

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA



Report by - JANICE SHUARD - 2002 Churchill Fellow

The Family and Children's Services WA Churchill Fellowship for 2002, to study management and programs for indigenous youth and young women in custodial facilities.

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Signed

Dated

Janice Shuard

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Introduction

Between April and June 2002, I travelled through Canada and to Houston and New York, investigating management and programs for indigenous youth and young women in custody. This was funded through the generosity of a Family and Children Services WA, 2002 Churchill Fellowship Award. My employer, the Department of Justice Western Australia, supported this opportunity and contributed expanding my study tour to include services to women offenders and programs for minority youth. The specific areas of study covered were:

- a) The extensive range of options or sanctions and programs available for youth who are in conflict with the law.
- b) Government partnering with non-government and not for profit organisations in the delivery of justice services.
- c) Agencies working with Aboriginal people and communities to provide services and programs suitable for Aboriginal offenders.
- d) The community's involvement with offenders' reparation and within custodial facilities.
- e) Specialist services and programs for girls and women in custody.

The invaluable experience and knowledge gained would not have been possible without the support, generosity and commitment of the following people that I am sincerely grateful to;

- The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the Western Australian Regional Committee.
- The Sponsorship of Family and Children Services – Community Development, Western Australia, as their commitment to the eradication of poverty.
- The Director General, Department of Justice Western Australia, Alan Piper, for his support and encouragement and commitment to making ours a great organisation.
- The Referees for my submission Robert Harvey, Julie Roberts and Dr Robert Fitzgerald, all of who were most gracious in their praise for this project.

By far the most impressive aspect of the tour was the generous spirit of the people I had the privilege to spend time with. They willingly gave up many hours, shared their experiences and knowledge, and joined in friendships, making this a very special occasion. There are far too many unique individuals to mention, however I will acknowledge the following agencies whose staff and clients provided humbling assistance and made significant contributions to this work.

- Young Offender Services, Montreal Youth Centre, Canada.
- Intergovernmental Affairs, Women Offender's Sector and Women's Institutions, Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge and the Pe Sakastew Centre, Correctional Service of Canada.
- Youth Justice Policy and Aboriginal Justice Directorate, Department of Justice, Canada.
- Aboriginal Corrections Policy, Solicitor General, Canada.
- Community and Youth Corrections, Manitoba Justice, Canada.
- Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.
- Alberta Solicitor General, Correctional Services and Alberta Justice Departments, Canada.
- Prince George Youth Custody Centre, Burnaby Youth Secure Custody Centre, Ministry for Children and Families, British Columbia, Canada.
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Prince George, Canada.
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Prince George and Greater Vancouver, Canada.
- Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women, Ministry of Solicitor General, British Columbia.
- Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, Houston, Texas, USA.
- Juvenile Aftercare Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, New York City, USA.

Executive Summary

Name: Janice Shuard

Position: Director, Juvenile Custodial Services

Address: Department of Justice, 141 St Georges Terrace, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

E-mail: janice.shuard@justice.wa.gov.au

Contact: 92641064 (work) 0417938837 (mobile)

Project Description: **To study management and programs for indigenous youth and young women in custodial facilities.**

The range of highlights for this Fellowship extends from very strategic approaches to simple practices with young offenders, Indigenous people and females in conflict with the law.

1. **Young Offender Services, Montreal Youth Centre** A social-judicial process with three avenues of diversion for youth from the formal Court process; a range of 'alternative measures' focusing on victim mediation, community work and social responsibility; and a scale of intervention depending on identified risk, criminogenic needs and responsiveness.
2. **Correctional Service of Canada** Women centred policy and regional facilities focussed on the specific needs of female offenders. Core programs designed for Aboriginal people and the two purpose built Aboriginal Healing Lodges. The engagement of volunteers and Citizen's Advisory Committees in custodial facilities to reflect community interest.
3. **Ursula's House** A privately operated, open custody home for young offenders serving a sentence in a community setting with guidance, structure and support provided by Ursula.
4. **Native Counselling Services of Alberta** A non-profit Aboriginal organisation delivering a range of justice services including custodial facilities, to adult and young offenders and others, in partnership with government agencies.
5. **Elizabeth Fry Society of Prince George and Greater Vancouver** An organisation providing services to break the cycle of poverty, addiction, mental illness, homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system. Their goal is to reduce the number of women and youth involved in the criminal justice system by giving them the tangible resources they need to build a life for themselves.
6. **Harris County Youth Village Houston and Juvenile Aftercare Services New York** Delivering accredited education, skills development and throughcare programs that give youth the competence and the support that create solid foundations for success. The Bronx Evening Reporting Centre has structure, supervision and tangible support for youngsters and Brooklyn Residential Centre is a community-custodial placement for girls.

The major conclusions I have drawn from the applications and approaches I saw were:

- ❑ Interventions with young offenders and females must target their individual and identified risks, needs and responsiveness and have structure and essential supports.
- ❑ There is scope for and potential benefits when justice services are delivered in partnership with non-government agencies, particularly where the agency has an established social mandate to provide services for youth and/or women at risk or Aboriginal people.
- ❑ Custodial operations and programs for girls and women offenders must target their specific and individual needs and thus have to be different than those provided for males.
- ❑ The active role volunteers from the community play in criminal justice are valuable to the integration of offenders and the public's understanding of correctional issues.

Many of the lessons learned will be put forward for discussion in the Western Australian criminal justice system and will also be shared nationally through the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators group. The paper will be presented at a function for the National Day for the Eradication of Poverty in Perth in October. A detailed journal of the tour is available.

Programme

CANADA

Montreal, Quebec 4 - 17 April

- **Les Centres jeunesse de Montreal**, Young Offender Services, Montreal Youth Centre - Clement Laporte.
- **Cite Des Prairies**, Youth Custody and Protection Centre - Anne Duret.
- **Trajet Jeunesse** (Directions for Youth) - Christian Favreau.
- **Mont St Antoine**, Evaluation, Probation and Open Custody for youth - Denise Berube.
- **Batshaw Youth and Family Centres** - Helen Downey.
- Re-enforced Probation and Intermittent Custody - Claude Pineau & Michael Brissette.
- **Provincial Parole Board of Quebec** - Isobel DeMercies, President.
- **ROJAO** (Association of Alternative Justice Organisations of Quebec) Native Community Training & Support - Lyne St-Louis.
- **Joliette Institution for Women** - Julie Cobb, A/Warden.

Ottawa, Ontario 19 – 25 April

- **Correctional Service of Canada** - Intergovernmental Affairs, Women Offender Research and Services, Programs and Reintegration, Aboriginal Policy and Programs Development, Citizens Engagement - Shereen Benzvy Miller, Peter Cummings, Suzanne Blais.
- **Solicitor General Canada**, Aboriginal Corrections Policy – Ed Buller.
- **Department of Justice Canada** - Youth Justice Policy, Aboriginal Justice Strategy, Aboriginal Affairs – Paula Kingston, Gary Larkin, Grant Christoff.
- **William Hay Centre** – private secure youth detention centre – Gordon Boyd.

Kitchener, Ontario 26 April

- **Grand Valley Institution for Women** – Karen Black-Smith, Warden, Marion Evans.

Winnipeg, Manitoba 30 April – 5 May

- **Manitoba Youth Centre** – Darryl Rumsey, Superintendent.
- **Ursula's House** (Open Custody Home) – Ursula Backe & Wayne Rudderham.
- **Agassiz Youth Centre** – Carolyn Brock, Executive Director.
- **Portage Women's Correctional Centre** – Dennis Lemoine.

Maple Creek, Saskatchewan 7 – 10 May

- **Okimaw Ochi Healing Lodge** (Aboriginal Women's Prison) – Clare McNab, Director.

Edmonton, Alberta 13 – 23 May

- **Edmonton Institution for Women** - Janet-Sue Hamilton, Warden.
- **Native Counselling Services of Alberta** – Allan Benson, Executive Director.
- **Stan Daniels Healing Centre** (Aboriginal adult custodial facility) – Robert Davies.
- **Edmonton Native Youth Justice Committee** – Joan Collins.
- **Alberta Solicitor General** - Correctional Services Division, Young Offender Branch – Kevin O'Brien, Aboriginal Justice – Carmen Parent.
- **Pe Sakastew Centre** (Aboriginal Men's Healing Lodge) – Randy Sloan, Director.
- **Edmonton Young Offender Centre** – Wayne Reddon, Director.
- **Edmonton Youth Attendance Centre** – Susan Buda.
- **Kochee Mena Native Group Home** (Open Custody Centre for Youth) – Doug Smith.

Prince George, British Columbia 27 – 30 May

- **Prince George Youth Custody Centre** – Stan Hyatt, Director, Ron Manning.
- **Prince George Native Friendship Centre** – Bertha Cardinal.
- **Camp Trapping** (Wilderness Camp for young male offenders) – Darryl Goll.
- **Prince George Regional Correctional Centre** – Don McIntyre, Director.
- **Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society** – Penny Gagnon, Executive Director.
- **Prince George Urban Aboriginal Justice Society** – Morgan Jamieson.

Vancouver, British Columbia 3 – 7 June

- **Burnaby Youth Secure Custody Centre** – Andrew Cronkhite, Director Programs.
- **Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women** – John Pastorek, Director Operations.
- **The Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver** – Shawn Bayes, Executive Director.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Houston, Texas 11 – 16 June

- **Harris County Juvenile Probation Department** – Elmer Bailey JR, Executive Director, Keith V Branch, Attorney at Law, Executive Director, Association for Blacks in the Criminal Justice System.
- **Burnett-Bayland Reception Centre** (Sex Offender Unit and Drug Treatment Program) – Terry A Snow, Superintendent.
- **Burnett-Bayland Home** – John Kandeh, Superintendent.
- **Texas Youth Commission** – T.C. “Joe” Joseph.
- **Westside Detention.**
- **Delta Boot Camp.**
- **Prairie View A & M University, School of Juvenile Justice – Texas Juvenile Crime Prevention Centre** – H. Elaine Rodney, Ph.D. Dean and Director.
- **Harris County Youth Village** – Loretta Stitt Tigner.
- **Harris County Psychiatric Centre (Unit for Young Offenders)** – Diana Quintana, Ph.D
- **CUPS 7 (Community Supervision Programs).**
- **Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program - The Brown Schools**– Robert Lysek.
- **Family Care Medical Clinic** – Ulysses W. Watkins, Jr., M.D.

New York City, New York State 17 – 20 June

- **New York State Office of Children and Family Services – Juvenile Aftercare Services** – Cheryl Collins-Rashid, Area Manager.
- **NYC Intensive Aftercare Program** – Robert Ellis.
- **Intensive Aftercare Services** – Faye A. Lewis.
- **Pyramid Reception Centre for Boys.**
- **Bronx Evening Reporting Centre** – Renee Barbel.
- **Brooklyn Residential Centre for Girls** – Janice Pressley.
- **CASES (Centre for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services)**– Nona Fontnel
- **Staten Island Community Residential Centre for Girls** – Maureen Down, Director.
- **Staten Island Juvenile Aftercare Services** – Juanita B. Jones.

Summary of Fellowship

Background

In Western Australia there is a disproportionate overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in juvenile detention, where Aboriginal youth represented 65 percent of young people aged 10 to 17 years sentenced to a period of detention in 2000/2001. These youngsters represent only 5 percent of the general population. Girls and women are a distinct group and very small in numbers within the offending population, but they present complex concerns. The purpose of this study tour was to examine the approaches to such issues in Canada, where there is a similar overrepresentation of indigenous people in custody, and a different strategy towards female and Aboriginal offenders being applied. In Houston and New York in the United States, minority groups specifically African American and Hispanic youth, are also over represented within juvenile justice, and I sought to learn what was being done to address their particular needs.

Introduction

The approaches being taken to address these issues in North America are;

- ❑ A range of options, sanctions and programs for youth who are in conflict with the law.
- ❑ Government partnering with non-government and not for profit organisations in the delivery of justice services.
- ❑ Working with Aboriginal people and communities to provide services and programs suitable for Aboriginal offenders.
- ❑ Community involvement with offenders' reparation and within custodial facilities.
- ❑ Specialist services and programs for girls and women in custody.

This paper will describe what I consider to be the best of these approaches and the lessons learnt during my study tour. The major conclusions and recommendations from my experience that may further enrich our approach to these matters in Australia will be included.

❑ **Options, sanctions and programs for offending youth.**

There is federal legislation governing young offenders in Canada, however the youth justice model in Quebec is said to have better results in reducing crime rates, diversion and recidivism, than the rest of the country. In the social-judicial process there are three avenues for diversion from the formal court process; Police discretion (53% of reports filed), Crown Prosecutor and Youth Assessment. Youth Assessment receive 1200 annual referrals of which 10 percent of cases are dropped, 35 percent are sent to court and 55 percent are dealt with by way of diversion, with only a 4 percent failure rate for this option.



Pe Sakastew Centre

'Alternative Measures' are the actions or sanctions imposed and agreed to by young people who commit an offence but are not convicted in court. They include community work, donations to the community, victim mediation and social responsibility awareness. The range of dispositions or 'measures' that may be ordered by the court comprise discharge, community work, fines, restitution, compensation, donation, probation without follow-up,

probation with follow-up, re-enforced probation, intensive probation as an alternative to open custody, intermittent custody, open custody, closed custody and prison.

All young offenders diverted, evaluated for the courts and supervised by **Young Offender Services, Montreal Youth Centre** are assessed using a range of comprehensive assessment tools resulting in a planned intervention program. The applications are the *Jesness Inventory*, a *Risk/Needs Assessment Inventory* and '*Suivi Probatoire Differentie*' (*Differential Probation Follow-up*). The evaluation is based on equal components of risk (the higher the risk the more intensive the program - minimal intervention for low risk), the needs (focussing on criminogenic needs), responsiveness, being the young persons ability and willingness to repair, clinical judgement and therapeutic integrity. In addition to developing and storing each individual's intervention plan, the system is a comprehensive database of information, tracking, measuring and recording the effectiveness of the intervention strategies.

Manitoba Justice, Winnipeg manages an open custody program for young offenders to serve their period of detention in a community-custodial house. '**Ursula's House**' is a privately operated home that accommodates four young male offenders with a family, for periods of three months to one year. The home is located in a residential area and is akin to any other family home with Ursula providing the parental guidance, supervision and support for the youth who reside there. The reporting rules are strictly adhered to and Ursula ensures the boys actively participate in education, vocational training and recreation activities, as well as programs to address the factors that contributed to their offending. The boys must do their share of the household chores and are also required to do voluntary work within the neighbourhood. The home is supported by a twenty-four hour Custody Support Unit, within Community and Youth Corrections. The benefits of this type of program are that the young offenders serve their sentence with structure, supervision and support while they participate in positive community living where personal responsibility, making good choices and self-control are practised.



Camp Trapping – Prince George

At the **Prince George Youth Custody Centre** there is closed and open custody facilities and the young people engage in a number of impressive community service work activities. To facilitate this a Temporary Absence Panel comprising representatives from the community and the police, grant approval for eligible youth to have temporary absences from custody. Community activities include delivering meals on wheels to the elderly; work for the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals; a forestry restoration program and outdoor hiking. The Centre has received a number of Community Service Awards for this work done by the young offenders.

The **Harris County Youth Village** in Houston had an excellent vocational training program for juvenile offenders within an open campus setting. In conjunction with the charter school program, the Vocational Education and Employment Training Experience Program teaches the young people skills, safety habits and work ethics. The trade and industrial education courses comprise most components of the building trades and include both theory and practical activities. There were relationships with private industry so that all youth had employment in a trade to take up when they leave the Village. The training program was similar to 'pre-apprenticeship training' and was fully accredited.

Juvenile Aftercare Services in New York City operate the **Bronx Evening Reporting Centre** as a post-residential program for youth transitioning from custody to the community. The

young offenders are able to reside at home and attend their local school but they must report to the Centre six days of the week where a treatment plan guides their program. Generally this is during after school and evening periods and on Saturdays, when these youth are considered to be most at risk of re-offending. There is a system of graduated relaxation of restrictions used in response to appropriate behaviour and progress, and predictable sanctions applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. The Centre is a house in the community that is readily accessible by public transport and the young people have access to laundry and other facilities and also receive an evening meal, taking care of welfare needs they may have. Continuity of services is provided as part of the young offenders transition from custody to the community.



Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge

□ **Partnerships with non-government and not for profit organisations in the delivery of justice services.**

Trajet Jeunesse is a non-government and non-profit organisation in Montreal whose role is to offer young offenders (through the Young Offenders Act), the possibility to make amends for an offence by participating in a non-institution measure. There are 350 community organisations that work voluntarily in collaboration with *Trajet Jeunesse* as the community plays an active role in the mending process with young offenders. The alternative measures used in this process are victim mediation, compensation, community work and social responsibility.

The **Association of Alternative Organisations** of Quebec represents alternative justice organisations in their activities associated with youth diversion and court orders. It provides training and support to Aboriginal communities who wish to reclaim ownership of conflict management by establishing community justice committees, dispute settlement circles and sentencing circles. Their objectives are to promote and support:

- The development of mediation and other alternative dispute methods;
- The development of alternative justice projects; and
- Involvement of citizens in the administration of justice and greater access to justice.

The **Elizabeth Fry Societies** of Prince George and Greater Vancouver were both excellent examples of a holistic approach to providing preventative services and programs to youth and women at risk of greater involvement in the criminal justice system. These are registered charitable organisations where many of their programs are provided in partnership with government agencies. The agency's priorities are the socially and economically disadvantaged youth and women, those in conflict with the law, and victims. Volunteers who are trained and supervised by the organisation do a large portion of the work.

The extensive range of services and programs provided include citizens advisory committees, courtwork, community services, specialised victim assistance programs, victim/offender reconciliation, diversion programs, youth accountability programs, teen mothers resource program, bridges program for women, shelters for victims of abuse, halfway houses for women on parole, group homes for youth and residential projects for women and counselling programs for youth, women and families. As these organisations see their role as '*bridging the community to the offenders*' and they have a stated goal of: '*Reducing the number of*

women and youth involved in the Criminal Justice System', they are well placed to provide justice services, while they support offenders in their endeavours to leave behind criminal activities. The potential is that as offenders are connected with social service agencies and assisted to rebuild their lives, they are separated from entrenchment into the criminal justice system.

□ **Working with Aboriginal people to provide services and programs for Aboriginal offenders.**

Across Canada there were many Aboriginal organisations and communities and government agencies delivering services designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal offenders. Some of these were recent initiatives and others had been established for more than thirty years. Correctional Services of Canada has embraced the need to attend to Aboriginal spirituality and healing within the process of rehabilitation for indigenous offenders. They have two very impressive; purpose built Aboriginal Healing Lodges that reflect the requirements of their Aboriginal correctional initiatives that are:

- The meaningful participation of Aboriginal Elders and people;
- The connection of the Healing Lodges to the Aboriginal Community; and
- An approach that is meaningful to Aboriginal women and men.

The **Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge** is a thirty-bed prison for Aboriginal women who wish to practice a traditional Aboriginal holistic way of life. The principles of the Healing Lodge are:

- a) A safe place for federally sentenced Aboriginal women.
- b) A caring attitude towards self, family and community; belief in individualised client-specific planning.
- c) An understanding of the transitory aspects of Aboriginal life.
- d) Pride in surviving difficult backgrounds and personal experiences.

The operation of the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge is focussed on healing and the journey all women will undertake. The vision and responsibility to women offenders and generations to come that is the objective of the facility is to:

- Restore their pride as women and mothers;
- Restore a sense of worth, dignity and hope;
- Rebuild their families and their communities;
- Build bridges between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal societies; and
- Promote the healing of the earth and all her creatures.



This approach has seen a reduction in recidivism rates for women who have participated in the program and the intention is ultimately for the local Aboriginal Community, the Nekanek people, to take over the operation of the institution. The **Pe Sakastew Centre** is the male equivalent facility that houses sixty offenders on the grounds of the Samson Cree Band of First Nations people. Both facilities employ a majority of Aboriginal staff and the Elders who are the spiritual leaders with their values, traditions and ceremonies, guide the operation of the facilities.



The **Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA)** was established in 1970 as a non-profit organisation under the *Alberta Societies Act*, with the initial objective of providing court worker assistance to Aboriginal people in contact with the law. It has now grown into an agency focussed on the healing and harmony of the entire Aboriginal community. It provides services in the areas of restorative justice, social programming, and community development and wellness initiatives through partnerships with government agencies. All programs and services are designed and delivered for Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people.

Among the many justice services provided by NCSA is the **Stan Daniels Healing Centre**. This is a minimum-security custodial facility for adult males, operated through a partnership agreement with government for the past thirteen years. The facility has a capacity for eighty-three residents on a range of community and custodial orders. A unique program provided there was the ‘Half Way Back Program’. This was for released offenders on parole and experiencing difficulties likely to return them to their old behaviours. The offenders were given the option of voluntarily returning to the facility for what the Elders described as “*giving them a tune-up*” to avoid re-imprisonment.

There was also the **Kochee Mena Native Group Home** run by Native Counselling Services of Alberta, a community-custody home for youth on open custody orders. The young offenders reside in a communal semi-independent living apartment arrangement, attend education on premises at an accredited school, participate in activities and visits off site and are supported and supervised by staff 24 hours a day. The program was designed to support the transition from secure custody to a community placement in the process of reintegration.

The Edmonton Native Youth Justice Committee made up of concerned volunteers from the Aboriginal community was established by NCSA in 1994 under the *Young Offenders Act*. Its function is an ‘**Aboriginal Sentencing Circle**’ and they receive referrals from Judges, Youth Court Prosecutors, Lawyers and Probation Officers. The Sentencing Circle sanctions are viewed as being ‘*longer and stronger*’ than sanctions imposed by the court. The Youth Court accepts ninety-five percent of recommendations from the Sentencing Circle.

□ **Community involvement with offenders’ reparation and within custodial facilities**

The general community plays a very active role in the delivery of justice services across Canada, through the commitment of many thousands of individual volunteers and community volunteer organisations. The benefits of this are the shared responsibility this creates for crime and its effects and bridging the gap between offenders and the community. This citizens’ involvement is to assist in the efforts to integrate and reintegrate people in conflict with the law and increase public understanding of the challenges facing corrections. Where Aboriginal Communities are ‘reclaiming community justice’ there are Community Justice Committees made up of volunteers who find resolutions to local issues of conflict through dispute settlement circles and sentencing circles for cases referred by the courts. With young offenders in Montreal there are 350 voluntary organisations working in collaboration with one alternative justice organisation and they were said to be ‘*the driving force behind the community’s commitment towards these youths*’. At a provincial prison for women in Vancouver, there were 450 volunteers registered for service.

The Elizabeth Fry Society established the **Citizens' Advisory Committees** that operate in the federal and provincial institutions, community correctional offices and the youth centres in Canada. They comprise voluntary representatives from professional, non-profit agencies and the community to represent citizen's interest in offenders in custody and the community. The service they provide is covered in correctional legislation and they have access to offenders, staff and all parts of correctional facilities. They perform many functions and act as independent advisors and observers on management committees with an interest in policy and programs that impact on offenders, not individual issues.

Some examples of the services performed by this group of volunteer citizens include interviewing new offenders arriving at an institution, independent observation of critical incidents, volunteer programs for visits, supports and positive socialisation and friendship to isolated youth during their stay in custody and delivering social skills programs. As an independent committee their aim is to offer advice, assistance and support while reflecting the views of the general community. They also advocate on behalf of offenders in order to serve the needs of society and people in custody.

In most of these arrangements participation is voluntary with the agency employing paid co-ordinators to provide training and support to the program, while they look after the interests of the volunteers and the organisation.



Camp Trapping – Prince George

❑ **Specialist services and programs for girls and women in custody**

While there has only been limited and relatively recent research on girls and women offenders, most practitioners agree, that this group has unique and different needs than males. A working party to look at the issues for girls and young women in Montreal concludes that although they often have histories that are similar to male offenders, it is the way we interact, deliver programs and services and our relationships with girls and young women offenders, that should be different. The **Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Women** of Correctional Service of Canada, who embarked on a new strategy for women offenders in 1995, support this view in respect to women offenders. There is a dedicated women's section within the correctional organisation that is responsible for research, policy and program development, a strong functional responsibility for operations, and staff selection and training to work with women offenders. No correctional policy can be implemented without the approval of the Deputy Commissioner for Women.

The development of regional facilities designed for women in Canada was guided by the goals and vision of the 1990 position paper entitled "*Creating Choices: The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women*". This report emphasised a holistic vision with respect to the treatment of women offenders and an approach guided by the five principles of '*Creating Choices*' being; *Empowerment - Meaningful and Responsible Choices - Respect and Dignity - Supportive Environment - Shared Responsibility*. At the four women's institutions I visited the principles of '*Creating Choices*' was clearly articulated and practiced by staff working there and the management was focussed on meeting the needs of women offenders. For example, there were strong mother and child programs as it was acknowledged that unless females in custody were at ease with the care arrangements for their children, then

they were unable to focus their efforts on rehabilitation. There was a range of accommodation to cater for special needs such as the 'structured living unit' for those with psychiatric and learning or coping difficulties and the planned 'intensive support units' to be used specifically as drug free environments.

At **Edmonton Institution for Women**, representatives from the Inmate Committee described some of the following as being important to them:

- Being listened to and no uniforms for staff or inmates contributing to their sense of being individuals and treated as such;
- Interactions and healthy relationships with staff and their assigned Primary Worker;
- The ability to learn and use life skills of budgeting, cooking, laundry and running a household;
- Programs on health care and health promotion provided by community agencies;
- Training and selection into the Peer Support Program that contributed to inmates' safety.

At the **Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women** in Vancouver, there were two notable work programs for the women. What made these programs particularly impressive were the integration opportunities they created with the community. The first was the 'Canine Program', which was a small business within the prison. The business provided three separate functions:

1. A fee for service function for boarding, day care and grooming of pets to paying customers.
2. A community service to care and rehabilitate animals from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
3. Care and training for dogs from the Blind Society for their first year until they were mature and ready to be properly trained in their role as Guide Dogs.

The staff and women described the strong therapeutic benefits derived from caring for animals as an unexpected bonus of working with animals.

The second program was a 'Floral Arrangements Program' that operated as any florist business would, by providing advice and guidance to customers and then preparing floral arrangements for bridal parties and others. Both of these ventures required that the inmates interacted with the customers, learnt and were accredited with trade and small business skills and fulfilled the work required to run the operation. There were many success stories of women gaining employment on release in these particular areas.

Two custodial programs specifically for girls in New York City were the **Brooklyn Residential Centre** and **Staten Island Community Residential Centre and Pregnancy Unit**. The Brooklyn facility is housed in a restored double brownstone structure in a residential area. The building has security but inside works as an open home environment. The program provides for twenty-five girls aged 13-18 years and operates a fully accredited school program. The overall goals for each resident are to:

- Gain internal strength and insight to use to overcome personal issues that have contributed to delinquent behaviours.
- Advance and earn privileges by demonstrating that they have learned to use social skills and problem solving techniques.
- Demonstrate positive changes in their attitude, values and behaviour so that they can become productive members of their community.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services, has a *'Prescriptive Programming'* and *'Youth Development System'* designed to help the young people learn and experience progress while in residential care, and gain skills they will need to make good decisions and avoid re-offending when they return home. There is a *'Release Readiness Assessment'* to determine when the young person may be released to a lower level of supervision or go home with aftercare supervision.

The **Staten Island Community Residential Centre – Pregnancy Unit** is a group home setting for young pregnant women and their babies who are in detention. The philosophy is to provide these young women with the skills to address their problems and adjust to motherhood. They strive to empower the young mothers to develop the skills to become effective parents and return home. While they are pregnant the young women must be involved in the fulltime school program at the Residential Centre. After the babies are born the mothers are required to attend a mother-child school in the community, while they reside at the Centre.

Conclusions

This Fellowship was to *'study management and programs for indigenous youth and young women in custodial facilities'* and there were many good practices seen that would enrich our services in this area. The community service work that is being done by young people in custody in Prince George; the community-custody homes such as Ursula's House; female centred facilities and management, policy and programs aimed at women and the valuable role of Citizen's Advisory Committees in Canadian Corrections; the vocational training program at Harris County Youth Village, and the custodial programs for girls and aftercare services in New York City; are some of note.

However, this study tour has also identified a much broader range of strategies and programs when dealing with Aboriginal people, youth and young women who come into conflict with the law, outside of custodial facilities. There is considerable scope for further examining the application of the assessment and evaluation tools and range of measures applied when youth offend in Montreal, government partnering with non-government and not for profit organisations in the delivery of a range of justice services; working with Aboriginal people, and agencies in providing programs suitable for Aboriginal offenders and their communities; gaining community involvement and valuing the role of volunteers in criminal justice services; and designing and delivering services to female offenders that meet their specific needs.

The potential benefits of adopting the broader range of strategies may include:

- Achieving a range of options and targeted interventions, programs and resources for young people who come into conflict with the law, so that they learn from the experience and are restrained from any further entrenchment into the criminal justice system.
- Connecting disadvantaged people with social agencies that will assist them move away from criminal behaviour and support them with the tangible tools they need to lead law-abiding lifestyles.

- Capacity building of Aboriginal communities and forming partnerships in justice services designed to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal people and a reduction in the rate of incarceration of our indigenous peoples.
- Volunteers supporting and helping correctional services programs, and acting as constructive role models for offenders, and sharing their informed views with their community thus increasing public awareness and recognition of the issues facing corrections.
- A more equitable and appropriate correctional regime for girls and women in Australia so that they have the opportunity to address their distinct issues and take on positive roles in their communities.
- Reduced re-offending and safer communities.

Recommendations

To realise the potential benefits as outlined above, I recommend that the juvenile and adult correctional systems in Australia examine the application of:

1. Comprehensive assessment tools and planned intervention strategies for young offenders based on risk, criminogenic needs, responsiveness, clinical judgement and therapeutic integrity and an extensive range of diversion options and supervision programs.
2. Government partnering with the non-government and not for profit organisations whose social agenda includes youth and women at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system to deliver justice services.
3. Agencies working with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations to deliver justice services designed to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal people and their communities.
4. A legitimate role for community volunteers and Citizens Advisory Committees in custodial facilities and with offenders in the community and the development of stronger community involvement in criminal justice services.
5. Specialist portfolios mandated to address the full range of research, policy and program development and operational needs for female offenders that reflect their distinct characteristics and the holistic nature of services that should be provided to girls and women in conflict with the law.

The findings of this study tour and recommendations will be put forward for discussion within the Western Australian Department of Justice and nationally through the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators Group. The paper will also be shared with all of the agencies in North America who so generously contributed.