in the community.

1.4.4 Appropriate and timely notifications are made to prisoners in the event of the death or life-threatening illness or injury of a family member and, where appropriate, authorisation given for a prisoner to attend their family member's bedside/funeral.

1.4.5 Policies governing authorisations in line with principle 1.4.4 reflect the special kinship and family obligations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners/offenders in culturally appropriate criteria for attendance at family funerals.

1.4.6 Prisoners who receive a notification in line with principle 1.4.2 are supported to address their welfare needs, including access to religious or cultural protocols.

## **1.5 Professional conduct**

- 1.5.1 Ethical behaviour, professionalism, accountability and transparency are demonstrated by all staff.
- 1.5.2 Staff model prosocial behaviour by treating all people with decency, respect and fairness.
- 1.5.3 Staff interactions with prisoners/offenders are appropriate and lawful, recognising the impact of these interactions on rehabilitation outcomes.
- 1.5.4 Positive work environments are achieved through consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- 1.5.5 Identified functions/activities or practices requiring improvement are addressed by management and staff in a timely and appropriate manner.
- 1.5.6 Staff misconduct is identified and managed promptly ensuring procedural fairness and the appropriate level of confidentiality.

## Guiding principles

### *Outcome 2: Safety and security*

*The safety of staff, the community, visitors, prisoners and offenders is maintained, with particular consideration to those most vulnerable.*

#### **2.1 Safeguarding**

- 2.1.1 Correctional practices identify, minimise and manage any risks to staff, the community, visitors, prisoners and offenders.
- 2.1.2 Prisoners/offenders are effectively managed, supervised and suitably placed to maintain the safety of all people.
- 2.1.3 Prisoners/offenders, visitors and staff, particularly those most vulnerable or at-risk, are safe from bullying, intimidation, victimisation and discrimination (including verbal, mental or physical abuse, damage or property theft).
- 2.1.4 Prisoners/offenders who present an extreme or unacceptable risk to public safety are managed under regimes that reflect the gravity and potential harm to the community. Restrictions are the minimum required to maintain safety, security and good order, alongside their human rights.
- 2.1.5 All appropriate measures are taken to ensure no injuries or unnatural deaths occur to staff, visitors or prisoners/offenders.
- 2.1.6 Risk factors, historical information and cultural considerations are taken into account when assessing and responding to prisoners/offenders at-risk of self-harm or suicide.
- 2.1.7 Prisoners identified as being at-risk of self-harm or suicide are managed in the least restrictive manner based on a holistic, trauma-informed and objective assessment of their individual risk, needs, health and welfare.
- 2.1.8 Victims are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity with their needs and safety considered and their rights supported through the provision of key information.
- 2.1.9 Children residing in custody with caregivers are housed in safe and secure accommodation that adequately meets their needs and facilitates

access to essential services.

- 2.1.10 Prisoner visits take the safety and best interests of children and other vulnerable people into account.
- 2.1.11 People in custody are transported using fit for purpose vehicles that are safe, meet relevant standards and are subject to regular and routine safety checks.
- 2.1.12 Transport of people in custody is conducted in a safe and humane manner, taking into account the dignity of the person being transported.
- 2.1.13 Where prisoners who present an extreme risk require movement outside a secure environment, comprehensive risk assessments are conducted and movements are planned to mitigate risks to staff, the community and the prisoner.
- 2.1.14 Prison staff are trained in appropriate methods of restraint and control, based on the principle of de-escalation and using the minimum level of force required to maintain good order, the safety of the public, staff and other prisoners.
- 2.1.15 Force (including use of instruments of restraint) is used as a last resort where there is a compelling safety or security need and other means of managing the situation have proved unsuccessful. Any force used is the minimum necessary to manage the situation, applied for the minimum time required and appropriately reported and documented.
- 2.1.16 Instruments of restraint are not used on prisoners:
  - during and immediately following childbirth,
  - receiving treatment for significant medical conditions, such as surgical procedures and recovery, or receiving end of life care, unless an individualised assessment identifies a compelling safety risk that cannot be managed by other available means.

## **2.2 Safe environments**

- 2.2.1 Comprehensive strategies, systems and procedures to detect, deter and prevent incidents that impact the safety or security of correctional services, staff, the community or prisoners/offenders are developed and implemented.
- 2.2.2 As far as practicable, secure cellular accommodation will minimise the

opportunity for self-harm or suicide.

- 2.2.3 Correctional services are encouraged to develop a set of principles, to guide efforts to identify and minimise risk caused by ligature points in custodial environments.
- 2.2.4 Dynamic security practices support and optimise prisoner and staff safety and the good order and management of the prison.
- 2.2.5 Regular testing and maintenance of static security infrastructure ensures the centre and its secure perimeter is uncompromised.
- 2.2.6 The management of offenders in the community is underpinned by evidence-based assessments that enhance the safety and security of staff, the community and offenders, while recognising the diverse environments in which their management takes place.
- 2.2.7 Local procedures are appropriate for the operating environment, consistent with governing policy and legislative frameworks.
- 2.2.8 The security and safety of staff, prisoners, visitors and the community is supported by a variety of strategies and systems to prevent, detect and deter contraband, with due regard to privacy considerations and the benefits of technology in allowing for less-intrusive detection methods.
- 2.2.9 Correctional services work to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism from being organised or supported by any prisoner/offender managed by corrections.
- 2.2.10 Correctional services provide opportunities for prisoners/offenders who present an extreme or unacceptable risk to disengage from violent extremism and reintegrate into the community.

### **2.3 Classification and placements**

- 2.3.1 Prisoner classification and placement is based on an objective assessment of prisoners' security risk, rehabilitation and reintegration needs.
- 2.3.2 Prisoners are assessed and allocated to accommodation compatible with their assessed risks and needs to ensure their safety and security and

the good order of the facility.

- 2.3.3 Unsentenced prisoners/detainees are accommodated in a manner which acknowledges their legal status and where practicable, provides for the separation between sentenced and unsentenced prisoners.
- 2.3.4 Where a prisoner is found unfit to stand trial or not guilty by reason of disability or mental illness, avenues are pursued to secure the person's timely transfer to an appropriate therapeutic facility, in accordance with relevant court orders.
- 2.3.5 The particular needs of specific prisoner cohorts are reflected in placement decisions.
- 2.3.6 Prisoner placement promotes individual rehabilitation and supports wellbeing. Where practicable, prisoners are placed in a location proximate to their family and community, with particular consideration given to the importance of Country and connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.
- 2.3.7 Prisoners with disability are integrated within the prison and accommodated safely to support their needs.
- 2.3.8 The placement assessment of transgender, gender diverse and intersex prisoners includes comprehensive and holistic consideration of their individual safety and wellbeing, and takes into account their stated preferences.
- 2.3.9 Decisions to segregate/separate prisoners reflect that these practices are used as a last resort, following an individualised and holistic risk assessment that considers the prisoner's individual characteristics and circumstances.
- 2.3.10 Prisoners who are segregated/separated have their circumstances reviewed on a regular basis and are provided with opportunities for meaningful engagement, including (at a minimum) daily contact with appropriate staff, with a view to ensure they can be reintegrated with general populations as soon as it is safe for them to do so.
- 2.3.11 Signs that a prisoner's physical or mental health has or will be injuriously affected by continued sanctions or segregation/separation are actively

monitored for, in consultation with health staff, and given due weight in balancing safety and security concerns impacting the prisoner's placement.

- 2.3.12 Prisoners placed in segregation/separation and/or placed in a management or high security unit are managed under the least restrictive conditions consistent with the reason for their separation and to the extent necessary to minimise the associated risk. Prisoners are informed of the reason for their separation in a form and language they understand, with due regard to accessibility needs.
- 2.3.13 Decisions about classification and placement in areas designated for prisoners who present an extreme or unacceptable risk are evidence-based and made by a delegated officer, based on clear and transparent criteria and subject to regular review.
- 2.3.14 Where prisoners who present an extreme risk are accommodated in specifically designated areas, they are subject to a transparent and accountable management regime, with appropriate case management, review and governance mechanisms.
- 2.3.15 Community and victim safety is prioritised when considering projects or community work placements that support reintegration into the community.

## **2.4 Behaviour management**

- 2.4.1 Rules and routines provided to prisoners encourage their responsible behaviour and support the security, good order and management of the prison.
- 2.4.2 Allegations of prisoner misconduct are investigated and managed appropriately, promptly and fairly.
- 2.4.3 Where possible, alternatives to sanctions are used to manage behaviour constituting prisoner misconduct resulting from a prisoner's mental illness or disability.
- 2.4.4 Prisoner discipline is lawful, proportionate and timely. Discipline decisions are based on evidence and are made without bias or further

repercussions.

- 2.4.5 Prisoners/offenders are aware of the reasons for any imposed sanctions and acknowledge they understand their rights of review. Reviews are facilitated by an independent decision-maker in a timely manner.
- 2.4.6 Responses to non-compliance are the minimum required to maintain good order and safety within a prison or community safety.

## Guiding principles

### *Outcome 3: Health and wellbeing*

*Prisoners and offenders are supported to address their primary health, mental health, cultural and spiritual, social and emotional care needs through facilitated access to appropriate services.*

#### **3.1 Health services**

- 3.1.1 Health, wellbeing and cultural services are available to prisoners and they are aware of how to access them.
- 3.1.2 Offenders supervised in the community have support to access relevant health, wellbeing and cultural services.
- 3.1.3 Stakeholders in the correctional environment cooperate to provide health care services to prisoners. Roles and responsibilities are clear, with clinical decisions made by responsible health care professionals and facilitated by custodial staff.
- 3.1.4 Prisoners are provided a standard of health care equal to services available in the community that meet their individual physical health, mental health and social and emotional care needs, fostering continuity of care between custody and the community.
- 3.1.5 Prisoners are provided with appropriate health practitioners to deliver the right care at the right time, consistent with equivalent codes of conduct and professional/ethical standards as those applying to public health services in the community.
- 3.1.6 Health services within correctional services provide for trauma-informed care practices.
- 3.1.7 Public health is protected through measures that reduce the risk, and impact of illness or pandemic.
- 3.1.8 All prisoners, including remandees, are screened and provided with access to multidisciplinary health care and advice throughout their sentence.

- 3.1.9 Prisoners are provided with respectful and culturally appropriate health care.
- 3.1.10 Holistic health services are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners within a social and emotional wellbeing framework, that encompasses mental and physical health; cultural and spiritual needs, strengthens connection to culture, builds resilience and promotes healing. Where possible, these services are delivered by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander-led organisations or Aboriginal and Torres Strait health care professionals.
- 3.1.11 Identification and access to treatment, education and interventions help minimise harm arising from alcohol and other drug use.
- 3.1.12 Appropriate mental health care is accessible to prisoners with systems in place to refer people with deteriorating or acute mental illness for specialist mental health treatments.
- 3.1.13 Culturally sensitive health services are available and provided to prevent, manage and treat prisoners experiencing episodes of acute mental illness.
- 3.1.14 Health care provided for women in custody is gender appropriate, emphasising underlying determinants of health unique to women including reproductive and sexual health; and facilitating access to counselling services for victims of violence.
- 3.1.15 Culturally appropriate, community equivalent screening processes are in place to support timely identification of prisoners/offenders with disabilities (particularly on or shortly after admission/registration), and facilitated access to support, health and mental health services.
- 3.1.16 Appropriate arrangements are established to provide coordinated support and services to prisoners/offenders with complex mental health or disability throughout their correctional episode and to assist with community reintegration.
- 3.1.17 Health care provided to LGBTIQA+ people in custody is appropriate to their individual needs, with due consideration to the unique needs of transgender and gender diverse prisoners.

3.1.18 Appropriate health care is provided to aged, frail and terminally ill prisoners, including access to palliative care services as clinically determined.

## **3.2 Healthy living**

3.2.1 Prisoners have continual access to clean drinking water.

3.2.2 Prisoners are provided with well presented, sufficient nutritious food that is adequate for adult good health and wellbeing at regular intervals.

3.2.3 Food meets prisoners' cultural, religious and dietary needs, and complies with legislation, security, food handling and storage requirements/standards.

3.2.4 Prisoners are provided with clean clothing, bedding and sanitation facilities appropriate to the climate, to support and maintain personal and group health and ensure decent living conditions in prison.

3.2.5 Prisoners are provided with health promotion and illness prevention education and services that are based on the best available evidence.

3.2.6 Prisoners, staff and visitors have access to smoke free environments.

3.2.7 Correctional services develop practices, programs and interventions that are trauma-informed and strengths-based, supporting prisoners/offenders to build resilience, adapt to stresses and cope with any changes in their circumstances.

3.2.8 Prisoners are provided access to approved personal, grocery and activity items which support their individual needs and wellbeing.

3.2.9 Prisoners are provided opportunities to safely engage in a range of recreational and sporting activities which promote good health and wellbeing.

3.2.10 Activities are available to support expression of, and connection with, culture as an essential part of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.

## Guiding principles

### *Outcome 4: Rehabilitation and reintegration*

*Prisoners and offenders are supported to make positive behaviour change through participation in targeted evidence-based interventions which address their criminogenic and wellbeing needs, providing them with the tools and strategies to lead a life free from offending.*

#### **4.1 Management and planning**

- 4.1.1. Prisoners and offenders are managed in a way that emphasises their continuing part of the community, not their exclusion from it.
- 4.1.2. Integrated end-to-end prisoner/offender case management is supported by effective, consistent and system wide frameworks that ensure accurate assessment, planning, intervention and review.
- 4.1.3. Accurate, timely and evidence-based risk and needs assessments of all prisoners/offenders are undertaken.
- 4.1.4. Case management of prisoners/offenders is holistic and structured. Case planning considers risks and needs and utilises a multidisciplinary approach that encourages positive behaviour change and promotes accountability.
- 4.1.5. Victims are considered to avoid re-victimisation.
- 4.1.6. Interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners/offenders are culturally specific or adapted to cultural needs. They acknowledge the impact of Stolen Generations and incorporate and strengthen connection to culture.
- 4.1.7. Structured and evidence-based interventions aligned to the risk of reoffending, criminogenic needs and responsivity issues enhance rehabilitation and support community safety.
- 4.1.8. Remand prisoners have access to early interventions such as personal development and life skills programs which focus on building resilience.

- 4.1.9. Programs and services are responsive to the particular needs of vulnerable prisoner/offender cohorts, and their development and evaluation is informed by feedback from people with lived/living experience (among other things).
- 4.1.10 Decisions regarding the management of and interventions for prisoners/offenders who present an extreme or unacceptable risk are informed by multiple credible sources and reflect a multidisciplinary approach.
- 4.1.11 Prisoners have access to nationally recognised education programs. Programs are matched to prisoners' educational level and learning needs, and aligned with vocational training that assists them to gain employment post release.
- 4.1.12 Prisoner employment increases future employability, supports the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications and complements educational and vocational training opportunities.
- 4.1.13 Opportunities for employment are provided to all eligible, sentenced, remand and unsentenced prisoners.
- 4.1.14 Monitoring devices are used to enhance case management, increase prisoner/offender accountability and support community safety.

## **4.2 Reintegration planning**

- 4.2.1 All prisoners, including remandees, are provided access to reintegration programs and services to meet their individual needs both prior to and at the time of release.
- 4.2.2 Prisoners are supported to maintain family relationships and links to the community through personal and professional visits, with access to appropriate technology used to enhance opportunities for connection.
- 4.2.3 Prisoners can access relevant staff, external services/agencies, family and community groups to assist in meeting their reintegration needs. Where possible, relationships with external agencies are established during the

prisoner's transition planning to support inter-agency partnership and post-release continuity.

- 4.2.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners are provided with culturally appropriate reintegration and post-release services.
- 4.2.5 Restrictions on movement, such as curfews and home detention, prioritise public safety while preparing offenders for their return to unrestricted independent living.
- 4.2.6 Temporary leave programs are available to eligible prisoners, to support reintegration through continued engagement with family and community and access to education, training and employment opportunities.

### **4.3 Engagement**

- 4.3.1 Prisoners/offenders are supported and encouraged by staff to address their criminogenic needs through active participation in developing case plans, accessing aligned services and participating in programs specific to their risk of reoffending and individual needs.
- 4.3.2 Prisoner/offender engagement with meaningful prosocial activities is supported and encouraged throughout their sentence.
- 4.3.3 Eligible and suitable prisoners/offenders are provided with meaningful opportunities to engage in community work and projects that assist in developing or utilising existing skills necessary to gain employment and contribute to the community.
- 4.3.4 A range of purposeful and meaningful activities are available to all prisoners that promote and motivate good conduct and order.

### **4.4 Partnerships**

- 4.4.1 Public protection and prisoner/offender rehabilitation and reintegration is enhanced through effective partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.
- 4.4.2 Consultation and involvement with the local community promotes public

awareness and supports prisoner/offender participation in community work and projects.

- 4.4.3 Appropriate consultation ensures that correctional industries do not unreasonably impact on other Australian businesses and employment.
- 4.4.4 Meaningful community partnerships are developed and maintained with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, Elders, other respected people and the broader community to support ongoing connection/successful reconnection and reintegration.
- 4.4.5 Collaboration and shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led community organisations underpins the design and delivery of services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners/offenders.
- 4.4.6 Effective collaboration, coordination and engagement with relevant partner agencies support improved outcomes for victims of crime.

## *Outcome 5: Governance and system improvement*

*Correctional practice is governed by a framework of evidence-based, transparent and accountable decision-making that is free from bias. Prisoners and offenders are managed by competent and authorised people in accordance with the law.*

### **5.1 Decision-making and accountability**

- 5.1.1 Informed, impartial, appropriate and timely information is shared with courts, releasing authorities and other relevant stakeholders to support decision-making.
- 5.1.2 Significant changes in prisoners'/offenders' circumstances are communicated to courts, releasing authorities and other relevant stakeholders when sentence outcomes are impacted.
- 5.1.3 Conditions and penalties imposed by courts and releasing authorities are administered consistently.
- 5.1.4 Management systems, policies and procedures are evidence-based, and are informed by human rights principles and operational practice.
- 5.1.5 Relationships are established with key state and federal justice agencies to support and enhance information sharing.
- 5.1.6 Recommendations of relevant Inquiries, Commissions and Inspectorates are considered and implemented in policy and work practices when deemed appropriate.
- 5.1.7 A well-functioning health and safety system provides staff, visitors and prisoners/offenders with protection against harm to their health, safety and wellbeing.
- 5.1.8 Effective systems ensure that information is collected, collated and analysed, and intelligence is disseminated to relevant people in an appropriate and timely manner.

## **5.2 Staff recruitment, training and performance**

- 5.2.1 Correctional services foster diversity in the workforce, striving for a workforce composition that reflects the diversity of prisoners/offenders.
- 5.2.2 Appropriately qualified and trained staff engage with, supervise and manage prisoners/offenders.
- 5.2.3 Staff have access to, and are informed of, current policies and procedures including those which set performance and behavioural expectations.
- 5.2.4 Staff receive ongoing, industry specific training to support effective and consistent service delivery that reflects contemporary best practice.
- 5.2.5 Staff training emphasises person-centred approaches to service delivery, strengthening understanding and equipping staff to respond to the diverse and holistic needs of prisoners/offenders.
- 5.2.6 Correctional workforces are trained and supported to demonstrate cultural competency, with an understanding of the unique context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contact with correctional systems and the historical and ongoing reasons for their overrepresentation.
- 5.2.7 Training programs for privately contracted service providers are approved by the state/territory.
- 5.2.8 Staff are managed within a consistent framework with appropriate support to enhance work practices.

## **5.3 Requests, enquiries and complaints management**

- 5.3.1 Effective systems provide prisoners/offenders with opportunities to make requests or complaints and access appropriate information, with due regard to accessibility requirements.
- 5.3.2 External review and oversight is facilitated through engagement with Official Visitors, custodial inspectorates and integrity agencies, including

their free and unfettered access to all prisoners, staff and all areas of the prison, subject to any compelling security and operational concerns.

- 5.3.3 Complaints are promptly actioned and governed by a review framework that is fair, transparent and equitable.

#### **5.4 Operational performance**

- 5.4.1 Operational transparency supports effective oversight and builds community confidence in correctional practices.
- 5.4.2 All performance and inspection records are managed and maintained appropriately, to increase operational transparency without compromising security or personal privacy.
- 5.4.3 Independent inspections and investigations are welcomed, encouraged and facilitated, with recommendations and findings considered to improve policy and practice.
- 5.4.4 Operational performance (qualitative and quantitative) is monitored and reported against established standards and policy within an outcomes-focused, continuous improvement framework.
- 5.4.5 Authorised and ethical use of prisoner/offender data supports evidence-based decision-making and trend analysis to inform system planning.
- 5.4.6 Data-driven approaches are used to monitor the impact of correctional services, with due examination of differential outcomes among different prisoner/offender demographics to safeguard against systemic discrimination.
- 5.4.7 System improvement efforts are informed by feedback from impacted user groups, including staff and people with lived/living experience of correctional service systems.
- 5.4.8 Privately contracted correctional services are bound by the operating standards of the state/territory.

- 5.4.9 Timely and independent reviews are undertaken in response to critical incidents, serious injury or loss of life, with findings reported to relevant authorities and available mitigation or preventive measures promptly taken.

## **5.5 Records management**

- 5.5.1 Comprehensive and contemporary information is recorded to support appropriate assessment and continued management of prisoners/offenders.
- 5.5.2 Records of sentence details, administration and personal information are maintained, used for legitimate purposes and secured from unauthorised access and use.
- 5.5.3 Prisoner/offender information is only released where there is a lawful purpose or a duty of care prevails.
- 5.5.4 The exchange of prisoner/offender information occurs within a clear governance framework that supports the management of any risks to public safety and acknowledges the individual's right to privacy.
- 5.5.5 Personal information held by correctional services (including information concerning staff and prisoners/offenders) is stored securely and access is managed in accordance with legislation and privacy principles.
- 5.5.6 Records of staff misconduct and associated evidence are maintained to support decision-making.

## Document history



**1978**

The first edition of the *Minimum Standard Guidelines for Australian Prisons* ('the Guidelines') published.

**1986**

Community-based corrections incorporated and the Guidelines expanded to the *Minimum Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia and New Zealand*.

**2012**

Re-titled to the *Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia*. This revision reflected changes arising from: exponential growth in prisoner numbers, the introduction of contracted correctional services, the re-appraisal of evidence-based offender behaviour programs; an increased focus on throughcare, the introduction of services for victims, an increased focus on offender reparation and prisoner escorts.

**2025**

The Principles are revised and contemporised to ensure they continue to assist jurisdictions to develop policies and procedures that reflect leading correctional practice.

**1984**

The Guidelines are revised by the Australian Institute of Criminology.

**1992**

The revision of the Guidelines considers the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

**2018**

The Guidelines are re-branded to the *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia* ('the Principles') to reflect its purpose as a national statement of intent and a foundation for the development of agency specific policies, procedures and standards.

The Guidelines are reframed as core outcome-focused principles, beyond minimum standards, to encourage each agency to strive to achieve best practice that is fit for purpose in each environment.

## Key terms

Term	Definition
At-risk prisoner	Prisoners/offenders at-risk of suicide/self-harm.
Case management	Collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy to meet prisoners/offenders criminogenic and wellbeing needs.
Children residing in custody	Children approved by the state/territory to reside (full or part time) with a prisoner identified as their primary caregiver, in a custodial environment.
Community Corrections	The management and supervision of offenders in the community. These offenders are serving court imposed orders either as an alternative to imprisonment or as a condition of their release from prison.
Community partnerships	Relationships between community groups, charitable, non-profit educational institutions, and state, federal and local government agencies.
Curfew	An official order to restrict the movement of prisoners/offenders in periods where they are subject to temporary release, serving a custodial sentence or extended supervision order, in the community and/or if there is a high risk of reoffending.
Disability	People with disability include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Dynamic security	Regular and consistent interaction between prisoners/offenders and staff and timely analysis of information and sharing through observations and communication (e.g. rapport building, training, networking, intelligence gathering and strategic analysis).

Elder	A highly respected person in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
End-to-end	The coordinated and integrated approach to the management of people who are the responsibility of correctional services from their first point of contact with the agency to the completion of their legal order, including their reintegration into the community.
Extreme/unacceptable risk prisoner/offender	A prisoner/offender posing a risk of engaging in, or inciting others to engage in, activities that constitute a serious threat to the peace, order or good government of the State or any other place.
Gender diverse	An umbrella term used to describe gender identities that demonstrate a diversity of expression beyond the male/female binary.
Health services	Services that provide health and mental health care to prisoners.
Home detention	Any order allowing suitable offenders to serve a custodial sentence in the community by way of restricting their movements within the precincts of a specified residence during specified hours; and permitting absences from those precincts only during specified/nominated periods for specified/approved purposes.
Intersex	People born with physical sex characteristics that do not fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies.
Intervention	Any activity an offender is undertaking to address their criminogenic needs.
LGBTIQA+	An inclusive umbrella abbreviation to encompass a range of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer and questioning, Asexual and other sexually or gender diverse.
Methods of restraint	Approved methods and techniques of physical intervention used to contain a

	person's behaviour.
Monitoring device	Any active or passive electronic system using a device, fitted to the person, for signalling the compliance and/or movements of the prisoner/offender.
Offender	A person on whom the court or releasing authority has imposed a community-based order.
Official Visitor	Person appointed by a relevant authority who is independent to correctional services that can assist facilitate issues related to prisoners and the effective management of a prison.
Prison	Any building, enclosure or place legally declared to be a correctional centre for the lawful custody of people committed by lawful authority.
Prisoner	A person sentenced by the court to a term of imprisonment; or ordered by the court to be detained in a correctional centre/prison. This includes people on remand and people placed in the custody of the Administering Department in accordance with a lawful order for the purpose of undertaking specific programs while under restrictive custody.
Privately contracted services	Independent person, organisation or business that provides correctional services under the terms specified in a contract or agreement (such as not-for-profit, external service providers, 'in house' contestants or other service providers).
Radicalisation	The process by which an individual's beliefs move from the relatively mainstream to calling for a drastic change in society. It does not necessarily mean a willingness to use violence to realise those beliefs, noting that some individuals come to believe that violence is justified to achieve ideological, political or social change.
Remandee	A person who is alleged to have committed an offence who is held in custody by a court who has not applied for bail; has been refused bail; cannot meet bail or provide a surety or is unwilling to meet the conditions

	set out by the court.
Resilience	An individual's ability to adapt to life tasks in the face of social disadvantage or other highly adverse conditions.
Sanction	Penalty for disobeying a law or rule.
Segregation/Separation	Separate confinement of a prisoner deemed necessary following evidence-based assessments for the protection and safety of others where there is no other reasonable way to manage the risk/s to safety, security, or good order and discipline of the correctional centre.
Social and emotional care needs	Those needs directly related to the wellbeing of prisoners/offenders.
Staff/Workforce	Any person(s), other than a prisoner/offender, who regularly performs any work, activity or function either paid or unpaid on behalf of the Agency or its contracted service provider.
Substantive equality	Recognises that policies and practices put in place to suit the majority of people may appear to be non-discriminatory but may not address the specific needs of certain groups of people. In effect they may be indirectly discriminatory, creating systemic discrimination.
Temporary leave	Lawful escorted temporary absence, unescorted temporary absence or absence subject to a work release authority from a correctional centre.
Transgender	A person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth.
Unsentenced	A person who has been convicted with a sentence yet to be imposed by a court/authority.
Victim	A person who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage, or economic loss as a result of a crime.
Violent extremism	A person's support for, and act of, violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals.

Revised 2025

This includes terrorism, other forms of politically motivated violence and some forms of communal violence.