

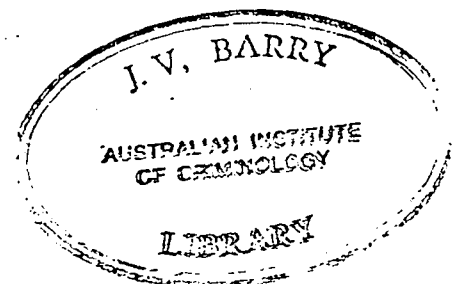
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PROGRAM EVALUATION AT BARWON PRISON (1991-1992)

Evaluator

Dr. R. Semmens
Senior Lecturer
Institute of Education
Melbourne University

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Abstract

During 1991-1992 a product evaluation was conducted with 46 men and seven women prisoners at Barwon security prison. The study aimed to establish whether prisoners who participated in articulated on-the-job off-the job training programs at Barwon were more likely to gain post release employment and less likely to re-offend than prisoners who participated in non-credentialling programs. While the numbers of participants were too small to make firm conclusions, a possible trend towards more successful outcomes for participants in credentialling programs was accompanied by a trend towards first time prisoners with personal contacts for future employment having the most successful outcomes in terms of employment and recidivism. It is suggested that in order to improve the labour market opportunities for recidivists, training pathways be continued into the parole supervision period and that community networks afforded by agencies, such as the Second Chance Business Register, be further developed. A more intensive pre-release program is also recommended.

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ABSTRACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION AT BARWON PRISON (1991-1992)

During 1991-1992 a program evaluation was conducted at Barwon security prison near Geelong in Victoria. The study aimed to establish whether prisoners who participated in articulated on-the-job off-the-job training programs offering continuity of training in prison and after release were more likely to gain post-release employment and less likely to re-offend than prisoners who participated in non-credentialling programs.

Prisoners were interviewed six months prior to release in relation to past employment, past education level and a range of personal identifying data such as age, nationality and marital status. This first interview also sought details of their current sentence and program participation.

At a second interview, just before release, prisoners were asked to review their program participation at Barwon and their future employment and training prospects.

Six months after release contact was made with community based corrections offices and police records to gain information on post-release employment, training and offending records.

Due to the limited time-scale for the evaluation only 46 men and seven women could be included in the evaluation project. However, some trends in data were apparent. Firstly, most of the identifying data appeared to have no significant outcome in terms of post-release employment or recidivism, except for previous imprisonment experience. The six participants who had no previous prison experience and who had personal contacts willing to provide employment, were the only participants who gained full-time employment. Four of these six had participated in credentialling programs at Barwon but only one continued his training post-release and none of them gained employment in the area of training at Barwon.

No prisoner who gained full-time post-release employment had any further contact with the criminal justice system in the first six months after release. On the other hand there was a trend towards higher recidivism amongst participants who had 'shopped around' amongst available non-credentialling activities whilst in prison, whereas those who enrolled in courses and pursued them for 'self-improvement', were less likely to be in further trouble with police after release.

These tentative conclusions are supported by a larger study by the researcher at Malmsbury Youth Training Centre (Semmens, 1986) in which it was found that 17 to 21 year old trainees who achieved higher levels of schooling and had never been in a youth training centre before were more likely to gain post-release employment, and with the assistance of a relative or previous employer.

There are two recommendations for future program development coming out of the Malmsbury and Barwon data:

1. The work of the Victorian Office of Corrections, in conjunction with the State Training Board, to provide articulated training programs should continue and be expanded because many prisoners become highly motivated to improve their skills through participation and the current provision nowhere meets the demand.
2. Stronger supports need to be developed between prison and post-prison, not only in the area of continuity in training program participation but also in employer contracts, especially for recidivist offenders, who even with successful completion of a training course in a high demand area of the labour market, appear unable to secure any sort of employment without assistance. Additionally, Commonwealth labour market programs, currently available only after release, could be made available prior to release, possibly as part of an intensive pre-release program which would involve prisoners working on problem-solving tasks and simulations related to community living situations, particularly in two areas of concern commonly mentioned by prisoners in the current study namely, re-adjustment to family living and work.

These recommendations also apply to the small number of women who participated in the evaluation. All were repeated offenders, none were able to participate in a credentialled training program, and six months after release only one was not in further trouble.

It is noted that the Office of Corrections Industry Training Plan (1993) places great emphasis on the first recommendation. The second recommendation may require new initiatives.

Dr. R.A. Semmens
Senior Lecturer
Institute of Education
Melbourne University

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Introduction

The Barwon prison was chosen for this evaluation project because it was a new prison established to implement new initiatives in prisoner training and management. Firstly, the concept of program articulation, especially the focus on combining on-the-job and off-the-job training was seen by the author as worthy of evaluation in terms of post-release employment and recidivism rates. Secondly, the concept of unit management appeared to afford prisoners some responsibility for personal decision-making and therefore encourage the development of a prison environment more consistent with the aims of education and training than the traditional highly restrictive custodial management regime.

Barwon was seen as an important development in Australian corrections, and despite the fact that most prisoners were undergoing long sentences, it was decided that most of the evaluation design problems for a short-term study could be overcome. The following chapters tell the story in detail.

CHAPTER 1

THE PRISON CONTEXT FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION AT BARWON

In the foreword of the Unit Management Guidelines (1990), published by the Victorian Office of Corrections, imprisonment is portrayed as a double-edged sword:

on the one side it offers protection through deterrence and incapacitation; and on the other, it is expensive and damaging, possibly causing an escalation in crime amongst those who are released (p.5)

This statement appears to accept the validity of deterrence and incapacitation for the sake of temporary community protection. However, the Unit Management Guidelines go on to propose leadership and good example by prison staff as the major strategy for damage control after release. Modelling of appropriate behaviour by prison officers is claimed to facilitate development of prisoner skills that:

lead to responsibility, self-reliance and self-discipline ... skills that will enhance their chances of living a crime-free life after they are released (p.5).

Despite the good intentions of the prison staff there is no resolution of the age-old correctional dilemma, that is, how is it proposed to reform the individual whilst he/she is being deterred and

incapacitated at the same time? Barwon staff say that the answer lies in the individual taking responsibility for his/her behaviour in the context of a humane and rational prison management system. So each living unit within the prison is semi-autonomous with prisoners each relating to one prison officer, who has a caseload of about ten prisoners, for counselling and general welfare. This is in addition to other custodial/welfare responsibilities. This staff-inmate relationship is the basis for responsible citizenship within the prison.

Prison programs, especially vocational training programs are seen as a way of credentialling prisoners to facilitate their transition to responsible citizenship, in the wider community upon release. This proposition needs to be tested and provides the stimulus for this evaluation of Barwon programs. The focus of the evaluation is on prison programs and to some extent these could hardly develop in a repressive prison environment, because education and training require the opportunity to think and to solve problems. While the unit management system is not the central focus of this evaluation, it is acknowledged that unit management contributes to the prisoners' participation in education and training programs.

Whether the encouragement of responsible citizenship in the prison is transferrable to community living situations is debatable because of the difficulty of replicating community living conditions in the prison. Evidence of the inability of prisons to replicate 'normal' social intercourse is provided by the lack of daily contact with

family and friends. In some cases this respite may have a healing effect but deprivation of contact with non-criminal people of different age-groups, gender and class, together with the common human need for intimacy, renders the prison experience unnatural.

There are also some assumptions underlying the transfer of responsible citizenship proposition which could be investigated further in another study. The assumptions are:

1. that prisoners lack previous knowledge and experience in responsible citizenship;
2. that prisoners will take the opportunity to model responsible citizenship as exemplified by prison staff;
3. that character change is possible in a prison environment;
4. that the individual is totally responsible for his/her behaviour and, conversely, that social conditions have no contributory role in criminality;
5. that the community at large will accept the changed person as an equal and responsible citizen upon release.

This is not to argue that unit management is flawed, but simply that the evidence for transfer of responsible citizenship is not yet available. Human rights, respect for others, decision-making

responsibility, and accountability for one's behaviour are all to be encouraged in any human service agency - including prisons, where the longer the term of imprisonment the more difficult for prisoners to maintain a clear connection between community reality and prison reality. For example, one prisoner who had been out for two weeks after two years of imprisonment said:

Mate, I'm exhausted. I can't keep up. Things, people, everything moves so fast out here.

Catching up on family and friends in the community is different from weekly visits in prison. Other areas of community living are also different. Accommodation changes from a single cell free of charge to a room, flat or house for rental or rates. Transport changes from short supervised trips on foot from one part of the prison to another, to various forms of public transport, taxis, or self-driven cars, across the metropolis or on freeways to provincial cities and towns. Culture expands from evening television programs to multicultural choices in music, art, drama, film, language, food, religions etc.. Recreation no longer centres on occasional organized activities, weight-lifting, tennis and swimming, but also includes a wide range of spectator sports and access to a large number of public buildings such as the museum, zoo, civic centres, shops and hotels. Welfare changes from personal protection and health services to social security benefit, medicare, 'the Melbourne Big' and a variety of agencies. It also requires a large stretch of the imagination to move from the prisoner economy of a small daily allowance according to work performance and behaviour, a weekly canteen spend, and sundry winnings or losing at card games, to a national economy in recession, high unemployment, and the dole to be negotiated and budgeted on a

fortnightly basis. Politically too, community living is quite complex. Prisoners move from a prison system comprised of the rulers and the ruled with some local formal and informal variations, to a much more dynamic set of arrangements based on class, gender, race, ethnicity, wealth and personal networks.

Prison employment also differs from employment in the community in that prison employment is often less central to the individual's self-identity, is more to do with being occupied than with labour market or career structures, and is not pivotal to quality of life or personal and family survival issues. There are few prison occupations which have direct transferability to community employment opportunities. The Barwon involvement in vocational training programs is of interest to this evaluation study because the employment area would seem to be one area of prison life where the degree of incapacitation or disqualification from community reality could be reduced at the same time as long-term community protection is increased. As one woman said:

I work hard here. It helps to pass the time, but nothing I do here will get me a job outside. What I want more than anything else is to get my kids back from foster care. I haven't heard from the Housing Commission for eight weeks. I get out in four weeks. They've had plenty of time to do something. If I get out with no job, no house, no kids, no friends, just a dole cheque, I'll have to go back on the streets. Then I'll finish up back in here and everyone will say: why did you come back?"

Perhaps bureaucratic processes take longer than eight weeks to provide public housing, especially in times when there are long waiting lists, but lack of communication, combined with deprivation of community contacts and supports, increases prisoner anxiety in the last few weeks prior to release. To assist with community re-integration, education and training programs could be developed to keep prisoners in contact with community realities in key survival areas - transport, welfare, health, culture, commerce, politics,, employment and recreation - as well as upgrading qualifications. However, many prisoners have unpleasant memories of previous schooling, and prison administrations generally present many barriers to prisoner participation in education programs (Braithwaite, 1980). These include prison administration emphasis on work, insufficient education places for prisoner demand resulting in a lengthy waiting period for participation, and fees and equipment for some courses which act as a disincentive to many prisoners and render enrolment inaccessible to others. For some prisoners the education centre provides a respite from the custodial environment but possibly at the price of being seen as soft or not fitting the 'macho' image of the regular prisoner.

These barriers to participation are not insurmountable but they are still part of the prison scene and they were identified a long time ago (Tomasic and Dobinson, 1979). Their continued presence is unfortunate because education provides daily practice in interacting with outside community issues. Education can lead to credentials that have currency in the labour market; education can develop self-confidence through intellectual, personal and social competence curricula; and

education can, through experiential problem-solving methods, address those areas of community living from which the prisoner has been temporarily disqualified from participation - housing, transport, budgeting, politics, transport etc.. Other areas of prison life can be drawn into an education model for prison management - prison work and recreation are two obvious areas for inclusion in an educational model, but democratic procedures within prison living units can also provide experiential learning highly relevant to community living in the world outside (Grant, 1982).

The assumption underlying this proposed emphasis on education is that prisoners need to maintain regular interaction with key areas of normal community life throughout their temporary disqualification so that when they are returned to the community outside, the expectation of responsible citizenship is within their capacity. One way of addressing this issue was proposed in a report (Semmens, 1988) to the Office of Corrections and the State Training Board. Briefly, the report recommended articulation of education vocational training, and work experience to create pathways to credentials that may be completed within the prison system or continued in community education and training institutions after release. The major recommendations of the report outline how the proposal would work:

1. that prison industries be selected in areas which reflect labour market expansion so that access to available post-release employment is increased;
2. that prison industries be coordinated with vocational training programs so that industrial experience can become accredited as part of vocational training programs;
3. that prison vocational training provision be structured so that prisoners may enter short courses, preparatory courses, apprenticeship and other accredited courses according to their level of skill and experience in a particular industry or career path;
4. that correctional administration be restructured so that continuity of educational and vocational training programs is possible upon transfer from one prison to another and from prison to community-based supervision;
5. that access to updating of qualifications and work experience for industrial supervisors and study leave be a right for prison officers, in order to improve career prospects, strengthen morale, and develop greater support for prisoner access to vocational training; and

6. that a participatory model for prison management be introduced initially in a new prison where existing practices and procedures do not have to be phased out.

Recommendation six is directed at developing an education for democratic citizenship in the prison environment as preparation for community living on release. Recommendation six places education courses, vocational training and work experience in a community living context on the assumption that the proposed increased emphasis on credentialing prisoners would not be sufficient on its own for prisoners to become more employable. Job skills are important for gaining employment but social skills are essential for retaining employment.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Introduction

Evaluation of correctional programs does not have a tradition of rigor. In the Spring, 1974, issue of The Public Interest, Martinson concluded that:

with a few isolated exceptions, the rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have had no appreciable effect on recidivism (p.25).

Martinson's research, based on published reports of prison rehabilitation efforts from 1945-1967, was limited to studies which met standards for social science research. Not surprisingly many studies did not meet these standards. Among the problems identified by Martinson were:

1. a failure to employ a basic research design utilising experimental and control groups in order to isolate the effect of the rehabilitation program on the clients;

2. studies were frequently not replicated and thus the reliability of the reported findings were difficult to ascertain.

Martinson concluded that the general lack of positive findings may have been the result of ineffectual programs, faulty research or both.

Recent Developments

According to Jengelski (1984) and Ryan (1987) the quality of correctional evaluation efforts has not improved since Martinson's 1974 statement because of inconclusive results and only inferential relationships between program participation and post-release success. Bell (1989) also reported that even when program evaluations are available they focus more on internal processes, such as enrolments and withdrawals, than on individual gains or post-release follow-up.

Jenkins (1990) is more positive in his presentation of some examples of evaluation designs which have attempted to collect and analyse post release data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of correctional programs. One such project, was conducted by the Illinois Council on Vocational Education (1988). The study involved 760 releasees and attempted to isolate the impact of vocational education. Four groups of releases were followed up:

1. inmates with academic education only;
2. inmates with vocational education only;
3. inmates with academic and vocational education;
4. a control group.

The report concluded that vocational education was positively related to post-release success in obtaining employment. Even vocational education students who did not complete their course of study had higher levels of employment than the control group. Where completion of vocational training was combined with completion of secondary schooling, releases had a greater chance of securing employment and avoiding criminal activity.

These results are supported by a recidivism study in Maryland (Division of Correction , 1989) where completion of vocational training is associated with a lower overall return rate over a two-year follow-up. The lowest rates are reported for inmates who had completed an Associate of Arts degree while in prison, but as there is no control group it is unclear whether the results are due to participation in the education program or to other variables such as previous education level, type of offence, length of imprisonment, labour market conditions, or general social competence.

These variables rarely influence correctional educators' program planning and often post-release behaviour is not part of their responsibility nor connected to their responsibility. Recidivism rates are an objective measure of program effectiveness but may be unrelated to the program goals of correctional educators which may variously be: involvement of as many prisoners as possible; educational gain for participants; course completion, or even course commencement. Factors related to offending, such as drug addiction or anger management, may be seen to be the major focus of educative efforts prior to participation in credentialling courses and the impact of these 'preliminary' courses needs to be taken into account by program evaluation studies (Figgie, 1988).

On the other hand the most 'effective' programs may be those which aim to educate prisoners through addressing their problems and rationally working through their options. The Canadian Department of Corrections has developed a high profile in correctional education program development through its adoption of an education model that links cognition and crime. According to Fabiano (1991), staff from the University of Victoria (British Columbia) had established by 1980 that social skills could be acquired through an education program that provided university level education in the humanities and social sciences. The program operated in two prisons, Matsqui and Kent, and outcome data indicated exceptionally low recidivism. The fundamental assumption of the program was that:

offenders had developmental delays in the acquisition of a number of cognitive skills necessary for the development of one's interpersonal problem-solving ability and moral reasoning ability which are required for effective social adaptation. Most criminals could be likened to the pre-adolescent child. Thus criminals' reasoning, both cognitive and moral, and their perceptions are different from the majority. This leads to decisions that result in criminal behaviour (Fabiano, 1991).

Program implications of this set of assumptions are in the direction of interpersonal cognitive problem-solving processes that are designed to mediate healthy social adjustment. Fabiano (1991) concludes that:

Successfully associating cognition and crime could imply the replacement of the medical model, which had prevailed in corrections for some time, with an educational model.

However, it appears that Fabiano has replaced one pathological model (medical) with another pathological model (cognitive deficit). The claimed reduction in recidivism rates may be due to a number of factors as there is no evidence which points directly to diagnosis of cognitive deficits or to program participation - is it the clear statement of program philosophy and goals, or the cohesiveness and consistency of staff around a set of guiding principles, or the

program content and teaching style, or is it the acknowledgement that prisoners can solve their own problems given a little guidance? Selection of prisoners may also affect outcomes and control group data would help to validate or refute the claims of Fabiano and other proponents (Ross, 1980; Gendreau and Ross, 1980) of the cognitive deficit theory.

Gehring (1988) broadens the cognitive theory debate to include the prison environment as well as the individual when he writes:

The reigning education paradigm (in prisons) is still behavioural, as opposed to cognitive or cognitive-moral, and the corrections paradigm is co-ercive as opposed to democratic.

Gehring goes on to observe that:

When trusted to participate in democratic decision-making, incarcerated frequently develop the capability to think their way through life's problems.

Could it be that an authoritarian prison environment inhibits cognitive development and that this is interpreted by Ross, Fabiano and Ross (1988) as cognitive deficit?

The idea of democratising prison management to create an interactive learning environment for development of responsible citizenship is not new, although it is a radical departure from the traditional authoritarian correctional style. Twenty years ago the Lorton Project (Taylor, 1974; Pendleton, 1988), attracted national attention in the U.S. for its apparent success (15 percent recidivism) in re-integrating prisoners into the community through linking academic studies in prison to real life situations in the community and through gradual transfer of participants from problem-solving in prison to problem-solving and community service with alienated youth. A major difference between Lorton and the Canadian model is that the Lorton program was not premised on cognitive deficits but on cognitive development and transfer of learning to community living, including employment. The Lorton assumption that everyone can do better, avoids the focus on diagnosis of deficits and concentrates entirely on thoughtful analysis and active solution of human problems.

Recently (H'sai Corin, 1990), a similar project has commenced in some Californian prisons. While taking advantage of Canadian cognitive program development, the Californian project shares the optimism of the Lorton project that 'everyone can do better'. Groups of prisoners participate in designing and acting-out role-plays and other co-operative activities directed at solving problems. Interestingly it is claimed (H'sai Corin, 1990) that scores on maths and reading tests increase even though specific lessons in maths and reading may not have been given. The outcomes in terms of post release employment and recidivism may be years away but

the Californian Department of Corrections initially supported the project in seven prisons because it badly needs to reduce recidivism due to a budget approaching \$2 billion. Recently, the Californian Department of Corrections has shown signs of withdrawing support for the program because it is perceived that the electorate is in retributive mood. How any correctional programs can overcome the growing barrier of community hostility to offenders is unknown. Meanwhile costs keep escalating, as does recidivism.

Other States in America face a similar set of problems to those of California although it appears that vocational training is preferred over a problem-solving educational model for rehabilitation.

Vocational training is emphasised in several States (Ohio: Coffey, 1986; Alabama: Cogburn, 1988; Oklahoma: Davis and Chown, 1990) and in the Federal prisons (McCollum, 1984). In Ohio there is an attempt to link training, industry and education (T.I.E. programs: Coffey, 1986). Responding to a call from Chief Justice Warren Burger to transform prisons from 'human warehouses' into 'factories and schools with fences', the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction began to integrate education, skills, and work experience programs with the aim of enabling prisoners to find and keep employment upon release. Correctional authorities in Ohio drew on a national survey (Malzio et al, 1984) in which employers were asked to indicate the emphasis placed on educational credentials in their company's employment practices and to rate the importance of various skills and attitudes for most adults employed at their company in jobs

that required not more than a high school diploma or equivalent credentials. Ninety percent of responding employers put emphasis on credentials for both employment and promotion. The employer ratings of various preferred skills and attitudes were as follows:

1. completing job assignment;
2. following spoken instructions;
3. getting along with people;
4. reading and understanding information;
5. following written instructions.

The employer requirements gave added impetus for the T.I.E. program development in Ohio because it was decided that none of the requirements could be taught in academic classroom, vocational shop, or industry alone. There had to be devised 'a proper mix of all three'. In practice prisoners are assigned to one of five main job clusters:

1. the academic T.I.E., which encompasses all mandatory (for illiterates) and voluntary education programs from basic literacy to post secondary. This T.I.E. may extend to post-release. Work assignments are linked to clerical positions and other institutional jobs requiring academic preparation;

2. the vocational/apprenticeship T.I.E., which places prisoners in vocational training, apprenticeship, or on-the-job training programs consistent with their interests and aptitudes. This T.I.E. includes all skilled trades such as carpentry and culinary arts and may extend to post-release;
3. the industrial T.I.E., which provides the prisoner with pre-industrial and for specific vocational training prior to, or concurrent with, placement into an Ohio Penal Industries job;
4. the service T.I.E., which provides initial work assignments for offenders entering the system and those not wishing to enter a specialised T.I.E. Service assignments include laundry, cleaning, and farm work.

Six weeks prior to release, prisoners move into a pre-release centre to participate in transition to community programs which include job readiness instruction, completion of employment credentials, community linkages, and job placement.

While there are no reported statistics on re-offending rates, Littlefield (1989) reports that full-time employment increases from 21.5 percent upon entry to the prison to an overall 40 percent employment upon release. Unfortunately employment rates are not specified for graduates from each of the T.I.E. tracks. However, there does appear to be a large increase in the proportion of

prisoners who gain post-release employment after participation in one of the T.I.E. programs for an average of about two years.

One study which does give details of recidivism rates, but not employment rates, was carried out by Cogburn (1988). The study sought to determine recidivism rates for prisoners who earned a diploma or general education development (G.E.D.) certificate at Ingram State Technical College during the years 1976-1986. Study findings included the following: of the 2,844 prisoners in the study, 1,182 earned diplomas, 284 earned both diplomas and G.E.D. certificates, and 1,378 earned G.E.D. certificates only; 69.7 percent of the program completers were non-recidivists, 10.8 percent were recidivists, and 19.5 percent were still in prison.

Recidivism rates were 12.9 percent for G.E.D. recipients, 13.3 percent for diplomates, and 16.9 percent for those who earned both a G.E.D. and a diploma. While these figures are lower than those reported in other recidivism studies, the upward trend with increasing qualifications does need further explanation. Cogburn believes that those who stayed in prison long enough to get both G.E.D. and diploma were more serious offenders with a longer criminal history. Cogburn concludes that the education program is effective in reducing recidivism but makes no comment about the correlation between length of sentence and recidivism, and the apparent diminution in program effectiveness on longer term prisoners. Cogburn also fails to indicate whether the period for calculating recidivism is the same for all offenders or whether it is calculated from release date until the

time of the study. If it is the latter case, then the period for re-offending for more recently released long-term "higher risk" prisoners may not include some cases of re-offending. This would also be true of some short-term prisoners but, as they are lower recidivism risks (according to Cogburn), the rate of re-offending would not be as great as for the longer term prisoners. Thus the overall recidivism rates may be higher than Cogburn states, especially for the longer term prisoners.

A recent recidivism study (Davis and Chown; 1990) does address the issue of length of post-release period for calculation of recidivism rates following participation in vocational training. This Oklahoma study examined the recidivism trends among prisoners released after completion of vocational training compared to prisoners who did not receive such training in the period January 1, 1982 to July 31, 1986. The vocational training group consisted of 2,372 released prisoners whereas the comparison group consisted of 9,851 released prisoners. The study found that 26 percent of the vocational trainees and 22 percent of the comparison group were reincarcerated. The study concluded that other factors, such as age, classification, and criminal history, might account for the higher recidivism of the vocational training group. Further analysis is necessary as the outcomes contrast with a Federal Department of Corrections Report (Miller, 1989) which claims that the recidivism rate for prisoners who completed an apprenticeship program was one-third the rate of others released.

Miller's finding is supported by the work of Schumacker et al (1990) who compared adult releasees who participated in vocational and/or academic training with a control group which received no training. All 19 adult correctional institutions in a mid-western state were involved in providing release information, yielding a total of 760 releasees studied for 12 months. A stratified proportional random sampling procedure was used to select and equate inmate groups. After 12 months the vocational and vocational/academic groups had the highest employment rates and lowest criminal activity rates. The control group had the highest criminal activity rate. Releasees who completed a vocational course of training whilst in prison had a higher employment rate and fewer arrests than non-completers, but even these had better outcomes than the control group. The academic group had the lowest employment rate and the second highest criminal activity rate at 12 months, but those who had completed a G.E.D. or higher had a higher employment rate and lower criminal activity than those who had less than a G.E.D., Overall the Schumacker et al data suggest that prisoners uninterested in vocational training and those with low academic skills are most likely to be unemployed and to re-offend post release.

While these outcomes may be close to expectations of correctional program staff, Krogstad (1988) believes that more can be achieved by increasing prisoner access to programs. Krogstad (1988) addresses the prison system barriers to success caused by the continual transferal of prisoners to other programs or prisons, lack of variation in training tasks, and the wide age-range of prisoners. He has made

articulation of training possible through development of study modules and through prisoner participation in keeping a personal competency file which is up-dated each day. If a prisoner misses a day or part of a day, or transfers from one prison to another, he can re-commence training at the point he left off. Each instructor records a grade of competency on the file against each task or unit of study as it is completed. Krogstad (1988) concludes:

The use of this system and format in the academic and vocational programs produced the stability, continuity and accountability that is essential to accountable programming.

Evaluation of program outcomes according to the system described by Krogstad (1988) would indicate whether, through increasing prisoner interest and application to education and training, it is possible to increase post-release employment and reduce recidivism.

At Barwon prison the attempts to articulate programs and the introduction of the unit management approach to prison administration appear to be moving towards increasing prisoner access to continuity of training. This review of programs has yielded some research data, which together with the theoretical foundation outlined in chapter two, may guide further program development at Barwon. Additionally, there are some points which will assist in evaluation of existing programs at Barwon. Firstly, the following common weaknesses in evaluation design and data analysis have been identified:

1. Failure to employ a basic research design (Martinson, 1974);
2. lack of replicability (Martinson, 1974);
3. only inferential relationships between program participation and post-release success (Jengeleski, 1984; Ryan, 1987);
4. varying criteria for successful program participation (Littlefield, 1989; Figgie, 1988);
5. varying criteria for successful program outcomes (Cogburn, 1988).

Secondly, more reliable program evaluations demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. use of a control group (Jenkins, 1990; Schumacker, 1990);
2. focus on individual gains and post-release follow-up (Bell, 1989; Maryland Division of Corrections, 1989);
3. analysis of post-release employment and recidivism rates (Miller, 1989; Schumacker, 1990).

Krogstad (1988) makes the further point that program evaluations need to hold the prison system, as well as the prisoner, accountable for program outcomes. One may wish to include some assessment of labour market opportunities upon release as well. Data from New South Wales (Gorta and Panaretos, 1987) suggest that programs which stop at the prison gate do not reduce problems of unemployment and recidivism. Work release programs are recommended to assist with the transition from prison to community.

Duguid (1988) and other Canadian correctional experts (Fabiano, 1991; Ross, 1980) go further when they argue that while transition to community may help, citizenship must be taught on the basis of clearly developed educational theory, if alternatives to offending are to be learned and practised.

CONCLUSION

Martinson may have been right - correctional programs are full of good ideas and enthusiasm but rarely is there any evaluation. Even if the recidivism criterion is too harsh in that it blames the individual and/or program for uncontrolled post-release factors, such as the state of the economy, a more rigorous appraisal of program aims and content would yield guidelines for further program development at the host prison and replication of the innovation elsewhere. While the Barwon evaluation may be too small as a basis for generation of widespread change in program development elsewhere, it is presented in ways which reflect on program aims, content and methods. Strengths, limitations, areas for further development, and issues for resolution are detailed.

Chapter 3

The Barwon Study

Introduction

According to theory and some isolated examples of practice it is possible to develop correctional programs which provide formative educational experiences. This contrasts to traditional prison program focus on reformative activities, although there has been increasing sophistication in the nature of reform programs, as illustrated in the chart below. Basically the task of this evaluation is to establish what stage of development Barwon Prison programs have reached and how the next stage of development could be achieved. The Unit Management Guidelines (1990) suggest that Barwon Prison is aiming at community integration. As indicated by the broken line in the box in the bottom corner of Chart 1, there is some tension between the traditional retributive nature of imprisonment and the goal of community re-integration. That tension is not so apparent in earlier stages of program development because non-articulated programs are completely under the control of prison management, whereas with articulated programming, management agrees to share some power with program staff. Further, in order to achieve 'community responsibility through participation' management devolves some decision-making power to prisoners hence the tension between retribution and re-integration in program development. The situation has some similarity to old-style authoritarian factory management and new-style industrial democracy. For the managers who are willing and able to cope with the risks involved in the sharing of decision-making power the benefits are reaped in terms of fewer 'sickies' and higher production (Emery, 1989)

Chart 1 STAGES OF PRISON PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

| CORRECTIONAL FOCUS | PURPOSE | METHODS |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| RETRIBUTION | TO PUNISH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * IMPRISONMENT * FINE * RESTITUTION |
| REFORM | TO CHANGE CHARACTER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * IMPRISONMENT * FINE * RESTITUTION * COUNSELLING * PERSONAL MODELS |
| REHABILITATION | TO TEACH NEW SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * IMPRISONMENT * FINE * RESTITUTION * COUNSELLING * PERSONAL MODELS * SKILLS TRAINING |
| RE-INTEGRATION | TO MAKE FULL CITIZENSHIP POSSIBLE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * IMPRISONMENT * FINE * RESTITUTION <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * COUNSELLING * SYSTEM MODELS * ARTICULATED SKILLS TRAINING * LEARNING THROUGH CO-OPERATIVE PARTICIPATION |

A distinction is made in the chart between rehabilitation and re-integration. Rehabilitation, as presented, reflects the changes that occurred in the Victorian prison system under the leadership of A.R. Whatmore. The program emphasis in the 1950's and 1960's moved from expectations that the prisoner would somehow reform himself/herself, to an emphasis on individual training program involving education and prison industries. Prisoners continued to be exposed to desirable individuals (chaplains, sportsmen, and other well-intentioned visitors) who were good examples of community accepted standards of behaviour and achievement. The influence of these itinerant 'personal models' became supported by on-going contact with teachers and industry supervisors who provided opportunities for prisoners to increase their skill levels. During the 1980's a new phase of program development (re-integration) commenced with the replacement of teachers employed from Schools Division of the Education Ministry by teachers employed at a College of Technical and Further Education (T.A.F.E.) in the vicinity of the prison. This means that prisoners now have greater access to credentials that have currency in the labour market and are accredited by the TAFE College rather than the prison or the prison school. The T.A.F.E. development also gives rise to the possibility of credits from previous education, vocational training and prior work experience in the community as well as current work experience in prison. Additionally, articulation of skills' training can occur when education, vocational training and work-experience within the prison are combined together to meet the requirements of a credential that can be completed within the prison or continued at a TAFE College after release.

The involvement of TAFE Colleges is one aspect of the community re-integration phase and is evidence of the introduction of a system model to complement the personal models exemplified by earlier phases of prison program development. The other system innovation which aims to facilitate community re-integration is the Unit Management System introduced at Barwon and other new prisons in Victoria. Through assigning teams of staff to work with groups of prisoners and using their discretion within the structure provided by the prison goals and procedures:

Staff are to support, maintain and provide a prison environment that reflects the diversity, demands and expectations of ordinary community life.
(Principle 7, Unit Management in Victorian Prisons: An Introduction, O.O.C., 1989)

Unit Management encourages an environment of co-operative participation between staff and prisoners which is consistent with the theory outlined in chapter two, i.e. that new learning is most likely to take place through co-operative social interaction. This refers to the overall environment of the prison as well as between individual prisoners and teaching staff and group learning projects.

To evaluate the impact of both Unit Management and the articulation of prisoner programs would be a very large study, probably requiring a period of live-in participant observation. However, the prison environment cannot be separated from the actual programs, so while the focus of this evaluation is on education, training, and work programs, references will be made to the prison management system wherever appropriate.

4.1 Research Question

The major research question for this evaluation of programs at Barwon prison is:

Does program articulation increase the chances of employment and reduce the level of recidivism post release?

Articulation refers to the following program connections:

1. the availability of course credits for education and work experience prior to imprisonment;
2. between education, vocational training and work experience so that prisoners can complete community accepted credentials whilst in prison;
3. the facility for continuation of education/training courses upon transfer from one section of the prison to another and from one prison to another;
4. the facility for continuation of education/training whilst on parole.

Diagrammatically, the research design can be represented as follows:

Table 1 Research Design

| Interview 1 (see Appendix 1) | Interview 2 (see Appendix 2) | Follow-up (see Appendix 3) |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Pre-Barwon education, training, and work experience | Program participation at Barwon | First six months post release - education, training, employment, offending. |

Data on previous education training and employment were collected at the first interview, and data relating to education, training and work program participation whilst at Barwon were collected by interview at least three months after the first interview. Follow-up data on post-release employment and recidivism were collected from community-based corrections offices and police records.

In addition to education, training and employment data at each of the three data collection points, personal data were collected from prisoner files, with the permission of each participant, in order to establish whether any personal factors correlate with program participation and post-release success or failure. The file data collection areas were:

1. Personal Background
Age.
Marital status.
Occupational status.
Nationality.
Drug involvement.
Medical status.
2. Criminal Background
Number and types of past offences.
Number of previous prison convictions.
Length of previous institution and prison history.
3. Present Sentence
Type of offence(s).
Number of present offences.
Length of sentence.
Date of most recent sentence.
Initial security rating.
Expected release date.

Some contextual data were also collected so that an analysis of how the correctional system works to facilitate and/or impede education, training and work programs could be attempted. These data were gathered from attendance at various meetings at which decisions are made about prisoner placement and participation. The meetings were:

classification meeting (Metropolitan prison)

review and assessment meeting (Barwon)

orientation program

program staff meeting

pre-release program

4.3 Data analysis

The task of the data analysis is to establish whether:

1. there are any background factors that correlate with program choice;
2. program articulation influences subsequent community employment opportunities.
3. contextual factors influence program participation.

Data are quantified, charted, and where appropriate, tests of significance applied so that themes can be identified and related to the research question.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM EVALUATION AT BARWON

Introduction

The first finding of the Barwon evaluation is that program articulation, as defined in chapter 4 is not yet fully developed at Barwon. What is happening is an attempt on behalf of some prisoners to link vocational training with work experience. This is especially the case with prisoners enrolled for the Kitchen Hand's course. This is a much more limited definition of articulation than that envisaged in the design of this evaluation project - although the more comprehensive definition is consistent with the evolving plan of the Office of Corrections (Corrections Industry Training Plan, 1992 and 1993).

The kitchen hands are employed in the kitchen at Barwon and are responsible for all meal preparation. In addition, they participate in a TAFE training course so that the combination of practice and theory is recognised with a certificate after 13 weeks. Prisoners then have the option of staying on in the kitchen as their work placement and they may enrol in an advanced kitchen course as well.

There is now a third level of hospitality certificate that prisoners may take. Eventually the same modular TAFE hospitality courses will be offered in most prisons so that prisoners may continue their training upon transfer or release. Analysis of interview responses indicated that all prisoners who enrolled for the Kitchen Hands' course claimed that they did so to improve themselves. This is a similar response to that of enrollees in full-time education courses. It was therefore decided to group the kitchen hands and the full-time education students together and conduct a careful analysis of all data to discover whether there are other ways in which this group differs from other prisoners. This group is hereafter referred to as the 'Improvers'.

Another group identified itself by its involvement predominantly in one work activity, usually for the entire period of detention at Barwon. Most of these prisoners worked in the metal fabrication workshop and did not seek additional training. This group is hereafter referred to as the 'Stayers'.

A third group participated in at least two work activities during their time at Barwon. Rarely did any of these prisoners seek education but appeared to move from one activity to another 'for a change' or 'out of interest'. This group is hereafter referred to as the 'Shoppers'.

The numbers completing both prison interviews in each group were as follows:

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| Improvers | = | 18 |
| Stayers | = | 14 |
| Shoppers | = | <u>14</u> |
| Total | = | <u>46</u> |

The mean length of detention at Barwon for each group is as follows -

| | | |
|-----------|---|-------------|
| Improvers | = | 13.3 months |
| Stayers | = | 9.5 months |
| Shoppers | = | 12.9 months |

Perhaps part of the explanation for the 'Shoppers' moving from metalcraft to another work activity is that they have longer to serve at Barwon than the 'Stayers'.

However, the 'Improvers' generally had the longest period of time at Barwon and once they moved into a vacancy in the kitchen or the education centre, they stayed until released from the prison. The 'Improvers' were also located in the same living unit (Eucalypt) within the prison. The 'Stayers' and the 'Shoppers' lived mostly in another unit (Diosma) and, occasionally, the reception unit (Cassia).

Seven women also consented to participate in the evaluation and completed both prison interviews. This is an insufficient number to yield significant data. However, data from the women will be used in a comparative way wherever possible.

Due to the time-limits on the evaluation numbers of participants were lower than desired. However, to include large numbers of prisoners from a long-term security prison in a short-term project is obviously impossible. In order to allow a six-month follow-up period and time to write this report it was necessary to work with prisoners who had at least 3 months to serve and who would be released from Barwon by the end of the first year of the evaluation project. The prisoner sample includes a cross-section of offenders, age groups, and lengths of sentence. Only seven men declined to participate, usually because they wanted to do their time without hassles. Three women who met the broad criteria, for inclusion in the study, also declined to participate saying they were not interested. One further male and one female were lost to the study due to prison transfer and release before the second interview could be conducted. Another woman refused to participate in the second interview and was therefore lost from the study. All prisoners who completed the second interview are included in the study, However, post-release data on a further four male prisoners is unavailable due to deportation. Post-release data on another four male prisoners are limited to the re-offending criterion as their sentences were less than 12 months and therefore had no parole period which would have permitted checking post-release employment data from their supervising community corrections' office.

In summary, any selected prisoner who completed both prison interviews is included in the study - see Table 2. Attrition of sample size at the post-release stage weakens the validity of the data relating to program impact on post-release employment and offending. However, due to the time limit on the study this problem could not be avoided.

Table 2
The Study Sample

| Interview 1 | Interview 2 | Follow-up | |
|-------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Men = 47 | Men = 46 (Improvers = 18) (Stayers = 14) (Shoppers = 14) | Men = 42 Employment/ Improvers = 13 Stayers = 13 Shoppers = 12 | Re-Offending 15 14 13 |
| | | ----- 38 | 42 ----- |
| Women = 9 | Women = 7 | Women = 17 | |

Analysis of Data

Stage One - File Data and Interview One

At the first interview participants were given a written outline of the evaluation and their consent was requested to proceed with the interview and for perusal of their Office of Corrections' files for background data. While the interview data were collected before the file data it is more logical sequence for data analysis if the personal background data are analysed before the interview data which focus specifically on previous schooling, vocational training and work experience.

File Data

Age

The mean age for each group at time of interview were as follows:

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| Improvers | = | 30.1 years |
| Stayers | = | 30.6 years |
| Shoppers | = | 35.9 years |

While this may appear that the 'Shoppers' tended to be older than the other two groups, it is noted that seven (out of 18) 'Improvers' were over 36 years of age and four were under 22 years of age. The median age for 'Stayers' was 26-30, while the 'Shoppers' had five (out of 14)

aged above 36 years of age and this group, pushed the mean age up, although there were another four 'Shoppers' under 25 years of age. With such a small overall sample it is difficult to attach any significance to age differences between groups.

Marital Status

The marital status for members of each group is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3 - Marital status of Sample

| | Improvers | Stayers | Shoppers |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Never | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| Married | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Defacto | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Separated | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Slightly more than half of the total sample was either married or in a defacto relationship.

Number of Children

While seven 'Improvers' had no children the mean number of children for this group was 1.3. The mean was pushed up a little as one member had five children. All the children of this prisoner were in the care of Community Services Victoria. The 'Stayers' had least children as a group. Ten members had no children whereas six 'Shoppers' had no children and five had one child. Overall it can be concluded that about half the prisoners in this sample have a small number of children. Except in one case, the children were living with the prisoners' partners.

Nationality

Table 4 presents the numbers of prisoners in each sub-group according to nationality.

Table 4 - Nationality of Prisoner Sample

| Nationality | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Non-Black Australian | 12 | 11 | 10 |
| Koori | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| British | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| European | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 4 indicates that the largest proportion of the sample was non-black Australian born.

Table 5 indicates sixty nine percent of the sample was unemployed at the time of arrest - most of these for less than three months.

Table 5 - Employment Status at Time of Arrest

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Employed | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| Unemployed (Less than 3 mnths) | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| Unemployed (3 - 6 mnths) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unemployed (7-12 mnths) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unemployed (over 12 mnths) | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 6 presents the numbers of prisoners in the sample who had a drug or alcohol problem at the time of arrest.

Table 6 - Drug or Alcohol Dependence

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|------------|----------|--------|---------|
| No problem | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Drug | 13 (5) | 8 (3) | 10 (3) |
| Alcohol | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Sixty seven percent of the sample was involved with drugs at the time of arrest either as a user or as a trafficker (see bracketed numbers). Some users were also recorded in their file data as traffickers as well so the bracketed numbers refer only to those who were not known to be using drugs but were selling drugs at the time of arrest and were charged with that offence.

Table 7 gives a brief medical profile of the sample according to Office of Corrections' files early in the latest period of detention which includes the time at Barwon prison.

Table 7 - Medical Status of Sample

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|------------------------------------|----------|--------|---------|
| No problem | 12 | 8 | 13 |
| Physical disability (chronic) | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Physical disability (temporary) | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Intellectual | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Psychiatric | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

This sample is largely without known medical problems. The small number in the category of chronic physical disability include asthma sufferers and two with minor congenital leg impairments. It appears that despite drug involvement there is no recorded evidence of permanent damage from that involvement.

Data on previous offences and detention are shown in Tables 8 and 9. These Tables contain separate data from that in Table 10 which is limited to the offences related to the most recent prison sentence at Barwon.

Table 8 - Types of Previous Offence

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| No previous offence | 9 | 6 | 5 |
| Violent person (e.g. rape) Person | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| (e.g. minor assault) Violent Property | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (e.g. armed robbery) Property | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| (e.g. theft) Drug | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| (e.g. Traffic) | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 8 indicates that of those who have a previous offence record, the majority were property offences such as theft and burglary.

Table 9 - Past Detention

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| None | 10 | 6 | 5 |
| Institution U15 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Institution U17 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Institution 17+ | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Prison | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Prison more than once | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 9 summarises previous institution and prison history. None of the prisoners was counted twice but file data indicate that once an institutional career begins, say at less than 15 years of age, it continues through to imprisonment for this sample. While no prisoner in the sample began his institutional career in the under 17 age group, those who started at under 15 were institutionalised (youth training centre sentence) at under 17, over 17, and then imprisoned.

Table 9 will be referred to again when release and recidivism data from the Barwon samples are analysed later in the report - to evaluate whether length of previous institution history has a more significant effect on post-release behaviour than type of program participation i.e. Improver, Stayer or Shopper.

Tables 10 and 11 provide details of the most recent offences and related minimum sentences.

Table 10 - Types of Most Recent Offences

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Violent person e.g. Rape | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Person e.g. minor assault | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Violent property e.g. armed robbery | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Property e.g. theft | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Drugs e.g. Traffic | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 10 indicates that all of the prisoners in the sample were serious offenders either by the nature of the offence or the number of property offences. This observation is born out by the length of sentence data in Table 11.

Table 11 - Minimum Length of Most Recent Sentence

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Up to 12 months | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 13-24 months | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| 25-36 months | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| 37-48 months | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 49-60 months | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 61-72 months | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 73-84 months | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 11 indicates that the majority of prisoners in the sample were expected to stay in prison for more than 12 months and up to four years. A smaller proportion of prisoners were to stay for longer than four years. With remissions many could expect to be released in less than their minimum sentence but the nature of their offences required them to serve their sentence in a high security prison.

Over all the profile data on the Barwon sample do not suggest any major background differences between the three types of program participants.

Interview One

In this interview (See Appendix 1) participants were asked about their schooling, their post-school training, their previous prison training, their previous employment and their post-release employment prospects as at the time of the Interview.

Table 12 shows the highest level of schooling completed.

Table 12 - Highest Level of Schooling Completed

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Primary | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Year 7 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Year 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Year 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Year 10 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Year 11 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Year 12 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

The 'Improvers' trend towards the higher levels of secondary schooling. This trend is influenced by the full-time education sub-group of Improvers. Senior secondary schooling is not a characteristic of the kitchen hands sub-group, nor of the 'Stayers' and 'Shoppers'.

The number of schools attended may give some indication of the amount of movement from school to school and hence the degree of interruption and re-adjustment experienced during the period of schooling.

However, it is not a very reliable indicator because some participants may have attended a small number of schools and left early whereas others may have attended a larger number of schools and stayed until completion of year 12.

Table 13 presents these data.

Table 13 - Number of Schools Attended

| No. Schools Attended | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| 2 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 6 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |
| MEAN | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.2 |

It appears that the 'Shoppers' attended a smaller number of schools than 'Stayers' and 'Improvers'. These data need to be combined with age upon leaving school before explanations are proposed.

These three sub-groups were also compared on their mean age upon leaving school. It appears that 'Improvers' and 'Stayers' received more schooling than 'Shoppers', as the following means indicate:

Table 14 - Mean Age On Leaving School

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Mean | 15.05 years | 15.6 years | 13.5 years |

The mean of the 'Improver' group is slightly affected by one member having never attended school but he did enrol full-time at Barwon in a basic education program. The 'Shoppers' mean may have been also slightly reduced by one member leaving school at the age of 6 due to the outbreak of World War 2 near his home town in Europe. He has never apparently returned to schooling and considered himself too old to start at Barwon. Given these unusual cases it appears that 'Improvers' and 'Stayers' tended to leave school at between 15.0 and 15.6 years. 'Shoppers' tended to leave before the end of compulsory schooling. Their lack of involvement in education or training at Barwon may be related to their previous experience of schooling but investigation of such a proposition is outside the scope of this study.

The reasons for leaving school provide further detail on the school experience of the samples. Table 15 sets out these data.

Table 15 - Reason for Leaving School

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Did not like school | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Failed | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Job prospect | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| Expelled | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Tertiary Enrolment | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

It appears that the most common reasons for leaving school were: job prospect, not liking school and expulsion - all of which suggest a general lack of enthusiasm for further schooling past the compulsory age. There is a small number of exceptional cases, mainly in the 'Improvers' group who did complete secondary schooling and move into tertiary education.

Most others have not undertaken any further education or training since leaving school. However, three 'Improvers' did gain apprenticeships, as did five 'Stayers' and four 'Shoppers'. Others have undertaken on-the-job training in semi-skilled positions. These data are summarised in Table 16.

Table 16 - Post-School Education and Training

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nil | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| Apprenticeship | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| On-the-job | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Tertiary | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

For some prisoners it appears that when the opportunity for further education and training is available they will take it. Apart from the kitchen hands' course which is a major characteristic of the 'Improvers' group, and the introduction to production processes of the metalcraft shop, which is a major characteristic of the 'Stayers' group, additional subjects and courses were undertaken by a large proportion of members of the 'Improvers' via the Education Centre at Barwon. Table 17 presents these figures.

Table 17 - Participation in Education Courses at Barwon

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nil | 3 | 13 | 14 |
| Basic | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Secondary Subjects | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Course of Study | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Tertiary | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

As the data analysis for the second interview at Barwon details (P) many prisoners made the point that they had their names on the waiting list for education but were unable to take a course due to the small capacity of the Education Centre.

The employment history of many members of the sample suggests that access to further education and training may improve their prospects of employment upon release. Tables 18, 19 and 20 provide these data.

Table 18 - Type of Employment Prior to Barwon

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nil | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Trade | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Unskilled | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Clerical | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Professional | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Own business | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

In the current economic climate the number of unskilled vacancies is likely to be very low and yet this is where half of the sample were previously employed. As Table 19 indicates, most prisoners claim that their arrest is the reason they left their previous employment.

Table 19 - Reason for Leaving Employment

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Never worked | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Sacked | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Retrenched | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Left | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Went Broke | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Better Job Prospects | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Imprisonment | 13 | 8 | 9 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Given that 30 prisoners claimed that their arrest is the reason for leaving their previous employment, their responses to the question: What are your job prospects on release?, are of interest to this research. The same question was asked again just prior to release (see Table 34). These figures are compared with the reality (see Table).

Table 20 - Expected Employment

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Don't know | 1 | 8 | 3 |
| Return to old job | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| New job related to Barwon training | 15 | 0 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

There are several points to be made from Table 20:

1. Fifteen 'Improvers' hoped to gain employment related to their training at Barwon - two in business, from their education centre studies; one in computer, from his education centre studies; one in metal lathing, from his metalcraft shop experience plus an additional three month fitting and machining course offered to a small number of prisoners from the metalcraft workshop; eleven kitchen hands hoped to gain employment in restaurants:
2. Nine 'Shoppers' expected to return to their previous jobs.
3. Two 'Improvers' expect to return to their previous jobs in restaurants - both completed the kitchen hands course to maintain contact with their preferred employment.
4. Two 'Shoppers' hoped to gain employment in their respective areas of work experience at Barwon - picture framing and gardening.
5. Eight 'Stayers' claimed that they did not know their chances of gaining employment upon release.

6. One 'Improver' believed he had no chance of employment upon release although he hoped that by participating in a basic education course he would be better prepared for work.
7. No one mentioned a new area of employment unrelated to prison experience - c.f. Tables 33 and 34.

Stage Two - Interview Two

The purpose of the second interview was to collect data on the prisoners' involvement in education, vocational training and work experience whilst at Barwon - see Appendix 2. Responses to the interview were then compared to previous education, vocational training and work to evaluate the degree to which Barwon experience connected with previous experience and how it prepared them for transition to the community.

Questions 1 and 2 asked the prisoners to state their main concerns about life after prison and what could have happened in prison to reduce these concerns. Tables 21 and 22 indicate their responses.

Table 21 - Concerns About Life After Prison

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| No concerns | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Failure | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Family | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| Becoming Normal | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Work | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Accommodation | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

These observations suggest that the issue of access to training be explored at Barwon and that the value of work release and training-release arrangements be investigated so that transition from prison to community is facilitated with minimal risk of disruption to the positive re-direction of many prisoners through certified training and education courses commenced at Barwon.

These observations will be reviewed in the light of post-release employment and recidivism data.

Family and employment concerns were the most common across the groups and tended to go together. Table 21 lists only the first mentioned concern but it was usual for both family and work to be mentioned by more than half the sample.

Table 22 - Barwon's Potential Role in Resolution of concerns

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| None | 12 | 7 | 9 |
| Prison Management | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Conjugal Visits | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Pre-release Program | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Wider training options | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Higher Wages | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Barwon is O.K. | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Twenty-eight of the total sample of 46 prisoners believed that Barwon prison could do nothing about their post-release concerns. A much smaller proportion (nine out of 46) believed that a pre-release program would help them to make the transition back into the community.

The next two questions asked prisoners about ideal prison programs and how Barwon programs might be improved.

Table 23 - Ideal Prison Training Programs

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Don't know | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Barwon is O.K. | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Wider Program Choice | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| Free Access to Education | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| More recreation Programs | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Program articulation | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Prisoner responsibility for decisions | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Staff training | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 23 indicates that a very large proportion of the sample believed that the ideal prison would offer wide program choice (37%) and free access to education (37%). The number of Stayers wanting free access to education is interesting given their relatively early departure from schooling and their apparent lack of involvement or interest since then. The same observation is relevant to Table 24.

Table 24 - Improvements to Barwon Programs

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Don't Know | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Barwon is O.K. | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Wider program choice | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Free access to training education | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| More recreation programs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Prisoner involvement indecisions | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Staff training | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| More interesting work | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

As with the ideal prison program the largest numbers in all groups at Barwon want free access to training and/or education. The proportion wanting wider program choice is not so large as in Table 23, suggesting that while the range of programs available at Barwon is a point of dissatisfaction, limitations on the numbers of prisoners who can participate in training and/or education is even more of a concern.

Four 'Improvers' felt that the Unit Management System would work better if staff were more carefully selected and more thoroughly trained in Unit Management strategies. This point will be taken up in the concluding chapter of this report.

The next question asked prisoners to state what they got out of their education/training/work programs at Barwon. Their responses are summarised in Table 25.

Table 25 - Gains from Training Program Participation

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nothing | 0 | 7 | 5 |
| Education | 6 | 1 | 3 |
| Work Practice | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Work skills | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Humane environment | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Certificate | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Proximity to family | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Resolve to stay out of prison | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

The 'Improvers' made the most positive responses to their program participation, claiming that they gained in education, credentials, or work practice. Half of the other two groups believe they gained nothing from their program participation except perhaps proximity to family or personal resolve to stay out of prison in future, both of which are by-products of life at Barwon rather than actual programs.

Prisoners were then asked more specific questions about their participation in education, vocational training, and work programs. The first set of questions related to education only. Table 26 summarises commencement rates in education programs.

Table 26 - Courses Commenced at Barwon

| | Improvers | Stayers | Shoppers |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| None | 0 | 10 | 8 |
| Basic education | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| General education | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Tertiary | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Computer | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Trade | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Due to the 'Improvers' group being composed of prisoners who wanted training or education at Barwon 'to improve themselves', the concentration in these categories was to be expected. However, the high proportion of 'Stayers' and 'Shoppers' who commenced no courses during their time at Barwon requires explanation. Some claimed they were too self-conscious but others claimed that they had been on a waiting list until it was too late in their sentence to enrol. Table 27 provides evidence of this point.

Table 27 - Reasons for Not Undertaking a Course

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Nothing interesting offered | | 0 | 6 |
| Motor Mechs. not offered | | 3 | 0 |
| On Waiting List | | 4 | 4 |
| Self conscious | | 3 | 3 |
| Already trained | | 3 | 1 |
| Too old | | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 On courses | 14 | 14 |

The six 'Shoppers' who were not attracted to any course on offer had their opportunity with the next question to be specific about courses that would interest them. These data appear in Table 28.

Table 28 - Additional Course Preferences

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| None | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Basic Education | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| General Education | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Tertiary | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| Computer | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Trade | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Forklift | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Integration | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Foreign Language | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Table 28 data support the data in Table 24 in which prisoners claimed that there were insufficient places available in education and training for the demand, especially for trade training and tertiary education courses.

Those who were able to undertake education or training courses were asked why they had enrolled and whether they had completed the course. These data are presented in Tables 29 and 30.

Table 29 - Reasons for Course Enrolment

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| No enrolment | 0 | 10 | 8 |
| Self improvement | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Interest | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Get a good job on release | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| Learn something new | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Apart from the getting of a good job on release it appears that the groups have little in common. The 'Improvers' indicate more drive and curiosity than the other two groups although this is largely related to preparation for employment in the hospitality area upon release - see Table 20. Post-release data may reflect on whether the

'self-improvement' motive makes any difference to getting and keeping a job. Course completion rates suggest that the 'Improvers' maintained their commitment whilst in prison at least - see Table 30 below.

Table 30 - Course Completions

| | Improvers | Stayers | Shoppers |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| None | 3 | 14 | 12 |
| Hospitality | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Picture-framing | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Learners permit for car | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Banker's certificate | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Script-writing | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Anger Management | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Of the 'Improvers' who did not complete their courses, one was sacked from the kitchen because of possession of drugs in prison, another had started a diploma in business studies which he intended to continue on release, and the other had started a computer studies course which he intended to complete on release.

The question about future intentions, relating to course continuation or commencement, was put to all prisoners in the sample. Their responses are summarised in Table 31.

Table 31 - Further Training Post-Release

| | Improvers | Stayers | Shoppers |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| No | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| Impractical | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Hope so | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Yes | 11 | 7 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

The types of course mentioned by each group are as follows -

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| Improvers | - Hospitality (10) |
| | - Hydraulics (1) |
| Stayers | - Accounting (1) |
| | - Woodwork (1) |
| | - Mechanics (1) |
| | - Forklift (1) |
| | - Welder's Certificate (1) |
| | - Rigger's Certificate (1) |
| | - Year 12 (1) |
| Shoppers | - Graphics (1) |
| | - Welfare Course (1) |

It is not possible to conclude from the data in Table 31 that the 'Shoppers' were less motivated towards training than the 'Improvers' or the 'Stayers' because Table 28 indicates that some of their training preferences were unavailable to them at Barwon, whereas the 'Improvers' and the 'Stayers' were relatively satisfied with their placements. While Table 14 suggests that 'Shoppers' tended to leave

school a little earlier than the other groups, their employment profile is similar (Tables 18 and 19), but more of them expect to return to their previous employment (Table 20). This difference will now be compared with their employment record at Barwon and their claimed employment prospects as perceived just prior to release.

Table 32 - Mean Number of Work Placements at Barwon

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--|----------|--------|---------|
| | 1.05 | 1.0 | 2.43 |

All nine 'Improvers' who worked in the kitchen and participated in the kitchen hands (hospitality) course believed that their work experience and training were related to their job prospects on release. This contrasts with only one 'Stayer' and one 'Shopper' who worked at die-setting and hairdressing respectively. The very limited number of work related training opportunities in the metalcraft shop was criticised by many prisoners. On the other hand the five prisoners participating in full-time education perceived that their course completion would improve their job prospects but were not specific about the type of work they would gain. Direct application of their studies to work experience at Barwon was either not possible or not negotiated.

It should be noted that from the range of work placements available there is potential for further linking of work and training for certification as in the Kitchen Hands' situation. Prisoner work placements included: metalfabrication, billet (unit cleaning), toy-making, laundry, painting, gardening, concreting, hairdressing, and maintenance work - apart from kitchen and full-time education.

The range of new skills prisoners claimed to have learnt at Barwon were: welding, powder coating, quality control, toy-making and picture-framing, hospitality, fitting and turning, computer, concreting, hairdressing, laundry and hobby skills. So new skills were learned but few were certificated or formally transferable to post-release job opportunities.

Additionally, of the eight prisoners transferred to other prisons prior to release, none was able to continue in the same type of work as he had been doing at Barwon. According to education staff it is possible for education courses to be continued upon transfer but continuity of work experience is not yet arranged largely due to differences in work experience opportunities from prison to prison and to differences in security levels and prisoner protection requirements which vary according to current prisoner population in each prison.

Nevertheless the Office of Corrections has plans (Corrections Industry Training Plan, 1992) to recognise previous learning and work experience and to create 'pathways' i.e. prison training programs that are transferable from one prison to certain other prisons, thus enabling prisoners to continue training as they move from one prison to another according to reduction in security level.

Implementation of the 'pathways' plan will gradually increase continuity of training and certification opportunities and may increase prisoner motivation and commitment to program participation, as with the Kitchen Hands at Barwon. 'Pathways' may not solve the prisoners' stated preference for a wider variety of program options but well-directed pathways leading to growth areas in the labour market may satisfy the prisoners' other strong preference, that is, for post release employment.

As things stand at present prisoners tend to have lost their capacity to dream about their ideal employment and would be content to return to their previous employment. Tables 33 and 34 illustrate this point.

Table 33 - Ideal employment

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Don't Know | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Return to old job | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| New area of employment | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| New Job Related to Training at Barwon | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

The 'Improvers' ideal employment appears to be either the same as before or related to their training at Barwon whereas the 'Stayers' and the 'Shoppers' have greater confidence in gaining employment in a new area, if not the same as before - despite their relative lack of additional education or training.

Table 34 - Expected Employment

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Don't know | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Return to old job | 9 | 10 | 5 |
| New area of employment | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| New job related to training at Barwon | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

The 'Improvers' were less optimistic about their employment prospects being related to their training at Barwon, with some members transferring their 'ideal' employment from Barwon training (Table 33)

to same as before or 'new area of employment'. The 'Stayers' also moved towards 'same as before' although their movement was from 'new area of employment'. The 'Stayers' expected employment was similar to their 'ideal' except that there was a small drift from 'new area of employment' to 'don't know'. However, this number remained the same as the responses given to a similar question at the first interview and shown in Table 20. The number of 'Stayers' in the 'don't know' category reduced from eight in Table 20 to two in Table 34.

The biggest change in expected employment was in the 'Improvers' who tended to move from 'new jobs related to Barwon Training' (Table 20) to 'return to old jobs' (Table 34). Table 35 data suggest that 'Improvers', in looking at their job prospects in the immediate future, will take whatever they can get through personal contacts, rather than what their Barwon training might get them.

Table 35 - Means of Gaining Expected Employment, provides a possible explanation for this change.

Table 35 - Means of Gaining Expected Employment

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Don't know | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Personal Contact | 9 | 10 | 8 |
| Formal Application | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Own Initiative | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Job Link | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 14 | 14 |

It appears from Table 35 that prisoners from all groups placed considerable confidence in gaining employment via personal contacts. The outcome of Stage 3 of this research project will indicate the degree to which personal contacts were important in gaining employment and whether these were as important as training programs in post-release employment rates.

Stage Two - Rating Scales.

Following the stage two interview, prisoners were asked to complete a rating scale in which they rated their responses to six statements on a six-point scale. Zero was the lowest rating and five the highest.

The statements were:

1. Your general involvements in the life of Barwon.
2. Your involvement in education/training/work.
3. Work/study skills you have gained at Barwon.
4. Your preparation at Barwon for work after release.
5. Your employment prospects on release.
6. Your chances of further training/education on release.

Table 36 indicates a trend towards the 'Improvers' rating themselves more highly on five of the six scales and about even with the 'Stayers' on the remaining scale (No.5 - Your employment prospects on release). In turn, there was a trend towards the 'Stayers' rating themselves more highly than 'Shoppers' on five of the six scales and the same as 'Shoppers' on the remaining scale (No.1 - your general involvement in the life of Barwon).

Table 36 - Mean Self-Ratings on Barwon Programs and Future Prospects

1. Your general involvement in the life at Barwon.

| Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------|--------|---------|
| 3.05 | 2.60 | 2.6 |

2. Your involvement in education/training/work.

| Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------|--------|---------|
| 4.16 | 2.50 | 2.10 |

3. Work/Study skills you have gained at Barwon.

| Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------|--------|---------|
| 3.55 | 1.50 | 0.96 |

4. Your preparation at Barwon for work after release.

| Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------|--------|---------|
| 3.20 | 1.90 | 1.40 |

5. Your employment prospects on release.

| Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------|--------|---------|
| 3.83 | 3.90 | 3.20 |

6. Your chances of further training/education after release.

| Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|----------|--------|---------|
| 4.02 | 3.00 | 2.10 |

According to the mean self-ratings (Table 36) the 'Improvers' rated themselves most highly on No.2. - Involvement in education/training/

work, and No.6. - Chances of further training/ education on release. Despite their relatively low self rating on No.2. - Involvement in education/training/work, the 'Stayers' and the 'Shoppers' were relatively confident about their employment prospects on release. This is an unexpected outcome, especially, as their ratings on No.3. - 'Work/study skills gained, and No.4. - 'Preparation at Barwon for work after release were also rated relatively low. These ratings suggest that 'Stayers' and 'Shoppers' confidence in gaining employment was based on a factor other than education, training or work at Barwon. Such a conclusion is consistent with the interview data provided in Table 35 - Means of Gaining Expected Employment, where the largest proportion of participants in all three groups indicated they would gain employment through personal contacts.

So, it may be that despite education and training when prisoners are faced with the realities of the labour market post-release they prefer to rely on contacts even more than their new work skills and the potential of these skills to gain them different, and possibly higher status employment than their previous work experience. This tentative conclusion needs to await confirmation or otherwise from post-release data.

It is an interesting possibility in light of t-tests of significance in relation to differences between the groups on the self-ratings presented in Table 36. On Item 2 (Your Involvement in education/training/work) the Improvers rated themselves significantly more highly than the 'Stayers' and the 'Shoppers' (.01 level of significance). The 'Improvers' also rated themselves significantly more highly than the 'Stayers' and the 'Shoppers' on Item 3 (Work/Study skills gained at Barwon) - significant at the .001 level; and, on Item 4 the 'Improvers' rated themselves significantly more highly in terms of their preparation at Barwon for work after release - significant at the .01 level; and on Item 6 (Chances of further training after release) the 'Improvers' rated themselves significantly more highly - significant at the .01 level of probability when compared to the 'Stayers' ratings.

These data are presented in Table 37.

Table 37 - Significant Differences in Self-Ratings

| | | | |
|--------|---|---|------------------|
| Item 2 | - | Your involvement in education/training/work | |
| | - | mean ratings: | Improver = 4.16 |
| | | | Stayer = 2.50 |
| | | | (Shopper = 2.10) |
| | - | t = 2.86 | |
| | - | probability = 0.01 | |
| Item 3 | - | Work/Study skills gained at Barwon | |
| | - | mean ratings: | Improver = 3.55 |
| | | | Stayer = 1.50 |
| | | | (Shopper = 0.96) |
| | - | t = 3.94 | |
| | - | probability = 0.001 | |
| Item 4 | - | Your preparation at Barwon for work after release. | |
| | - | mean ratings: | Improver = 3.20 |
| | | | Stayer = 1.90 |
| | | | (Shopper = 1.40) |
| | - | t = 2.89 | |
| | - | probability = 0.01 | |
| Item 6 | - | Your chances of further training/education after release. | |
| | - | mean ratings: | Improver = 4.02 |
| | | | Stayer = 3.00 |
| | | | Shopper = 2.10 |
| | - | t = 3.29 | |
| | - | probability = 0.01 | |

It is noted here that on Item 6 the difference between 'Stayer' and 'Shopper' ratings were also significant at the .01 level, so it can be concluded that the 'Shoppers' had least motivation for further training after release - as appeared to be the case during their stay at Barwon, apart from their claim (Table 28) that they would have preferred access to additional courses. This position may be partially explained by the larger proportion of 'Shoppers' intending to return

to their former employment upon release - see Table 20. A similar observation could be made of the 'Improvers' seeking employment through former contacts more than in the area of their training at Barwon (Table 35), because contacts may give greater certainty of immediate employment. Item 6 supports such an interpretation in that 'Improvers' intended to pursue further training upon release and this makes little sense unless it is linked to a perceived future employment opportunity for their new skills. Greater access to training may have increased the desire of the other groups for further training upon release - see Tables 23 and 24, had such opportunities been available at Barwon.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS ON THE POST-BARWON EXPERIENCE

Introduction

This chapter begins with an analysis of post-Barwon outcomes for male prisoners and some reflections on the outcomes for the small number of women who participated in the evaluation. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the evaluation and some issues raised by the project. It will be seen that while there were insufficient numbers of participants to draw firm conclusions, some helpful comments can be made about the current direction of prison programs and some hopeful signs for the future.

Outcomes for Male Prisoners

The employment outcomes for male prisoners were at least as bad as their expectations just prior to release. Despite their education and training, even the 'Improvers' were more hopeful of gaining employment through contacts rather than their new credentials. In fact only one continued a course of training (business studies) commenced at Barwon and none gained employment in the area of training commenced at Barwon. While the destinations of four

'Improver' participants could not be traced (due to deportation or no parole period), of the remaining fourteen only four gained employment in the first six months after release and these were through contacts.

It was a similar employment outcome for the 'Stayers'. Only one is known to have gained employment and that was in his old job. For the 'Shoppers' only two are known to have gained employment.

In the area of training it is noted that in four cases the course directly related to a credential or to an employment opportunity. In one of these cases (an 'Improver') the course was commenced at Barwon.

Table 38 provides details of the employment and training outcomes for participants in their first six months after release.

Table 38 - Employment and Training Outcomes

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|---------------------------|----------|--------|-----------|
| Employment | 4 | 1 | 2 (1 p.t) |
| Training (Credential) | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Training (Short Course) | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| (Employment and Training) | (1) | (0) | (0) |
| No Employment or Training | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| No Information | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Due to the small size of the sample the employment and training outcomes cannot be taken as conclusive. However, it appears that personal contacts may be more influential than prison training in gaining employment. This suggests that ways need to be found for continuation of training programs commenced in prison. While the Corrections Industry Training Plan (1993) outlines new initiatives in prison training pathways and also in training program development at community-based corrections centres, the issue of continuity from prison to parole programs is not highlighted although it was in 1992 and such programs may not have been available to the 1991 Barwon sample. Consequently, a lot of enthusiasm for self-improvement, especially amongst the 'Improvers' may have been lost because the training pathway appears to have ended at the prison gate. Re-adjustment to the community context may be so complex for many prisoners that further training is precluded, even where the option of training continuity is evident and available in areas of labour market expansion - as it was for three participants who commenced courses after leaving Barwon.

It is also acknowledged that not all of the unemployment was due to the lack of apparent continuity of training pathways into the community. Some prisoners breached their parole and were returned to prison shortly after

release and others were either charged or convicted of further offences. However, the number of participants who were excluded in this way from labour market opportunities was not large, as may be seen from Table 39 - Criminal Justice Outcomes.

Table 39 - Criminal Justice Outcomes

| | Improver | Stayer | Shopper |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Awaiting Court | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Parole Revoked | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Deported/Extradited | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| No Trouble (No Parole) | 11 (1) | 10 (1) | 6 (2) |
| Total | 18 | 14 | 14 |

Again, while the sample is too small to make conclusive statements, it can be stated that no participant who gained full-time employment or participated in some sort of training course after release, was involved in any further intervention by the criminal justice system, although one 'Shopper', who gained casual employment, was awaiting court on further charges six months after release. The 'Shoppers' may be slightly more prone to further trouble but taken overall, at least twenty-seven out of a total of forty-six participants, had no further contact with the criminal justice system. As twenty-six out of forty-six participants (Table 38) had neither employment nor training after release it appears that, at least in the first six months after release, lack of employment on its own, does not correlate highly with further contact with the criminal justice system. However,

recidivism studies with a longer follow-up period (Saylor and Gaes, 1992; Anderson, Schumacker and Anderson, 1991) suggest that employment is a critical factor in recidivism reduction. This evidence supports the earlier contention that training pathways need to be extended into the post-release phase. Additionally, Commonwealth labour market programs, currently available only after release, could be made available prior to release, to reduce waiting periods and to provide continuity of training for connection to real labour market opportunities, as recommended in NBEET Report No.17 (Semmens, 1992).

Implementation of these 'continuity' recommendations may be even more critical for women prisoners than for men. Only a small number of women was at Barwon prison during the period of the evaluation, seven of whom completed the post-program interview. Such a small number could be excluded from the study because of the unreliability and limited generalisability of data. However, the following outcome data suggest that the situation of women at Barwon, and the prison system generally, needs to be further investigated. In fact an enquiry was held in 1991 and programs for women are included as a high priority in the Corrections Industry Training Plan (1993). An overall policy document on women in prisons has also been published (Women Prisoners and Offenders: The Agenda for Change, 1991). The following data may therefore support other evidence on some serious shortcomings in prison programming for women which are now being addressed.

Table 40 - Employment and Training Outcomes

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------|
| Employed | = | 0 |
| Training | = | 0 |
| No Employment or Training | = | 6 |
| No Information | = | <u>1</u> |
| Total | = | <u>7</u> |

Table 41 - Criminal Justice Outcomes

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------|
| Awaiting Court | = | 4 |
| Parole Revoked | = | 1 |
| Deceased | = | 1 |
| No Trouble | = | <u>1</u> |
| Total | = | <u>7</u> |

While the sample was quite small it was random in that the women were selected on the basis of their coming up for release within the time-frame of the evaluation period. Tables 40 and 41 suggest that the lack of training pathways for women at Barwon could have contributed to their limited options for community re-integration upon release. Uncertificated work in the prison laundry or in wooden toy-making, and restricted access to the education centre appeared to compound women's hostility to imprisonment, especially at Barwon where their opportunities for training compared unfavourably with programs available to the men, and to programs for women at Fairlea or Tarrengower prisons.

There may be other differences that affected the post-release opportunities of women. For example, all of the women had long histories of imprisonment whereas twenty-one of the men had never been in prison before. Amongst these

twenty-one men were all six participants who gained full-time employment in the first six months after release (Table 38). Also included were all four participants who were engaged in training courses leading to credentials such as business studies (Table 38). While one recidivist participant gained casual employment and five other recidivist participants enrolled in literacy or job seeking skills courses (Table 38), it appears that generally recidivist offenders are less able or less fortunate in gaining full-time employment after release from Barwon. Another possible contributing factor to the good fortune of the six participants who gained full-time employment was that they did so via personal contacts such as relatives or previous employment. The emphasis participants placed on personal contacts in gaining employment after release (Table 35) therefore appears quite realistic.

On their own the Barwon trends may not carry much weight but they are in the same direction as a larger follow-up study of 113 youths from the Malmsbury Youth Training Centre (Semmens, 1986) in which significant differences were found in employment and recidivism records between first-timers and those with previous periods of institutionalisation and a low level of school achievement. Personal contacts were also an important characteristic of the successful parolees in the Malmsbury study.

If, after further investigation with a larger sample of prisoners, the Barwon trends are supported, the implication for prison administration is not only to

involve more prisoners in training pathways, but to facilitate the connection between prison training programs and their continuity in the community during parole. The other area for attention is the development of community contacts through agencies such as the Second Chance Business Register.

It is noted that the Office of Corrections has instituted a community integration program (1991) to assist prisoners in their transition from prison to the community. This standardised program provides information and discussions on areas of importance to prisoners, such as accommodation, employment, legal issues, health etc., during the last three months of their sentence. In the light of the Barwon trends this innovation is to be commended. It may also be valuable to monitor the progress of a much more intensive program established during 1990 in some Californian prisons (H'sai Coron, 1992) and influenced by the cognitive development programs in Canada. The more intensive interaction with real community-living issues, central to the Californian project may be necessary for some prisoners, especially long-term and recidivist prisoners. Such a development is consistent with the unit management system at Barwon with its emphasis upon prisoners taking responsibility for their decisions and behaviour.

The above suggestions for program development and improvement are made from the perspective of an outside evaluation. In turn they will be evaluated by

administrators inside the correctional system for their 'appropriateness' for implementation. Future evaluations may be even more productive if they are carried out in a partnership arrangement between the evaluator and Office of Corrections personnel with the aim of program improvement. Such an arrangement could be highly specific, addressing particular areas of program design and/or implementation. A broader study could also be undertaken in partnership, for example, a study of the extent to which the various decision-making committees, supervisors, co-ordinators etc. facilitate the operation of the Unit Management System, or, the extent to which the Unit Management System creates an environment conducive to prisoner motivation for, and participation in, training and education programs. The evaluation partnership would involve prisoners in the resolution of the problem of how to use their time most productively and in the interest of successful community reintegration. This is not an easy task, especially with recidivist prisoners who may lack motivation and contacts. Appendix One indicates some of the difficulties faced by a highly motivated prisoner - an 'Improver' who wrote down his impressions of one day at Barwon. While motivation for self-improvement appears to have little to do with post-release experience unless supportive contacts are available, it is hard to imagine how a 'Stayer' or a 'Shopper' would have handled the task of writing about a day in their lives at Barwon. None agreed to give it a go. It can only be assumed that their accounts would be of greater boredom than that experienced by the 'Improver'.

A partnership evaluation for prison program and system improvement would provide some direction for utilising dormant prisoner talent and motivation for achievement through, to the post-release phase - for 'Stayers' and 'Shoppers' as well as 'Improvers'.

Conclusions

The major question for the evaluation of programs at Barwon was: does program articulation increase the chances of employment and reduce the level of recidivism post-release? According to the definition of articulation given in chapter 4 (p.54) articulation was not yet fully developed at Barwon and it is therefore impossible to conclude that articulation has no effect on prisoner performance or post-release outcomes. In the three groups of prisoners which emerged it is clear that articulation was more highly developed for some prisoners ('Improvers') than it was for others ('Stayers' and 'Shoppers'). The Corrections Industry Training Plan (1993) details how the articulation opportunities afforded the 'Improvers' will progressively extend to other groups of prisoners.

In relation to the minor research questions (see p.56) it can be concluded:

1. that there are no personal or criminal background factors that correlate with program choice. However, it is possible that recidivists have less chance of gaining employment upon release;
2. that program articulation at this stage does not appear to influence subsequent community employment opportunities as much as personal contacts. In these very difficult times for anyone seeking employment it is unrealistic to judge any training program on its capacity to gain employment for participants. In this context the Office of Corrections and the State Training Board should be commended for developing training pathways that enable prisoners to participate in the same courses available to other job-seekers;
3. that contextual factors may influence program participation. This area was the least well developed in the evaluation project and no objective measures were applied to the prison environment. However, observations, anecdotal data, and general impressions were that staff and prisoner morale were high, prisoners took

care of their living units, and took part in work and study programs purposefully and productively - with the exception of the women who generally resented their restricted range of program opportunities. One consequence of this situation was that the women's section of the prison was harder to manage. The women at Barwon commented cynically about the unit management system because its humane intentions seemed to be in conflict with the lack of purposeful programs. The Office of Corrections (Industry Training Plan, 1992 and 1993) seek to redress this situation, but its existence in 1991 provides some evidence that contextual factors do influence program participation.

Appendix 1

27th February, 1991

PROGRAM EVALUATION AT BARWON PRISON

Dear

During 1991-92 I will be doing research on education and work programs at Barwon for the Criminology Research Council in Canberra.

To do this I need your permission to interview you briefly early in your time at Barwon and again shortly before you leave. I also need your permission to follow your progress according to files in prison and at the Office of Corrections for six months after your release.

All information will be treated with the strictest confidence and in my report I will not be identifying any prisoner. My aim is to give advice to prison administrations across Australia about the development of good quality training programs for prisoners.

If you give permission please tick the box on the interview sheet. I also understand that you have a right to withdraw your permission at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Semmens
Senior Lecturer

PRE-PROGRAM INTERVIEW

Permission _____

Research Participant No: _____

1. Employment

In the 6 months before Barwon:

(a) How did you spend your time?

- _____ prison
- _____ work
- _____ looking for work
- _____ voluntary work
- _____ unemployed
- _____ home duties
- _____ other

(b) If you had some paid employment what kind of job(s) did you have?

- _____ professional
- _____ clerical
- _____ manual
- _____ other

Time?

- _____ full-time
- _____ part-time
- _____ casual
- _____ seasonal

(c) How did you get your job(s)?

- _____ personal contact
- _____ advertisement

(d) How did you leave your job?

- _____ sacked
- _____ retrenched
- _____ left
- _____ sick
- _____ better job
- _____ family circumstances
- _____ arrested

2. Education and Training

(a) What level did you reach at school?

(b) How many schools did you attend?

(c) How old were you when you left school?

(d) Why did you leave then?

job prospect

d.n.l., school

friends

other

(e) Have you done any courses or training since leaving school?

(f) Have you done any work, education or training in prison or y.t.c. in the past?

Yes

No

Outcomes?

qualifications

employment

improved skills

filled in time

3. Barwon

(a) What information did you receive about work, education and training programs available at Barwon before your arrival?

How?

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| prison officer | _____ |
| prisoners | _____ |
| teachers | _____ |
| video | _____ |
| pamphlet | _____ |

(b) What information did you receive about work, education and training programs available at Barwon after your arrival?

How?

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| prison officer | _____ |
| prisoners | _____ |
| teachers | _____ |
| video | _____ |
| pamphlet | _____ |

(c) Did any of this information influence your decisions about what you might want to do while you are here?

Yes

No

What? _____

How? _____

(d) What work are you doing/expecting to do at Barwon?

Why?

| | |
|----------|-------|
| time | _____ |
| money | _____ |
| mates | _____ |
| directed | _____ |

(e) Are you doing/expecting to do training related to the work that you are doing at Barwon?

What?

(f) Are you doing any education?

What?

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| literacy/numeracy | _____ |
| subjects | _____ |
| course | _____ |
| tertiary | _____ |

4. Future

(a) What work might your Barwon work/
training/education prepare you for
on release?

(b) What sort of work do you expect to
get on release?

Appendix 2**POST-PROGRAM INTERVIEW**

Research Participant No: _____

General

1. What are your main concerns about life after prison?

2. What could have happened in prison to reduce these concerns?

- 3.a In your ideal prison, what sort of training programs would be offered?

- 3.b What changes would you make to improve education/training/work programs at Barwon?

4. What did you want to get out of education/training/work at Barwon?

5. What did you actually get out of education/training/work at Barwon?

Education

6. What courses did you start while in prison (Barwon) this time?

7. What courses did you complete?

- 8.a Why did you undertake these courses?

- 8.b Why did you not undertake any courses?

9. What sort of course would be most valuable to you if it were offered? Why?

10. Can courses have any value apart from a certificate or a job? (Confidence, fill in time, mental exercise etc.).

11. Will you start or continue a course after release?

Work and Training

12. What work have you done in prison (Barwon) this time?
(Approximately how long for each job). How did you get each job?

13. Did you receive any training related to the work?

14. Did (could) this training lead to a qualification (either at Barwon or after release)?

15. Did you do any work that might help you get a job on release?

- 16.a What new work skills have you learnt at Barwon?

- 16.b What other skills have you developed at Barwon.
(Work habits, regular hours, self-confidence, self-satisfaction)?

17. If you transferred to another prison before release, did you continue the same sort of program as at Barwon, or did you start a different program?
(Say what education or work program you are doing at the prison where you are now).

18. If you were able to take your choice after release what sort of job would you choose? Why?

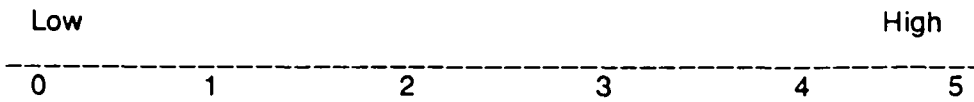
- 19.a What sort of job do you think you will get after release?

- 19.b How? - personal contact, former employer, Joblink etc.

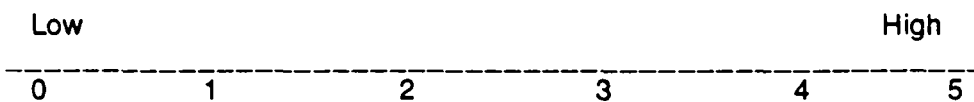
20. Other Comments.

Ratings

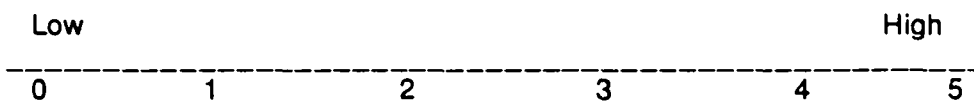
1. Your general involvement in the life of Barwon.



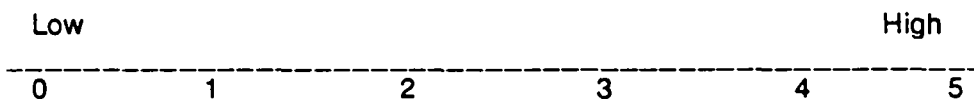
2. Your involvement in education/training/work.



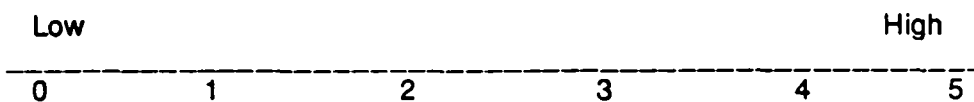
3. Work/study skills you have gained whilst at Barwon.



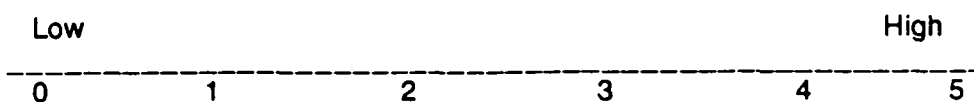
4. Your preparation at Barwon for work after release.



5. Your employment prospects on release.



6. Your chances of further training/education after release.



Appendix 3

Community-Based Corrections Follow-up Data Sheet

Participant's No.:

In the six months since release:

1. What education/training programs has the parolee participated in?

2. What employment has the parolee gained and for how long?

3a. What indictable offences has the parolee been charged with?

3b. Are these offences alleged to have occurred since release?

Appendix 4A Day in My Life at Barwon Prison

Tuesday, 11th June 1991

This morning's wake up call consisted of a few rings of the brass bell. It is not very loud but at 6.30 it manages to wake me up without difficulty. One of the benefits of a cell is that everything is close by, so it does not take long to take care of your bodily needs, making the bed, getting dressed etc, leaving about ten minutes to stretch and warm up for my morning run, or think of a dozen reasons why I should have the day off and rest. The cell door opens at 7.00 and I waste no time in exiting my cell to go down stairs to the gym to continue my warm up. It takes about fifteen minutes for the majority of prisoners to emerge from their cells, others do not show until the 8 o'clock muster. We are locked in the units until the all clear is announced over the public address system, ie 'count is correct'. This usually occurs around quarter past seven but it is not unusual for there to be a delay till half past depending on the proficiency of the officers who are at movement control and in charge of the musters.

When the count has been completed and we are permitted to move about outside the units, I start my run. The compound outside the units serves as our yard. It consists of footpaths leading to the units from movement control and a pathway around its perimeter with grass areas between. There is a small multipurpose court and a swimming pool for each of the three main population units. The laps I run in the morning are 330 metres, three laps to the kilometre. I estimate that in my average 25 minute jog I cover about six kilometres. If nothing else in that day I will have at least achieved that much, it acts as a catalyst for me to try and achieve more during the day.

About ten minutes to eight we hear over the units public address system that we have 'five minutes to count'. Five minutes later we are told to 'stand by doors for formal count'. The procedure sees the inmates standing by their doors, which are wide open and locked back. The officer checks off the prisoners' names against his list and returns to the console. Shortly after we are told to 'break off', and are restricted to the unit again until the all clear is given and movements may recommence within the prison. At this time most of the industry workers emerge from their units to go to work in the metal fabrication gang. I usually have a hot shower in my cell after the count and then have my breakfast downstairs in the dining area. Breakfast usually

consists of a bowl of powdered milk and Wheaties. After breakfast I prepare to go to education which starts at 9.00 am. As a full time education prisoner I attend five half day sessions a week.

After presenting my identification card to the officer at the gate I am allowed to enter the education building. The education centre at Barwon is nothing if not unremarkable and this seems to indicate it was designed as something of an afterthought. Barwon is meant to be a prison with a modern philosophy towards imprisonment. I had been led to believe that education was to be something of a priority as was the training of prisoners whilst they are imprisoned. Alas the small size and lack of any real facilities within the prison to meet these goals seems to betray a lack of real commitment to what I will loosely call 'rehabilitation'. However I must admit that there is a lot of support and encouragement from all the staff, both teachers and prison officers, as well as the classification committee etc for any prisoner who displays a genuine interest in education or retraining. From nine in the morning to about eleven thirty I sit in one of the rooms and work. I have found it the perfect constructive mechanism for killing time. I usually manage to fill my time constructively during school hours and feel it is time well spent. Considering there are a couple of hundred prisoners I feel that the education centre is not used to its fullest capacity and in my view it is surprising that more of us do

not take an interest. Many of the guys have fallen victim to a ritual of boredom and lethargy which is difficult to break out of without some powerful stimulation, be it a lengthy sentence or just a strong desire to achieve something.

I head back to the unit at eleven thirty so I won't miss lunch which can arrive any time between then and noon. Today for example we had sandwiches, a piece of fruit and soup. The kitchen supplies us with a variety of food, in my opinion the only ingredient which is missing from the majority of meals is imagination. It is helpful if I tell myself food is no more than a source of nourishment, and my excess weight will testify to its nutritional value. (I don't run for the fun of it). The time between lunch and the one o'clock muster is a blur. Today it is spent typing out words on my laptop computer about a typical day in Barwon Prison, something of dubious literary value. After the count, time is in abundance. This is due to a number of factors. The programs which were supposed to be organised, ie, first aid, pottery, martial arts, volleyball, painting, etc remain disorganized as effective cohesive programs. I spend most of my afternoons reading or watching television, playing table tennis, pacing back and forth in the compound, or sitting on my backside procrastinating. Boredom is endemic in prison and unfortunately, Barwon is no exception. I must try and remember to put my name down for the sportsmen night, lots of junk food and plenty of sexist jokes, not bad for \$2. (Male inmates only). The Recreation Committee which is made up of

prisoners and staff has arranged this activity and I have just narrowly avoided donating my services folding clothes for a Geelong clothing company to raise money for activities within the prison. Tomorrow however I will either have to think of another excuse or end up doing some work. It appears the contract with the firm is worth about \$17,000 so it should breathe a bit of life back into prison activities. I've just spent an hour with an incorrigible armed robber who has been complaining that banks aren't worth the trouble any more since there is too much work involved, also he tends to be a little camera shy, so he tells me next time he'll concentrate on payrolls. Not taking his speech too seriously I suggested he write the A to Z Guide to Crime, he certainly is well qualified. I have come to the conclusion today that men, in prison anyway, are fairly petty and susceptible to gossiping endlessly about trivia and love to pass on and create rumours which are based on the flimsiest evidence. This is probably due to boredom, not to exclude the fact that talking shit has a limited entertainment value, especially when it's about someone else.

Donahue was pretty boring today, and the three o'clock muster has just passed by, time to turn the television off until the adult time slot. A number of my friends are great fans of the Mutant Ninja Turtles, however that is stretching my addiction to television to its limits and I prefer to go outside and sit in the sun or walk for an hour. Sometimes I cannot help but feel that I have been

sentenced to years of boredom and daytime soap-operas, talk about brain numbing, it's no wonder that so many of the inmates keep returning to jail. It amazes me that so many of us are unable to adequately develop even the minimum life skills to look after ourselves outside an institution. The sight of so many people being released and within a short period of time coming back is disillusioning but at the same time serves as an example for me in what not to do. The fight for survival in prison is not against gangs of drug crazed inmates who want to bash or rape you, it is against boredom, against negative defeatist attitudes, and the bad influences of some of my fellow inmates. All these can combine to destroy any chance one has of breaking out of the cycle that so many seem trapped by.

One thing that is depressing is the monotony, one day is much like the next. Prison routine is only interrupted by 'incidents' or industrial action by staff. You could serve a lengthy sentence and only have a very short memory of the years because there will be so little of worth to recall. Today is so typical that it is painful to write about it, there is no plot, no drama, its boring to write, boring to read, in that it is reflective of a day in Barwon or any other prison. I am seeking an escape through a book so I'll have to raid the library and hopefully find a book which will capture my imagination, something meaty with lots of gratuitous sex and violence. The only copy of 'American Psycho', has already been snatched up by the librarian and

unfortunately I seem to be at the end of a long line of people wanting to look at, or read the book. I end up walking out with Ruth Lee's 'To Kill A Mocking Bird'. Armed with a good book and a packet of chocolate biscuits I have no trouble passing time. A short interruption at five o'clock for dinner, a quick game of table tennis at six and back to reading till eight o'clock when we are locked up. For some obscure reason I have come to appreciate being locked up, maybe it comes as a relief to be alone in my cell. Once locked up there are more choices, sleep, reading, television, the three s's, ie shit shower shave. The cell becomes a cocoon, another world in a different dimension where you are completely alone. Being alone can be wonderful or it can be soul destroying, it depends on one's attitude at the time. I often wonder how my day compares with one which someone on the 'outside' may have. Isolated from the hassle and bustle of city life it is difficult to imagine the myriad of choices and decisions which one must face every day, and the responsibilities and commitments which must be met as just another part of life. There lies the difference, there are few choices, responsibility is minimal, and I cannot help but feel that because of this I do not so much live as I just exist. I can only be grateful that it is only possible to serve one day at a time, it gives me the opportunity to create demands and challenges for myself, which need to be met and overcome so that I can look forward to the next day

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