To study culturally relevant and responsive programs and engagement practices for Indigenous prisoners and offenders, and to investigate:

(i) the appropriateness of existing programs in alternative correctional and Indigenous community environments;
(ii) options to modify / adapt these programs toward the cultural needs of Indigenous prisoners and offenders;
(iii) the process of engagement of prisoners and offenders and community in meaningful and effective participation; and
(iv) practices that promote an environment of healing.

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication.

I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on a website for access over the internet.

I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which may in this Report, be deemed actionable for defamation, a breach of privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed by:  Marie Anne Murfet

Dated:  27 July 2009
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INTRODUCTION

It is well documented that colonisation in Australia and its consequences - the dispossession from land and culture and forcible removal of generations of Aboriginal children from their families and communities, have had a disastrous impact on the overall wellbeing, community and family function. It is also well documented that Aboriginal people in Australia are among the most socially and economically disadvantaged members of society. Aboriginal people continue to experience systemic racism, high rates of unemployment, high levels of mental health problems, alcoholism and increasing substance abuse. Apart from their collective experience of general social disadvantage, Aboriginal people in Australia are also disadvantaged by their disproportionately high rates of contact with the criminal justice system and imprisonment.

In 1991, the report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody highlighted the significant over-representation of Aboriginal people in Australian prisons. The 1994 Report of the Inquiry into the Implementation by Governments of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody - entitled "Justice under Scrutiny" - showed how difficult an issue Aboriginal imprisonment is for government bodies in Australia to solve.

It is for this reason, and many others, that I wanted to determine whether there was anything ‘out there’ that was working, or having some success in cutting down imprisonment rates and reducing recidivism. Did I need to look at Aboriginal specific programs, or would mainstream programs prove to be more effective? Could those options or programs be culturally and sensitively adapted to suit the corrections environment and Aboriginal prisoners in Victoria? Was it possible to find a program that would adequately address, or at least provide a basis for healing Aboriginal issues as a whole-of-life issue while in prison?

Between April 2009 and June 2009, I travelled to New Zealand, the United States and Canada to investigate:

(i) the appropriateness of existing programs in alternative correctional and Indigenous community environments;
(ii) options to modify / adapt these programs toward the cultural needs of Indigenous prisoners and offenders;
(iii) the process of engagement of prisoners and offenders and community in meaningful and effective participation; and
(iv) practices that promote an environment of healing.

My invaluable learnings and this journey could not have been made possible without the support and commitment of many, and I would like to acknowledge:

- The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the Victorian Regional Committee.
- The Executive Management Team, my peers and colleagues at Corrections Victoria.
- The Referees for my submission, Ms. Sheree Drever and Mrs. Annette Vickery, both of whom were generous with their expressions of support for the project and my ability, personally and professionally, to take it on.
- The staff and volunteers from the various correctional jurisdictions and community agencies who gave their time freely, treated me with dignity and respect and shared their astonishing knowledge and resources without hesitation. A full list of agencies and individuals visited is listed on pages 34 - 37 of this Report.
- To each and every prisoner and offender who allowed me to sit in on their reviews, assessments and community programs, I thank you for your courage and confidence to share your stories.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Project: To study culturally relevant and responsive programs and engagement practices for Indigenous prisoners and offenders, and to investigate:

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Highlights

When I returned to work, I was asked “What was the highlight of your trip?”. I had to respond “The whole journey!”. Yes, the reality is the whole journey was an unforgettable experience and it was a little hard to isolate the many highlights for the purposes of this report, but decided to settle on the following:

- observing the ‘can do’ attitude of volunteers and paid staff, both in community and custodial environments;
- participating in, and being a recipient of, traditional customs and practices and observing how they are managed within secure environments;
- hands on learning about effective partnerships between the extensive, welcomed and necessary volunteer supports, community agencies and government; and
- observing and participating in the various deterrent programs, faith based, vocational, educational and wrap around rehabilitation and re-entry programs that target prisoners, offenders and their families, where instructors and teachers really did strive to protect, prepare, sustain and support participants.

Major Lessons and Conclusions

Acknowledge and appreciate:

- The crucial role industries, education, employment and vocational training play in the successful rehabilitation of prisoners - that prisoners are less likely to re-offend if they have appropriate skills and trades.
- The importance of customising education and employment programs to meet the individual and cultural needs of prisoners and offenders.
- The fundamental role of volunteers as an essential and significant part of the correctional system. They enhance the quality, diversity and quantity of programs, they support the re-integration of prisoners into community and they inform community’s understanding of correctional issues.
- The benefits when justice services are delivered in partnership with non-government agencies, particularly where the agency has an established social mandate to provide services to clients of the judicial system and other custodial and supervising agencies.
Information contained in this report will be disseminated to the following (with a focus on the major lessons and conclusions):

- Corrections Victoria.
- Koori Justice Units, Victoria’s Department of Justice.
- The Aboriginal Justice Forum (Victoria).
- Community Stakeholder Groups.
- Correctional jurisdictions across Australia.
- Correctional jurisdictions and agencies across New Zealand, the United States and Canada.
- Prison Supervisors’ Conference (July 2009).
SUMMARY OF JURISDICTIONS and PROGRAMS

Department of Corrections - Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand

The New Zealand Department of Corrections enforces the sentences and orders of the criminal courts and parole board. Corrections improves public safety by ensuring sentence compliance and works to reduce re-offending by providing offenders with rehabilitation programs, education and job training.

My time in New Zealand started with meetings with staff from the Department’s Maori and Pacific Policy, Strategy and Research team, Maori Rehabilitation Unit and Maori Service Development in Community Probation and Psychological Services. I had the opportunity, as Manager of Corrections Victoria’s Indigenous Policy and Services Unit, to discuss the operations and initiatives core to our respective business units.

The Department’s Maori Strategic Plan 2008 - 2013 highlights “…We all have an important role in keeping the public safe through our work in ensuring sentence compliance and reducing re-offending, particularly for Maori offenders…” and is committed to this Plan through a number of initiatives.

The Tikanga Maori Program (TMP) is one such initiative. This program aims to -

- put offenders back on the right track by teaching them more about their Maori identity
- equip participants with a willingness and motivation to address their rehabilitation, specifically focusing on their offending behaviour
- regenerate an awareness of genealogy (whakapapa), customs (tikanga) and family structures (whanaungatanga).

TMPs are available to all male and female prisoners who identify as Maori and who have been sentenced to supervision, intensive supervision, home detention, release on conditions, parole, community work with basic work and living skills approval, or a term of imprisonment.

TMPs are delivered across New Zealand by Maori for Maori, in prisons and in the community through locally based Marae, in partnership with the Department of Corrections. TMPs underpin all other programs, for example the Cognitive Intervention Program, provided by the Department of Corrections for Maori prisoners and offenders, and is very well supported by both community and staff.

Another of the initiatives are the Maori Focus Units. I visited two Maori Focus Units while in New Zealand.

The first Unit was at Rimutaka Prison, on the outskirts of Wellington. I was greeted with a traditional Powhiri (a formal greeting) involving a Haka by the Maori male prisoners and Karanga (female call of welcome by the senior woman of the Orongamai Marae - the local community). This ceremony was overseen by the Kaumatua (Elder) of the Orongamai Marae, Mr. Tamati Kaiwai.

As part of the ceremony a gift (a bone carving) was laid down for me and accepted by my Maori guide on my behalf. Bone carving is one of the traditional activities and bone from the local butcher store is brought in on a regular basis for this activity.

The second Unit was at Spring Hill Corrections Facility, just south of Auckland. Again I was welcomed into the Wharenui (prison based Marae or cultural centre) with a Karanga and Haka. I observed the graduation of Maori male prisoners from the Tikanga Maori Program before being invited to share lunch with participants, facilitators, staff, tutors and family of the participants. Upon receiving their certificates the graduates were able to say a few words, for some this was the first time they had spoken in a public forum and more particularly, shared their feelings publicly and with their families. It was a humbling
experience to witness the sense of achievement. Following lunch, I was provided the opportunity, as special guest, to introduce myself and speak (then answer many questions) on the purpose of my visit, my family and my work in Corrections Victoria.

- Maori Focus Units (MFUs) -
  - reduce the risk of re-offending by helping Maori prisoners to understand and value their Maori culture and its evolution
  - assist the offender to understand how their Maori culture influences them, their families and communities
  - motivates them to change their behaviours with the support of other intervention programs provided by the Department of Corrections
  - supports staff and prisoners working together to learn and apply the principles of Tikanga Maori to thoughts, beliefs and actions within a therapeutic community in a custodial environment
  - are open to Maori and non-Maori prisoners who must have completed a Tikanga Maori Program and have a security status of minimum or low medium before applying to transfer to an MFU.

Other initiatives I had the opportunity to observe or learn about included:

- Self-Care Units -
  Provide specialist support to increase prisoner’s self-responsibility and preparation for independent living.

- Maori Therapeutic Program (MTP) -
  A rehabilitation program tailored specifically for Maori male high-risk prisoners based on cognitive behavioural therapy integrated with Tikanga Maori.

- Reintegration teams including Social Workers and Whanau (family) Liaison Workers -
  Support a seamless approach to the rehabilitation of all Maori prisoners and their re-integration back into family and community.

- Kaumatua (Maori Elders) Program -
  Gives greater access to Maori prisoners. Referrals for Maori to access the program can be made by Maori Area Advisers, prison staff or through the prisoners themselves.

- Specialist Maori Cultural Assessment (SMCA) -
  A motivational assessment process that identifies the cultural needs and strengths of Maori prisoners. SMCA is undertaken by independently contracted Maori assessors, who have received appropriate facilitation training, provide in-depth cultural information about Maori prisoners with the intention to effectively match their cultural needs to appropriate Maori interventions.

- Recruitment campaigns targeted specifically at Maori communities to attract Maori staff.

- A Maori mentoring program -
  Focusing on non-managerial Maori staff being mentored by internal Maori managers to raise Maori leadership capability.

- Kowhiritanga Program for Women -
  A program based on cognitive behavioural / therapy prevention principles alongside forms of Maori and bi-cultural therapy.
• Kaiwhakahaere assists Probation Officers to -
  • use culturally-appropriate ways to facilitate, engage and develop positive working relations with the offender and their whanau (family)
  • actively involve whanau support to assist the offender to complete their sentence
  • influence decisions of the Parole Board, particularly around assessment of family capacity to support the compliance of parole conditions in a post release environment.

• Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit -
  • employs the core cognitive behavioural / social learning theory as well as an environment within a Tikanga Maori framework
  • offers a wide range of restorative activities to increase the responsivity of Maori offenders (eg: music, song, genealogy and carving)
  • provides a full-time cultural consultant who has the responsibility of delivering, reinforcing and maintaining the specific cultural aspects of the program.

I spent an afternoon at this Unit (north of Auckland), joined by Kaiwhakahaere Natalia and Tara from the Maori Services Team in that region. We met with participants, visited the wood carving centre and were entertained with an impromptu concert provided by Maori participants in the music program.

The Department also has the Pacific Strategy 2008 - 2013 that confirms “...The Department’s previous two Pacific Strategies have resulted in a range of programs and services aimed at reducing re-offending by Pacific peoples...” and is committed to this Strategy through a number of initiatives, including a:

• Pacific Focus Unit -
  • assists participants to understand and value their cultural processes and concepts
  • participants are actively involved in learning, engaging and role modelling pro-social behaviour based on Pacific values and beliefs and the importance of family and relationships to successful reintegration
  • supports staff and prisoners working together to learn and apply Pacific values and beliefs
  • are open only to Pacific male prisoners.

I had the opportunity to visit the Pacific Focus Unit at Spring Hill Corrections Facility. Here I was welcomed with beautiful songs and traditional dance in the Fale (cultural centre) and was again provided with the opportunity, as special guest, to introduce myself, talk a little on the purpose of my visit, my family and my work in Corrections Victoria. This welcome ceremony was followed by a tour of the Unit and general discussion with the Pacific prisoners.

Embedded in the Pacific Strategy Guiding Principles is the opportunity for Pacific communities to assist the Department of Corrections in the design and delivery of programs that support the effective reintegration of Pacific prisoners back into family and community. This dedicated Unit, the only one to date in the New Zealand prison system, and Fale is tangible evidence of this partnership.

Through the cultural performances, statements and stories shared with me, it was evident that the culturally specific Units instil a sense of belonging and sense of pride as both Maori and Pacific prisoners work to understand their customs and traditions and how they fit into their community and family as leaders and providers. They are encouraged and supported, through their communities and teachings, to aspire for a future outside of prison.
Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Huntsville, Texas, USA

The mission of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is to provide public safety, promote positive change in offender behaviour, re-integrate prisoners into society and assist victims of crime.

The TDCJ manages approximately 176,000 prisoners in the 116 state prisons and private correctional facilities that contract with TDCJ across Texas. The Department also provides funding, oversees community supervision and is responsible for the supervision of offenders released from prison on parole or mandatory supervision.

Dependant upon the security classification, all prisoners must work. They are not paid. TDCJ policy when assigning jobs is to try to match a prisoner’s skill and experience with a job that will enhance his / her rehabilitative needs, without compromising security. Industries produce stainless steel products, garments, mattresses, cardboard boxes, furniture, shoes, highway signs, number plates and much, much more. Goods and resources produced by the prisoners are for use within the prison system and other State agencies.

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in or observe a range of programs and operations undertaken in the TDCJ during my time in Texas. Some of the prisoner programs for developing life and parenting skills, work readiness capabilities and employment and industry competencies are outlined below:

- **The Wynne Computer Recovery Unit** - This Unit houses all forms of computers printers and associated equipment collected from various government agencies across the State. Prisoners assigned to industries and the Computer Recovery Unit work towards various certificates and accreditations to support sustainable employment upon release. For example, in relation to this program, Microsoft assess the level of competencies of prisoners assigned against first, second or third tiered computer programmers, technicians, etc.

- **Prison Deterrence Education and Life Decisions Programs** - These programs are designed to allow qualified prisoners to travel throughout Texas to inform, educate and advise the public, specifically young adults, about the negative consequences of poor decisions involving drugs, alcohol, crime and gangs in an attempt to deter them from prison.

  ‘Shattered Dreams’ is one such program and provides an awareness and insight into the long-term trauma and grief of everyone touched by fatalities caused by drink driving. The first part of the program is a re-enactment of a car accident, where drink driving is the cause of the accident and fatalities. State agencies including Police, Fire and Ambulance work with schools and volunteer students to host the re-enactment. Real vehicles, jaws of life, etc. are used as part of the program.

  The accident re-enactment scene is followed by an assembly of students, parents and teachers where ‘letters and eulogies’ are read out from teenagers (the fatalities who have not had a chance to say goodbye to their families), parents of victims and parents of the teenage driver.

  As part of the program, a prisoner under escort from one of the prisons (who has been incarcerated for intoxicated manslaughter and who has been invited by a school) to speak on his life. The prisoner talks about getting behind the wheel of a car, drinking and driving, his family, the friends that he loved and trusted, but more importantly that loved and trusted him enough to get into the vehicle with him. He also talks about his feelings on knowing that he is responsible for their death, his plans for the future and his pledge to make a meaningful contribution to community on his release.
• **Cognitive Intervention Program** -
  The curriculum of this program is designed to help prisoners overcome criminal thinking and behaviour. The curriculum is based on research regarding the effectiveness of various programs designed to reduce recidivism through cognitive restructuring and cognitive skill development. Cognitive restructuring helps participants examine and change the thinking that leads to criminal behaviour. Cognitive skill development is necessary to help participants learn more appropriate thinking skills in order to reduce anger and anxiety and increase communication and problem solving abilities.

  Prisoners are introduced to concepts that provide them with the tools necessary to change behaviours that have caused problems for them in the past and allows them to make informed decisions for the future (without trespassing on the rights of others).

• **Women’s Storybook Project of Texas** -
  The purpose of this program is to keep relationships between mothers in prison and their children strong. This program allows mothers, who have children under the age of 12, to read a story and record it for their children. The child receives a copy of the audiotape along with the book each month.

• **Making Peace with your Past** -
  This program helps female prisoners to understand dysfunctional family issues and feelings associated with those experiences and then to begin the task of working through those emotions to bring about healing and forgiveness.

• **Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP)** -
  Many offenders come to prison as seasoned entrepreneurs, having run highly successful enterprises, albeit illegally. Even the most unsophisticated drug dealer inherently understands business concepts such as competition, profitability and risk.

  PEP was the first entrepreneurship program of its type targeted at prisoners / ex-prisoners. Its leadership in implementing this groundbreaking program has received international media coverage.

  The prisoners receive a top-tier business education with key initiatives of this program including:
  - in-prison business plan competition
  - re-integration services, including work readiness
  - business development, including executive mentoring.

  A member of PEP staff works solely on job placement for recent parolees with a staggering 98% of the graduates having found work of some kind within one month of their release. Applications from prisoners to this program endure an intense process and, if approved, TDCJ transfers them (from approximately 60 prison facilities across Texas) to a facility that runs the program.

  Ex-prisoners who have graduated from this program return to the prison as an employee of PEP to facilitate and support the recruitment and enrolment processes as well as train and provide peer support to new participants.

  Additionally, the PEP Families Program connects, informs, encourages and provides hope to family and friends of those enrolled in the program. This connection to family and friends not only helps the offenders stick with the program while they are in prison, but also helps smooth their transition back into the community.
Windham School District - Huntsville, Texas, USA

Windham School District (WSD) was the first school system of its kind to be established within a state-wide prison system, to provide adult education in Texas prison units. WSD is an entity in its own right, separate and distinct from TDCJ and is one of the largest correctional education systems in the nation, providing education programs and services in schools located in 90 of the 116 TDCJ facilities.

WSD programs and services are designed to:
- meet the unique needs of adult prisoners and offenders
- address the legislative mandated goals of reducing recidivism
- reduce the cost of confinement
- promote positive behaviour during confinement
- increase the prisoners’ success in obtaining and maintaining employment.

All programs offered by WSD are delivered by trained teachers, who have usually moved from the state or private education system, or who may have returned to the workforce after retirement. Some of the programs offered are outlined below.

- **Project Re-Integration of Offenders (Project RIO) within TDCJ**
  - provides prisoners with the opportunity to acquire workforce skills that address the needs of Texas employers and lead Project RIO participants to employment and job retention upon their release
  - is an interagency employment program initiative that coordinates services provided by TDCJ and the Texas Workforce Commission through 28 local Boards that operate the Workforce Centres (located across Texas)
  - provides a link between TDCJ prisoners training, job assignments, programs and services received during incarceration and job placement, employment or further training after release
  - provides for a self study guide for prisoners to assist in preparing for a successful release
  - provides practical tips on selecting a place to live, obtaining employment documents and birth certificates, getting a driver’s licence and developing effective job search plans.

  The prisoner must be willing to work on assigned tasks that relieve barriers for employment and any requirements outstanding on their Individualised Treatment Plan (ITP).

- **Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES II) Program**
  provides prisoners the opportunity to develop the basic life skills and social values needed for successful re-integration through -
  - learning to recognise and change the thoughts and feelings that motivate their destructive actions
  - learning to accept full responsibility for their life - past, present and future - and to stop blaming others
  - learning to accept that change is a choice and choices determine the quality of life.

  The curriculum in CHANGES II covers seven units:
  - personal development
  - healthy relationships
  - living responsibly
  - drug education
  - living well
  - putting together a new start
  - going home.
Career and Technology Education (CTE) courses are based on -
- authentic, technological work-related environment
- rigorous curriculum based on industry standards
- Industry-certified teachers who have up to date knowledge of current industry practices
- WSD certificate of completion and options to earn industry recognised occupational certificates or licenses
- integration of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills workplace competencies throughout the curriculum.

The core, or main basis for CTE programs is industry standards. Industry standards and performance specifications dictated by industry that identifies the knowledge, skills and competencies an individual needs to succeed in the workplace.

WSD offers CTE training in approximately 30 different occupational fields to offenders in the TDCJ. The curriculum for each field is competency based and designed for student participation on an open-entry, open-exit basis. Upon successful completion of a CTE course, the student is awarded a WSD certificate of completion and may have the opportunity to earn industry-endorsed certification.

Marie Murfet talking with prisoners at the Wynne Unit who are undertaking the computer based literacy and numeracy education program in readiness to sit their General Education Development Diploma (equal to the Victorian Education System’s Year 12 Certificate)

Prisoners in the CTE Diesel Mechanics course at the Wynne Unit
A prisoner in the CTE Welding course at the Wynne Unit

Mr. Bob Evans, Director, Windham School District at the site of the CTE Commercial Truck Driving School at the Wynne Unit

Prisoners use remote controlled trucks and driving simulators as part of the training in the CTE Commercial Truck Driving course
Department of Corrections - Colorado Springs and Denver, Colorado

My visit to Colorado included:

• a visit to the Denver Women’s Correctional Facility where I was given a tour and observed in-program / industries
• a meeting with staff from the Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and Youth Offender Services (YOS) programs in Denver in relation to its Partnerships for Change programs - Pre-Release Program and Community Re-Entry
• days spent with ComCor, Inc., in Colorado Springs - a not-for-profit community corrections agency that provides residential and non-residential services, programs and opportunities for clients to successfully re-integrate back into the community
• meeting with staff from the Department’s Faith and Citizen Programs, particularly in relation to the recruitment and training of volunteers to enhance facility programs and to fill offender and agency needs.

The Denver Women’s Correctional Facility

The Denver Women’s Correctional Facility (DWCF) offers re-integration programs to female prisoners to assist with re-integration into the community. These include education, career and technical and therapeutic programs that provide a basis for lasting changes through accountability, treatment, education and self-improvement to support successful re-entry into the community.

The goal of the DWCF Educational Services is to ensure that every prisoner who leaves the Colorado Penal System:

• reaches the highest academic achievement level possible, preferably obtaining the General Education Development Diploma
• has the vocational skills needed to obtain employment upon release.

Two of the programs I visited are outlined below.

• K9 Companion Program -

  DWCF takes in cast away dogs from shelters and rescue programs and trains them to be a part of an adoption program. As this program is intended to be self-funding, there is a fee for service to community who purchase dogs from the adoption program. The boarding-in training is also provided for families in the community who are unable to train their own dogs and there is a cost to the family associated with this 4 week training program. At the time of my visit there were 24 dogs ‘in residence’. The women were only too pleased to show off their handling skills. Probably the most significant anecdotal theme to come from this program was the statement by a prisoner to me: “I did not think I could feel and care so much for something again”.

  Prisoners who are accepted into this program become ‘handlers’ and can work towards accreditation in Animal Welfare and associated disciplines through the Canine Behaviour Modification Certificate course. This course encompasses the Beginner Training Certificate, Intermediate Training Certificate, Master Trainer Certificate and Dog Handler Assistant Certificate.

  The course curriculum covers -

  • introduction to program - basic “dog manners” training, housebreaking, socialization, communication, rehabilitation and living with a dog 24 hours per day in the facility
  • alphanamship - covers the basic key to obedience training, which is being the alpha in the dog’s life without doing anything drastic
  • training fundamentals and theory
  • obedience
animal rescue vet care
cooperative work experience
testing and evaluation
counselling with dog owners - regarding the challenges and rewards of counselling with the dog owning public (telephone and live counselling techniques are included)
dog training business - how to start a business, keeping overhead costs down, marketing and presenting yourself well to the public.

• The Cosmetology course where the prisoners work to complete accreditation in hair styling, hair colour, manicures / pedicures etc. Other female prisoners are the clients and have to book in their appointments at the ‘salon’.

The course curriculum covers -
- sterilisation, sanitation and safety
- disinfection, sanitation and safety
- laws, rules and regulations
- management, ethics, interpersonal skills and salesmanship
- shampooing / rinsing / conditioning
- hair cutting / styling / colouring
- chemical texture
- manicures and pedicures
- application of artificial nails
- facial makeup
- hair removal
- introduction to facials and skin care
- advanced massage and skin care.

Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and Youth Offender Services (YOS)

I met with staff from this Division in relation to the following two programs. The information obtained, observations in a community meeting and discussion with prisoners and offenders confirms the partnership and intent of the programs to effectively apply the principals of intervention and a continuum of transitional services that cross over from the inside to the outside. The programs were -

• Pre-Release Program -
A partnership for change with the Department of Corrections and the Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and YOS. The program has been endorsed by the National Institute of Corrections and Johns Hopkins University and targets known barriers to successful community re-integration.

The program curriculum utilises a ten module delivery approach designed to increase awareness, self-sufficiency, networks of support and action around critical re-entry components, for example: housing, identification, transport, money management, etc.

• Community Re-Entry Program -
This program provides brokered services through state and federal agency partnerships and faith and community based partnerships.

Offenders are required to attend a re-entry / parole orientation the morning after their release and are provided comprehensive and practical re-entry strategies and information, as well as an opportunity to identify, review and discuss how they will maintain a balanced approach to successfully remaining out of prison.
Offenders are also provided with a gender specific backpack that contains essential toiletries, diary, pen, padlock, vouchers (food and travel) and other essential information, for example, cheap clothing, social security, etc.

Statements to me from offenders following this session include -

- “My first day out and I’m glad I could come here”.
- “Last night I had a mat on a floor and nothing else, now I have this stuff”.
- “I have a grocery list from my mum to fill from the voucher and feel good about taking food home and helping out”.

**Faith and Citizen Programs**

I also had the opportunity to spend time with the Manager of the Department of Corrections Faith and Citizen Programs in relation to community involvement in programs as volunteers. The importance of securing citizen involvement in agency programs, including service as advisors, interpreters and similar direct program / service roles is evident in the Policy and guidelines the Department has in place that govern the recruitment, training, selection, orientation, training and supervision of volunteers.

Through Faith and Citizens Programs, Sweat Lodges and cleansing smoking ceremonies are sanctioned in minimum security facilities throughout Colorado for the Native American population. As prisons in Colorado are tobacco free, this programs area works with Elders in the community to ensure that the traditional herbs / tobacco mix are provided for this process. Interesting to note, however, is that not all of this population participate for a number of reasons that include:

- some of the Native American prison population do not identify with the culture; and
- others see ‘cleansing’ in a prison environment anathema to their cultural beliefs and practices.
Comcor, Inc. - Colorado Springs, Colorado

ComCor, Inc. is a not-for-profit Community Corrections agency that embodies the original idea of the halfway house with community protection, client accountability and the opportunity to work and contribute to society while concurrently meeting the mandates of the courts and those of supervising agencies. For me, from my time with staff and clients and observations of the operations of this agency, it models ‘best practice’ when addressing overall one-stop-transition needs.

ComCor, Inc. -
• provides residential and non-residential services, programs and opportunities for clients to successfully re-integrate back into the community
• is an integral part of the criminal justice system
• owns five residential transitional and / or diversion facilities: two female, two male (including a sex offender secure unit) and a diner that provides a hot breakfast, packed lunch and hot evening meal to residences
• provides information and support to referring agencies so that good decisions can be made regarding the type and intensity of supervision best suited for an individual offender
• its many treatment / vocational / educational services, combined with its correctional model are individually tailored to meet offender needs
• is accredited by the American Correctional Association.

The programs and services available at ComCor, Inc. include:

• **Diversion** - provides correctional and treatment services for offenders who are sentenced by the Courts to serve a community corrections sentence.

• **Transition** - provides correctional and treatment services for prisoners in the State who have served a prison sentence and who are eligible to be placed in a community corrections program **prior** to being placed on parole.

• **Condition of Parole** - provides correctional and treatment services for parolees who, as a condition of their release have been referred to a community corrections placement prior to the expiration of their sentence or who have violated the terms of their parole (rather than being sent back to prison).

• **Work Release** - operates under a contract with the Courts and through contracts with individual clients to provide an opportunity for a limited number of offenders to serve traditional work release sentences at ComCor facilities.

• **Non-Residential Programs** - offer technology that provides solutions for jail alternatives and substance abuse monitoring for offenders who live in the community, for example, Home Detention; 24/7 Accountability (GPS tracking); 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Monitoring; PassPoint Drug Screening.

• **Mental Health Aftercare service** - a short term voluntary program available to both ComCor clients and clients who may be referred directly to the service from the Courts, probation or parole.

• **Vocational and Educational services** - that include the General Education Development Diploma, job coaching, job searching and job readiness skills, life skills and money management.
The Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex

The Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (CBCX) site is the reception, classification and diagnostic centre for male prisoners committed from the Middle Tennessee area. I toured both the main site and the Annex site.

The Annex site houses minimum custody prisoners who are within five years of release with an emphasis on community re-integration. The Genesis Transition Program, a 90-bed therapeutic community program offered at the Annex, follows a model that promotes awareness, responsibility and accountability and it was here that I had the opportunity to sit with the Genesis Assessment Team to assess a prisoner’s application to progress from phase two to phase three.

The program is a three phase structured work release program where prisoners undergo treatment interventions designed to assist in developing pro-social behaviours, develop an understanding of the impact of criminal behaviour on victims, develop employment readiness skills and assist in establishing positive re-entry goals. Prisoners can apply, or may be mandated by the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole to participate. Once applications are screened and approved against the criteria for eligibility, prisoners are relocated from other facilities across the State.

Worth noting are the statistics that 70% of participants who complete the Genesis program are less likely to re-offend.

Riverbend Maximum Security Institution

In addition to housing the majority of Tennessee’s male death row prisoners, Riverbend Maximum Security Institution (RMSI) is also home to approximately 600 maximum and medium security prisoners. The overall mission of this facility is to house and manage high-risk male offenders, including those sentenced to death, to ensure the safety of the public, employees and prisoners while providing rehabilitative programs.

Education programs at the prison include General Education Development Diploma and Adult Basic Education. There are also vocational classes available for printing, commercial cleaning, residential
construction, cabinet making / millwork and computer information systems. Prisoners not involved in academic vocation, or industry programs are required to work in support service roles throughout the facility, for example, in the laundry and kitchen.

I visited this facility a number of times during my stay in Tennessee, commencing with a tour of the site and a visit with a group of men on death row. On this occasion I visited with Mr. Jim Boyd and Mrs. Helen Cox, both long-term volunteers and regular visitors to this facility.

The other visits were to a group of prisoners participating in ‘Project: New Beginning’. The project curriculum has been developed by prisoners for prisoners and designed for emotional, mental and spiritual renewal. Consisting of eight information filled sections, the project is delivered over a 30 week period. The topics covered include modus operandi, modus vivendi, operating image, community, community and the legal system, respect, drug and alcohol / addict or alcoholic and economics. Speakers are invited from time to time to provide quality information to enhance the curriculum and as a visitor, a Churchill Fellow, an Aboriginal woman and an employee of a correctional environment outside their country, I was invited to attend three meetings over my two week stay.

It was a pleasure to speak to both groups of men, to share my life experiences, my travels, the purpose of my visit, the history of Aboriginal people and colonisation in Australia, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths and Custody and its Recommendations and the reason why we have dedicated Aboriginal Units and staff across justice agencies in this country.

**Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility**

I spent a couple of days at the Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility (DSNF) and thoroughly enjoyed the extensive tours, observing assessments and reviews, sitting in on program meetings, meeting with staff and learning as much as I could about this very special facility.

DSNF’s goal is to provide quality care through a number of services for the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC) including acute and convalescent health care, intensive mental health intervention, a therapeutic program for sex offenders and departmental pharmaceutical services.

The facility also provides -

- skilled nursing units to care for prisoners recovering from surgery or serious illness
- housing for prisoners whose treatment regimen cannot be managed at other TDOC facilities
- a rehabilitation unit that houses inmates with long-term medical needs
- specialty clinics, short-stay surgeries, individual treatment and diagnostic services that are not available at other facilities are provided to prisoners through its transient unit, health centre and contract staff
- mental health units for inmates with acute mental health needs - the mental health program is designed to stabilise the individual and move him through a process where he can take more responsibility for his behaviour and mental health
- units for the mentally challenged and a sheltered workshop program
- a progressive, therapeutic program for TDOC’s sex offender population
- a geriatric unit is located at this facility for TDOC inmates who are aged or infirm and unable to care for themselves within a traditional prison population
- provides inpatient and outpatient care for the prison population in a designated, secure area through contracts with a community hospital - other hospitals are also utilised for specialised care that is not available in the contract hospital.

Mr. Roland Colsen, Warden provided the following feedback via email dated 16 May 2009:
“Marie Murfet, Manager, Indigenous Policy and Services Unit spent time at the Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility observing some of the programs, staff, and inmates here at the facility. Ms Murfet is a special guest of the Department at this time observing and trying to obtain as much knowledge about our facilities and programs as possible in a brief time. She hopes to take back the best of what she observes to Australia. Everyone was enlightened by her visit.”

L to R: Mr. Elliott Garrett Jnr., Mental Health Administrator DSNF, Marie Murfet and Mr. Roland Colson, Warden DSNF

Tennessee Prison For Women

The Tennessee Prison for Women (TPFW), located in Nashville, is the primary facility for female prisoners in the State. TPFW is a reception and classification centre for female offenders entering into the TDOC system and although the security designation is maximum, houses prisoners of all custody levels, including pre-release participants, work release inmates and women sentenced to death.

TPFW offers academic courses that include Adult Basic Education, General Education Development Diploma and Special Education. Vocational classes include computer application and literacy, cosmetology, construction, culinary arts and greenhouse management. Prisoners also have access to a full range of treatment programs which include substance abuse, sex offender treatment and aftercare, anger management, pre-release and career management success.

In addition to a 64-bed intensive drug-alcohol treatment program called the Correctional Recovery Academy, TPFW operates a 40-bed Annex that provides job readiness / life skills and a therapeutic transitional program called EXODUS.

- EXODUS utilises the therapeutic community model to provide a self-sustained community atmosphere where participants undergo treatment interventions designed to assist them in developing pro-social behaviours, an understanding of the impact of criminal behaviour on victims and develop employment readiness skills and other skills to assist with a positive re-entry into the community.
Over 9 - 12 months participants will go through three phases (as in the Genesis program) which covers -

- classroom programming
- community service and life skills with *The Next Door* (further details on page 22)
- work release and evening classes with *The Next Door* in preparation for release.

**Morgan County Correctional Complex**

A major expansion of the Morgan County Correctional Complex (MCCX) has been undertaken to house 2,441 prisoners, including prisoners transferred from the Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex. A day spent here included a meeting with the Warden and Program staff and a tour of the attached Academy and Boot Camp. Worth noting among the exceptional work being done at this facility:

- MCCX can boast an 81.4% pass rate on General Education Development Diploma testing for prisoners.
- Substance abuse treatment is offered as a full-time modified therapeutic community assignment - class duration is six months and accommodates approximately 100 individuals per year - at this facility.
- Community Service crews from MCCX provide thousands of hours of labour to local government and non-profit organisations each year.

The Correctional Treatment Academy (CTA), a secure annex attached to MCCX, houses prisoners who have earned trustee status and who will be involved in either pre-release and / or other programs, work release or assigned other responsibilities. The main purpose of CTA is to foster care and concern for other prisoners’ in living in a “community-living” environment. Prisoners in the Annex all have the opportunity to be involved in designing individual programs that work for them.

Boot Camp, also attached to MCCX, is a secure compound housing approximately 40 prisoners who have applied to participate in the program. Applications are received from across the County Jails and both State and Federal prisons as well as recommendations from Courts. Prisoners who are successful participants to this 90 day program (remain for 120 days to include graduation) are actively involved in a program that reflects the first 90 days of Marine boot camp training.

**Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex**

Up until it was de-commissioned on 11 June 2009, Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex (BMCX) was the oldest operating prison in Tennessee. Its first compounds were built in 1984 and the enclosure wall, and many of the buildings making up this facility, are constructed entirely from hand-carved stone.

I was very privileged to have the opportunity to tour the site only a few weeks before it was de-commissioned and meet with staff who shared many stories and their sadness over having to leave working in this facility. Over half of the prisoners had already transferred to Morgan County Correctional Centre and the remaining prisoners at the time of my visit were maintaining grounds while staff were busy packing and getting ready to relocate.

Work sites for prisoners eligible for work release from this facility when it was fully operational included restoration of churches and graveyards as well as the provision of a free grave digging service to the neighbouring communities, saving families quite a hefty fee. Standard programs, however, did include education, drug and alcohol and pre-release.
As a law enforcement agency committed to public safety, the Sheriff’s Office strives to be the leader in the field of corrections, service of civil process, and innovative community-based programs that emphasise accountability, diversity, integrity and professionalism.

Following a meeting with Mr. Daron Hall, Davidson County Sheriff, I visited the Work Release Program at the County’s Offender Re-Entry Centre. There is an application and assessment process which goes before a Work Release Board for approval or otherwise. Once an application is approved, offenders will undertake an orientation program, civilian clothes will be issued; mandatory classes undertaken (eg: Beyond Anger, Alcohol and Drug Education) and offenders will have 10 days to get a job (if they don’t already have one). Job monitoring through physical job site checks and phone job checks are part of the process as are the written acknowledgements signed by the offender and employer.

Not-For-Profit / Volunteer Based Programs - Nashville, Tennessee

I met with a number of board members, CEOs, staff and volunteers associated with the following agencies. In working closely with the Tennessee Department of Correction and the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole, these agencies aim in their collective and individual way to provide an element of through care for prisoners re-integrating back into their communities.

They acknowledge the barriers and the enormous challenges faced by ex-prisoners, the lack of confidence, the sense of being too far behind to catch up, trying to find and maintain a good job and access suitable housing.

I was very privileged to be involved in the unpretentious but exceptional work these agencies do in providing much needed support to their clients to assist them to live on the outside and break the cycle of re-offending.

- The Next Door -
  This agency is dedicated to helping women in crisis and equipping them for lives of wholeness and hope.
When a woman leaves prison, she is helpless, homeless and sometimes hopeless. At this agency, women in crisis can find help for re-entering society and will usually come by a referral and application process to access -

- transitional housing - a 6 month residential transitional living program (shared accommodation for women)
- recovery support services for women with an addiction to alcohol and drugs
- employment search guidance
- supportive and compassionate staff and volunteers.

Onsite services include -

- professional counselling in co-occurring disorders
- case management
- drug prevention classes for children
- access to public transport.

- **Aphesis House** -
  
  This agency was founded in 2002 by Mr. James Settles and Mr. Jim Boyd and is dedicated to eradicating the recidivism rate of ex-offenders through its mission “to provide transitional living homes for individual men being released from prison”. It promotes self-esteem, self-confidence and provides advanced training to empower participants to change their behaviour and habits and enable them to re-enter society as productive and law-abiding citizens.

  The housing facility offers full-time staff, meals, job search assistance, mentoring, community involvement and a complete reintegration program that underpins tenant incentives and beneficial outcomes, such as -

  - living a healthier life
  - becoming an asset instead of a liability
  - developing skills to become a better father
  - learning how to live more responsibly
  - learning how to become dependable.

- **Leaving the Cocoon** -
  
  As re-entry specialists, this agency services the needs of the ex-offender and their family. It’s support services are evidence-based, gender specific and Christian centred, and include:

  - Mentoring
    
    As the official women’s mentoring program for the Tennessee Department of Corrections and the Tennessee Prison for Women, *Leaving the Cocoon* works with the pre-release program to design services to successfully transition women from prison into the community.

    The mentor relationship is based on earned trust, accountability and guidance. The mentor has become friend, sister or mother for a short time. Mentors are trained, encouraged and equipped on a continual basis. They are not ‘lone rangers’ and do not have to fear going at this by themselves.

  - Pre-Release
    
    Provides support through therapeutic small groups, lay counselling and individual prayer. Resources, referrals, supplies and advocacy are also elements essential to the health and wellbeing of the clients of this program.
• **Aftercare**
  Professional individual, marriage and family counselling is offered after release. Every client is supported to ensure they have appropriate and safe housing, clothing, food, transportation and other welfare assistance, including financial and legal.

• **Counselling**
  Offered on a sliding scale, all services are provided in the context of a strong commitment to the integrity of the individual, the family and the community. This is a service to the whole person, psychologically, spiritually and socially. All services are provided under the laws of the State of Tennessee regarding such services and the licensing of counsellors. Their counselling services are available to everyone in the community, regardless of the ability to pay.

A group of volunteers and TDOC staff who completed the Mentor Training Program
(Marie Murfet, second from right)

• **Mending Hearts** -
  The mission of this agency is to provide shelter, hope and healing to women who desire sustainable recovery from addiction and homelessness. Staff work very closely with *Leaving the Cocoon* to provide assistance and support to women exiting prison.

  *Mending Hearts* was founded in 2004 by Katrina and Charlotte who, because of their own experiences in overcoming their personal backgrounds of addiction and homelessness, felt led to serve women in similar situations.

  Since 2004, the agency has helped over 330 women obtain employment and stable housing, all while remaining drug free. They have two apartment complexes and a duplex, serving 35 women at any one time.

• **The Mending Hearts Recovery Model**
  A three-tiered model that incorporates the treatment protocols of a traditional 28-day program, a half-way house and a transitional facility into therapeutic community program. This pioneering model helps ensure that the women who leave *Mending Hearts* remain substance-free and become contributing members to their community.
I was very honoured to be invited to attend a celebration of women graduating from the Mending Hearts Recovery Model. The graduates included those women who have remained drug and alcohol free - some for the 90 day mark, one for the six month mark and others for reaching the 12 month milestone. Each of the women graduating had their mentor, their mother, a sister or children to help them celebrate. More than a few tears of joy were cried throughout the celebration.

Some of the women and volunteer staff at the graduation of the women in the ‘Mending Hearts’ Recovery Model

- **Project Return - a new beginning** -
  This agency provides a broad range of assistance and support to anyone with a juvenile or criminal record, aid in the transition from incarceration to the community to ensure a chance for success and education to the community and clients that offenders are human beings first and offenders second. The programs offered by this agency include:

  - Pre-Release Programs -
    - survival skills for men through workshops in correctional facilities
    - pre-release classes for women in the Tennessee Prison for Women
    - youth programs in juvenile facilities
    - job readiness classes in county jails.

  - Post-Release Services -
    - housing referrals
    - emergency food boxes
    - purchasing and providing work tools
    - transportation: metro Nashville transit bus passes
    - clothing referrals (Salvation Army, Dress for Success)
    - medical referrals (substance abuse, mental health)
    - securing birth certificates, ID cards, and social security cards.

  - Programs -
    - Bridge to the Future
    - General Education Development Diploma / Adult Literacy Programs
    - Jobs & Futures
    - Project Success
    - The Legacy Program.
Bridge to the Future aims to empower participants to effectively manage their family and employment responsibilities and focuses on -
- preparation for release
- financial responsibilities
- employment responsibilities
- family awareness
- job search preparation
- job retention awareness.

Jobs & Futures allows for client service counsellors to assess the specific needs of individual and re-entry plans are developed to support successful transition from a correctional environment to self-reliance in the community. The program focuses on -
- employment placement assistance
- survival skills training
- life skills and job readiness training
- information and referral to support services
- on-going follow-up and job counselling
- institutional job fairs
- direct aid (bus passes, emergency food boxes and clothing)
- documentation (ID cards, social security cards and birth certificates).
Correctional Service Canada - Alberta and Saskatchewan

Descriptors, for reading this section:

• Aboriginal - means First Nation, Inuit or Metis.
• Sharing circle - is a very old way of bringing Aboriginal people of all ages together in a quiet, respectful manner for the purposes of teaching, listening, learning and sharing. The circle leader, teacher or facilitator begins by passing around the sweet-grass, cedar or sage, so that the participants may ‘smudge’ themselves. As the smoke from the herbs surround us we are better able to connect on many levels with each other and with ourselves.

Healing Lodges and Aboriginal Offenders

Healing Lodges have been developed by the Correctional Service of Canada in partnership with Aboriginal communities in response to disproportionately high numbers of Aboriginal prisoners in the corrections system. Healing Lodges offer services and programs that reflect Aboriginal culture in a space that incorporates Aboriginal peoples’ traditions and beliefs. In the Healing Lodge, the needs of Aboriginal offenders serving federal sentences are addressed through Aboriginal teachings and ceremonies, contact with Elders and children and interaction with nature.

Male prisoners must be classified as a minimum security and women must be classified as a minimum or medium security to be transferred from a mainstream correctional facility to reside at a Healing Lodge.

Healing Lodges differ from mainstream correctional institutions in that they follow a holistic approach while maintaining similar security measures. Additionally, the Aboriginal community is encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility and ownership of the healing process of Aboriginal prisoners.

I had the opportunity to visit three Healing Lodges, meet and talk with both staff and prisoners and participate in sharing circles.

• Pê Sâkâstêw Healing Centre for men is in Hobbema, Alberta (one hour from Edmonton). The Centre is built on land leased from the Samson Cree Nation, one of the four groups making up the community in this area. The other three groups are Ermineskin, Montana and Louis Bull First Nation.

   The Centre’s philosophy works to bring Cree culture and spirituality to the corrections system and have them blend in a good way to promote healing.

• Willow Cree Healing Lodge for men is on land belonging to the Beardy’s and Okemasis First Nation and is located about an hour from Saskatoon.

   The Centre’s philosophy is firmly rooted in the ceremonies, spiritual traditions and principles of Aboriginal people. Staff work to contribute to the uninterrupted motion and power of the Sacred Hoop. This is done by actively encouraging and helping individuals, families and the community to strive for and achieve a healthy lifestyle that is in harmony and connected with the Creator, with nature and with society.

• Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for women is on land leased from the Nekaneet First Nation in Maple Creek.

   This is the only Healing Lodge in Canada for federal Aboriginal women prisoners. The staff structure is based on the Aboriginal family model, including a Kikawinaw (Cree word meaning
‘our mother’), aunts and older sisters. This structure allows the residents to access strong role models as well as the wisdom and guidance of Elders as they learn to reconnect to their culture.

I spent a couple of days at this Lodge, learning about programs and cultural practices, talking with Elders and participating in sharing circles.

Facilities at Healing Lodges generally consist of:
- Spiritual lodge
- Elders lodge
- Sweat lodges (winter and summer)
- Prisoner living units
- Private family visit unit
- Reception, administration and maintenance units.

Edmonton Institution

Edmonton Institution is a maximum security facility located in Edmonton, Alberta. The main programs available include: Anger and Emotions Management, Reasoning and Rehabilitation, the Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program and the segregation program.

In line with the Institution’s policy direction: “...to ensure that the needs of all Aboriginal offenders are identified and that programs and services are developed and maintained to meet those needs.”, programs are adapted to incorporate the customs of Aboriginal culture and spirituality.

Another of the policy objectives of this Institution is “...to ensure that Aboriginal offenders are provided with an equitable opportunity to practice their culture and traditions without discrimination and with an opportunity to implement traditional Aboriginal healing practices.”. 

A meeting of all Aboriginal staff was set up to discuss processes and practices around implementation and management of customs and ceremonies in this facility, including:
- fasting
- feasts
- pipe ceremony
I also met with Aboriginal prisoners across the various units, most of whom participate in the traditional activities. They shared their stories with me and acknowledged the Elders for the opportunity to be able to participate in the traditions and ceremonies - some for the first time, that these practices have made such a significant difference in the way they think about themselves and others and helps them to deal with daily life in prison.

I participated in a sharing circle, a great privilege for me, particularly being the only female in the circle with Aboriginal male Elders, prisoners and staff. It was also very painful to hear stories told from the heart of the experiences of some of the prisoners and the reasons why they have ended up in prison. Once the eagle feather had been passed around and everyone had the opportunity to share (while holding the eagle feather) it was time for me to answer questions and share my story, including the purpose of my visit, my family and traditional practices and some of my experiences on my travels to date.

It was evident that there is consistency and continuity in the provision of traditional spiritual services provided to the Aboriginal population through engaging, and providing support for, Aboriginal leaders who attend to the spiritual needs of Aboriginal prisoners at Edmonton Institution.

**Saskatchewan Penitentiary**

Saskatchewan Penitentiary is a medium-security facility located in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The institution plays an active role in re-integrating Aboriginal prisoners through various programs, particularly through the concept and vision of the Pathways Unit.

The Pathways Unit promotes a culturally based healing process and an environment that offers the necessary elements to fully support and encourage the healing that will increase the Aboriginal prisoner’s potential to move to a less restrictive environment.

I had the opportunity to meet with Elders and staff in the Pathways Unit who provided insight into how they manage to establish traditional culture and practices within the institution that compliments and links to existing programs and work opportunities. Those practices include:

- spiritual ceremonies
- weekend retreats (institutional)
- Elder healing plans
- ceremonial escorted temporary absences
- cultural events.

**Regional Psychiatric Centre - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

The Regional Psychiatric Centre (RPC) is a multi-level psychiatric hospital operated by the Correctional Service Canada through an affiliation agreement between Canada and the University of Saskatchewan. RPC provides assessment, intensive programming, treatment for mental disorders and a 24-hour medical care to individuals from the federal and provincial justice systems.

My visit included a tour of the facility, meeting with staff to learn about the Aboriginal culture and programs offered to the Aboriginal prison population who reside here. Following the tour, staff and I participated in a sharing circle and were joined by two Aboriginal prisoners from the facility who were invited to participate and share their very personal and painful stories with me.
Native Counselling Services of Alberta - Edmonton

Native Counselling Services of Alberta focuses on the healing and harmony of the entire Aboriginal community it services. The agency provides services in the areas of restorative justice, social programming, community development and wellness initiatives through partnerships with government agencies. All programs and services are designed and delivered for Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people.

Stan Daniels Healing Centre

This Centre provides a range of programs and services that are specific to the needs of Aboriginal residents. The continuum of services offered at the Centre ensures that residents have opportunities to resolve past traumas that have created barriers to employment and positive family and community relationships. Residents also gain training and skills that will assist in finding long-term and meaningful employment.

This model of service delivery and its associated re-integration continuum is designed to provide whatever training residents require, whether personal or employment focused, to support residents to successfully complete a range of community and custodial orders and assist with successful re-integration into the community.

This Centre is a minimum security custodial facility for adult males, operated through a partnership agreement with government. I had the opportunity to learn a little of the extensive services that the Native Counselling Services of Alberta provides and the operations of the Stan Daniels Healing Centre during my time spent on a tour of the Centre and with staff.

In Search of Your Warrior Healing Program

Developed by the Native Counselling Services of Alberta, this program has been recognised by Correctional Service Canada as an effective, Aboriginal specific program that addresses the needs of Aboriginal violent offenders. It is grounded in a holistic Aboriginal philosophy: “...the belief that all things are connected and that for sustainable change to occur, an individual must engage the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of self in the healing process...”. The program helps participants understand the effects of personal and historic trauma on their behaviour and provides them opportunities to connect with their healing path.

The program is implemented in Healing Centres and correctional facilities across Canada through a partnership between the Native Counselling Services of Alberta and Correctional Service Canada.

Note: A recent follow-up study by Correctional Service Canada of Aboriginal prisoners who have been admitted to Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge, Pê Sâkâstêw Healing Centre and the Stan Daniels Healing Centre revealed a relatively low federal recidivism rate for some Aboriginal healing lodge participants. This is an early indication that this approach is having a positive effect. It also demonstrates that Correctional Service Canada is achieving some success in fulfilling its mandate to safely and successfully re-integrate Aboriginal prisoners back into their communities.
Ministry Of Justice - London

Although this visit was not part of my initial Churchill Fellowship proposal, I was invited to meet with staff from the Ministry of Justice in London while spending a few days stopover for recreation purposes before returning home. In particular, I met with staff from the National Offender Management Service who were interested in hearing of programs and services other jurisdictions have in place that address diversity in prisons, particularly learnings from my visits to corrections and communities in New Zealand, the United States and Canada.

It was also a great opportunity for me to tour Wandsworth Prison, the largest prison in the UK and to meet with staff from Learning and Skills and Race and Equality at the prison.

Additionally, I was very grateful to have the opportunity to meet staff working on the new Diverting Women from Custody Program. Two main areas of the Program will focus on (i) building capacity of one-stop-shop services at existing women’s facilities and other specialist provision for women in the community; and (ii) further developing bail support services and maximise accommodation opportunities by engaging with existing and new accommodation providers and exploring other models showing success in supportive accommodation.

This will be an area of learning for Corrections Victoria, and other jurisdictions, particularly around addressing the specific diversion and transitional options for women and I look forward to hearing about how this initiative progresses.
CONCLUSIONS

Leading a normal life after prison may seem impossible and perhaps the most basic attitude that needs to change is the attitude the prisoners have of themselves. To see the possibilities, they must be ready to start over, gain experience, learn new skills and be provided with opportunities to develop respectful and trusting connections that will support their rehabilitation and transition.

This Fellowship was to study culturally relevant and responsive programs and engagement practices for Indigenous prisoners and offenders and to investigate:

(i) the appropriateness of existing programs in alternative correctional and Indigenous community environments;
(ii) options to modify / adapt these programs toward the cultural needs of Indigenous prisoners and offenders;
(iii) the process of engagement of prisoners and offenders and community in meaningful and effective participation; and
(iv) practices that promote an environment of healing.

Although a number of the programs I outline in my Report were not Aboriginal specific, I did get answers to my questions. It was evident that the progression of healing and learning for prisoners and offenders was influenced by volunteer and community supports, recognition of needs, access and participation and a shared commitment to successful outcomes.

It was also evident from the materials I accessed and delivery practices observed, that of central importance to initiatives developed for the purpose of rehabilitation and crime prevention:

- the content supported self-determination and empowerment rather than dependence
- in-prison programs not only integrated skills that supported an intent to rehabilitate and reduce the rate of recidivism, but strengthened the potential of individuals for suitable and sustainable employment
- resources were truly representative of supporting appropriate programs and service delivery to encourage and maximise improved outcomes
- the mix of community and custodial based expertise in custodial environments emphasised the positive long term impact on factors such as offending behaviour, relationships, addictions, education and training
- volunteer relationships were embraced to cultivate trust and build norms of commonalities between community and corrections, essential to stable and safer communities.

The many community based agencies and services I outline in my Report, not only provide much needed support to their clients to assist them to live on the outside and break the cycle of re-offending but also provided a forum for prisoners and ex-prisoners to tell their stories of the enormous challenges faced in re-integrating back into community. This vital feedback can only inform and define a more holistic approach to how we develop and implement programs and services in the future that aim to reduce the impact of crime and recidivism rates.
RECOMMENDATIONS

As respective jurisdictions remain solely responsible for the daily life in prisons: the programs, security, justice, health and individual needs of those in their care, they need to demonstrate in the execution of these responsibilities: “…that they are making a difference to the prisoner returning to life on the outside.”

At a minimum, prisoners should be supported to:
- identify and address critical barriers to successful re-integration
- identify internal strengths and external resources in order to expand networks of support
- identify strategies for creating and maintaining stable mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Respective jurisdictions should be looking to effecting positive progress through consulting and developing partnerships that will provide a mix of community and custodial based expertise.

At a minimum, there should be an emphasis on:
- recognition of individual needs
- access and participation
- an integrated and holistic approach
- practices that underpin traditional customs and sensitivities
- responsive and meaningful content
- the value of volunteer relationships that cultivate trust and build norms of commonalities between community and corrections
- community engagement and partnership practices, to shift the focus from the individual to the collective and address issues affecting the ‘whole’ and diverse requirements of communities
- the use of impact statements to assess whether new initiatives and indeed existing programs and services, take into account the different approaches necessary to sustain change beyond the custodial setting
- appropriate and timely reviews and evaluations.

If we can continually review procedures and allow for traditional customs and practices, the men and women in our prisons here in Australia, and elsewhere, will be provided with the opportunity to speak of the pain of their past and acknowledge the pain they have caused others…..and so will begin the healing journey!
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  - Mr. Russell Caldwell and staff from the Policy, Strategy and Research team
  - Mr. Peter Johnson, Manager, Strategic Analysis, Policy Development
  - Mr. Jon Royal, National Manager Maori Services, Rehabilitation
  - Mr. Lawrence Tawera, National Adviser Maori Service Development, Community Probation and Psychological services
  - Ms. Jane von Dadelszen, General Manager, Policy, Strategy and Research
  - Mr. Viko Aufaga, National Adviser Pacific, Rehabilitation
  - Ms. Lucy King, Senior Adviser, Community Probation and Psychological Services
  - Mr. Des Ripi, Senior Maori Adviser, Rehabilitation
  - Ms. Natalia Taurima and Ms. Tara Hape, Maori Services Team, Northern Region
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  - Mr. Mate Webb, Cultural Supervisor
  - Ms. Raewyn Hawera, Cultural Supervisor
  - Mr. Shane Ashby, Manager Maori Relationships, Northern Region Adviser for Maori
  - Ms. Le'au Lole-Taylor, Regional Adviser for Pacific
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  - Ms. Uarnie More

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  - Mr. Brad Livingston, Executive Director
  - Mr. Marvin Dunbar, Community Liaison Officer, Management Operations
  - Ms. Joni White, Assistant director, TDCJ Classification
  - Ms. Karen Hall, Manager II, Executive Services
  - Mr. Frank Anizan, TDCJ Program Specialist
  - Mr. Virgil Jordan, Facility Administrator and Major Kitchen, Cleveland Correctional Centre (GEO)
  - Snr. Warden O'Reilly, Walls Unit
  - Mr. Jim Willett (former Warden Walls Unit), Director of the Texas Prison Museum
  - Assistant Warden O'Hara, Wynne Unit
  - Mr. Bob Stoudt, Plane Manager, Wynne Computer Recovery, Wynne Unit
  - Mr. Robert Van Burkelo, Dynamic Risk Assessment, SOMP, Goree Unit
  - Mr. Kenneth L. Gaston, Assistant Warden, O.B. Ellis Unit
  - Ms. Wilhelmenia Howard, Warden II, Plane / Henley Complex
  - Major Kristi Flippo, Plane; / Henley Complex
  - Mr. Allen Boutte, Facility Director and Ms Linda Drake, Assessor, ‘The Turning Point’, Plane / Henley Complex

- Windham School District (April 2009)
  - Mr. Bob Evans, Director of Continuing Education
  - Ms. Marjie Haynes, Director, Division of Instruction
  - Ms. Bambi Kiser, Public Information Officer
  - Ms. Charlene Moriarty, Administration
• Ms. Paula Davis, Project RIO Administrator
• Ms. Monica Price, Post-Secondary Programs
• Ms. Kathy Brown, Project RIO Coordinator
• Ms. Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
• Ms. Monica Price, Administrator, Post Secondary Programs
• Mr. Bill Nowlin, Ellis Unit GRAD Program
• Mr. Leonard Haley, GRAD Cognitive Skills Program
• Mr. Bill Nowlin, Principal Project RIO and Workforce Development, Ellis Unit
• Ms. Sandra Nash, Wynne Unit Education Programs
• Ms. Lisa Stirns, Project RIO and Workforce Development, Goree Unit
• Mr. Rudy Monteagudo, Welding Instructor, Wynne Unit
• Mr. John Anderson, Diesel Mechanics, Wynne Unit
• Mr. Barry Johnson, Computer Operations, Wynne Unit
• Mr. Joe Bullard, Small Engine Repairs, Wynne Unit
• Mr. Jim Harrell and Mr. Troy Allen, Truck Driving Course, Wynne Unit

• Department of Corrections, State of Colorado (May 2009)
  • Ms. Heather Elliott, Offender Programs Manager, Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and YOS
  • Ms. Johanna Leal, Pre-Release Work Lead, Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and YOS
  • Ms. Nicole M. Lewis, Community Re-Entry Work Lead, Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and YOS
  • Ms. Heather McQueen, Pre-Release Specialist, Denver Women’s Correctional Facility
  • Ms. Rosa I. Frayre, Administration Supervisor, Denver Complex
  • Mr. James Falk, Administrative Services manager, Denver Complex
  • Ms. Kim Beicker, Manager, Faith and Citizen Programs

• ComCor, Inc., Colorado Springs (May 2009)
  • Mr. Steven C. Gilmore, Executive Director
  • Mr. Paul M. Isenstadt, Director Program and Residential Services
  • Mr. Willie Alexander, Development Director
  • Mr. Jack B. Brodsky, Contract Coordinator, Community Corrections Centre
  • Ms. Marcia Hanscom, Vocational Coordinator, Community Corrections Centre
  • Ms. Barb Wakefield, Program Coordinator, Jail Mental health Aftercare Program

• Tennessee Department of Correction (May 2009)
  • Mr. George M. Little, Commissioner
  • Ms. Gail Ray, Deputy Commissioner
  • Ms. Sheryl DeMott, Victim Services Director
  • Mr. Ronald G. Turner, Director of Religious Services / Interim Director Volunteer Services
  • Ms. Emily O’Malley-Laursen, Good Samaritan Coordinator
  • Ms Rae Ann Coughlin, Former Executive Administrative Assistant
  • Mr. Joe Brodnicki, Training Officer
  • Ms. Sharmila Patel, Director of Education
  • Mr. Stevenson L. Nixon, Security Specialist
  • Warden Flora Holland, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex
  • Mr. Rivers Perry, Unit Manager, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
  • Mr. Charles N. Simmons, Deputy Warden, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
  • Mr. Joe M. Kpana-Quomah, Unit Manager, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
  • Ms. Cheryl Pullen, Ms. Deborah Dangerfield and Mr. Tom Rushing, Counsellors, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
  • Mr. Gary Scruggs, L.A.D.A.C, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
• Ms. Mary Ehrhardt, Project Return Facilitator, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
• Sgt. Thomas McLin, Unit Sergeant, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
• Mr. Rickey Barbee, Transportation corporation, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
• Ms. Linda Giles, Clerical Correctional Officer, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
• Mr. Kenneth Osbourne, director, Substance Abuse Services, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex (Genesis Program)
• Mr. J. Gower Mills, Compliance Manager, Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex
• Chaplain Jerry Welborn, Riverbend Maximum Security Prison
• Dr. Jennie L. Jobe, Morgan County Correctional Complex
• Mr. David G. Mills, Warden, Morgan County Correctional Complex
• Chaplain Dean Yancey, Morgan County Correctional Complex
• Mr. Adam Bastian, Agriculture Instructor, Morgan County Correctional Complex
• Cpl. Michael McPeters, Morgan County Correctional Complex Boot camp
• Warden Roland Colson, Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility
• Mr. Elliott Garrett Jr., Mental Health Administrator, Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility
• Ms. Jewel Steele, Warden, Tennessee Prison for Women
• Ms. Connie Seabrooks, Principal, Tennessee Prison for Women
• Ms. Kristina Kerr, Director Exodus Program, CTA, Tennessee Prison for Women
• Mr. James R. Worthington, Warden, Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex
• Mr. Doug Cook, Administrative Captain, Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex
• Steve Cantrell, Unit Manager, Classification, Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex
• Ms. Sue Young, Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex
• Sgt. Dean Hall, Internal Affairs, Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex
• Davidson County Sheriff’s Office, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Mr. Daron Hall, Sheriff
  • Mr. Shawn M. Dromgoole Sr., Offender Re-Entry Centre
• Project Return, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Mr. David Delbridge, Executive Director
  • Ms. Nancy C. Johnson, Employment Program Director
• Leaving the Cocoon, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Ms. Vicki Harvey, Executive Director
  • Ms. Malinda D. Wilson, Counselling Officer
• Mending Hearts, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Katrina Frierson, Executive Director
  • Graduates from the ‘Mending Hearts’ Recovery Model
• Aphesis House, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Mr. James G. Settles, Executive Director
  • Mr. Arthur Lee
• The Next Door, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Ms. Linda Leathers, Chief Executive Officer
• Equity Corporation, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2009)
  • Mr. Jim Boyd, Chief Executive Officer and TDOC’s Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, Volunteer of the Year 2009
• Correctional Service Canada (May / June 2009)
  • Mr. Ron Neufeld, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Edmonton Area Parole Office
  • Mr. Ash Mall, Director, Grierson Institution, Edmonton
• Mr. Ron J. Boutin, Warden, Edmonton Institution
• Mr. Brad R. Sass, Director, Intervention, Edmonton Institution
• Mr. Matt James, Programs Manager, Edmonton Institution
• Mr. Kurtis McAdam, Aboriginal programs Officer, Edmonton Institution
• Ms. Cheryl A. Threefingers, Program Development Officer, Pé Sâkâstêw
• Mr. Jason Hope, Warden, Saskatchewan Penitentiary Saskatchewan
• Ms. Christine Delorme, Project Manager, Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Saskatchewan
• Pathways Unit, Saskatchewan Penitentiary: Ms. Correne Pedersen, Mr. Dustin Dreaver, Ms. Della Lee, Mr. Jason Attenberg, Mr. Robin Lonjohn, Mr. Carl Rabbitskin, Ms. Melanie Dreaver
• Mr. Doug Altenberg, Willow Cree Healing Lodge, Saskatchewan
• Ms. Karen Scholfield, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Parole, Saskatoon
• Mr. Lawrence Burnouf, Regional Administrator, Aboriginal Initiatives, Saskatoon
• Mr. Steve Hindle, Corporate Services, Saskatoon
• Mr. Peter Guenther, Director, Intervention Programs, Prairies Region, Saskatoon
• Ms. Genevieve Lavoie, Project manager, Aboriginal Initiatives, Saskatoon
• Ms. Wendy Tippett, Project Officer, Executive Services, Prairies Region, Saskatoon
• Ms. Margaret Roy, Aboriginal Initiatives, Prairies Region, Saskatoon
• Ms. Jennifer Flett, Kikawinaw Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge
• Ms. Janice Many Grey Horses, Kikawisínaw (Manager), Programs, Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge
• Ms. Stephanie Chalifoux-Taylor, Aboriginal Programs Officer, Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge
• Ms. Clare McNab, Kikawinaw (Director), Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge
• Ms. Geraldine Arcand, Tribal Vice-Chief, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Asimakanisêekan Askiy Reserve

• Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Edmonton (May 2009)
  • Ms. Sheila Courtorielle, Director, Stan Daniels Healing Centre
  • Mr. Paul Davies, Coordinator of Residential Services, Stan Daniels Healing Centre

• Ministry of Justice, London (June 2009)
  • Mr. Colin Allars, Director Offender Management, South West Region
  • Ms. Susannah Madigan, Acting SPS, to Mr. Allars Mr. Ian Poree, Director of Commissioning and Operational Policy
  • Mr. David Asker, Head of Learning and Skills, HMP Wandsworth
  • Mr. Matt Wotton, Race Equality Action Group HM Prison Service
AFFIRMATIONS

“I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with us about your experiences with Australian corrections and the Churchill Fellowship here in the US. Your outside perspective and experience not only helps us learn, but gives us time to reflect on where we are and where we’re going”. Tennessee Department of Corrections.

“Thank you for including us in your study of correctional and work-related programs for offenders. It was a privilege and wonderful experience to spend time with you. We enjoyed sharing our goals and work with you as well as learning about your system and challenges. We are excited about your research, study, challenges and future possibilities. Your work will continue to help change the lives of many, many people for the better.” Windham School District.