

**Creating a Pathway to
Reintegration:
The Correctional Services
Employment Pilot Program
(CSEPP)**

**Final Report
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Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Section 1: Introduction	
1.1 The Current Victorian Corrections Context	5
1.2 The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP)	6
1.3 The CSEPP Evaluation	9
Section 2: Literature Review	
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 The Employment Context	11
2.2.1 Mental Illness	12
2.2.2 Educational Disadvantage	13
2.2.3 Financial Pressure	14
2.2.4 Lack of Social Support	14
2.2.5 Accommodation Instability/Issues	15
2.2.6 Employment Difficulties	15
2.2.7 Substance Abuse and Treatment	16
2.2.8 Employer Attitudes	17
2.2.9 Complex Support Needs	19
2.3 Employment Participation	20
2.3.1 Commonwealth Employment Assistance Programs	20
2.4 Specialist Employment Assistance for Ex-prisoners and Offenders	21
2.4.1 Employment and Training	22
2.4.2 Post-release Support Programs	23
2.4.3 Program Practices	24
2.5 Recidivism	25
2.5.1 Recidivism and Personal Characteristics	26
2.5.2 Recidivism and Programming: Prison-based and Community-based Treatment Programs	27
2.5.3 Recidivism and Offence History	29
2.5.4 Recidivism and Post-release Experiences	30
2.6 Successful Reintegration	30
2.6.1 Readiness to Change	31
2.7 Costs Associated with Crime and Criminal Justice	32
2.8 Summary of the Review of Literature	33

Section 3: Program Process Evaluation

3.1	Introduction	35
3.2	Summary of this Section	35
3.3	Methodology for the Process Evaluation	37
3.3.1	Participants	37
3.3.2	Structure and Content of the Interviews	38
3.3.3	Procedures in Conducting the Interviews	39
3.4	Results	40
3.4.1	Program Logic and Design	40
3.4.2	Program Implementation	45
3.4.3	Service Models	50
3.4.4	Specific Program-wide Issues	65
3.4.5	Best Features and Possible Improvements	71
3.5	Client Perspectives	78
3.5.1	Introduction	78
3.5.2	Methodology	78
3.5.3	Results of the Client Interviews	79
3.6	Practical Issues Emerging from the Process Evaluation	81
3.6.1	Coherence of CSEPP and CV Values and Practices	83
3.6.2	Outcomes-related Issues	84
3.6.3	Employer Involvement in the Program	85
3.6.4	Expanding Coverage Efficiently and Effectively	86
3.6.5	Staffing and Staff Development	87
3.6.6	Transition from Prison to Community	89
3.6.7	Reintegration: Tracking Long-term Success	90
3.7	Process Evaluation Summary and Conclusions	91
3.7.1	The Program Model	91
3.7.2	Operating Context	92
3.7.3	Service Models	93
3.7.4	Location Delivery Models	95
3.7.5	Program-wide Issues	96
3.7.6	Concluding Statement on Program Structures and Processes	99

Section 4: Program Outcomes Evaluation

4.1	Introduction	103
4.2	Summary of this Section	103
4.3	Method	104
4.3.1	Participant Files	104
4.3.2	Procedure	105
4.3.3	Employment Outcomes Measured	106
4.3.4	Recidivism Outcomes Measured	107

4.4	Results	107
4.4.1	Employment Outcomes	108
4.4.2	Summary of Employment Outcomes	127
4.4.3	Recidivism Outcomes	127
4.4.4	Summary of Recidivism Outcomes	134
4.5	Discussion	135
4.5.1	Employment Outcomes	135
4.5.2	Recidivism Outcomes	136
Section 5: Indirect Gains Associated with the Program		
5.1	Introduction	139
5.2	Summary of this Section	140
5.3	Method	141
5.3.1	Demographic Information on the Sample	141
5.3.2	Instrument	143
5.3.3	Procedure	145
5.3.4	Data Analysis	145
5.4	Results	145
5.4.1	Health	145
5.4.2	Housing	149
5.4.3	Employment and Training	150
5.4.4	Finances	152
5.4.5	Social Network	153
5.4.6	Substance Use	155
5.4.7	Criminal Justice Activity	158
5.5	Discussion	159
5.5.1	Summary of Results	159
5.5.2	Implications	160
5.5.3	Necessary Changes to Facilitate Sustained Client Development	161
Section 6: The CSEPP Evaluation: Summary of Results and Recommendations		
6.1	The Process Evaluation	163
6.1.1	The Program Model	163
6.1.2	Service Models	164
6.1.3	Program Implementation Issues	166
6.2	The Program Outcomes Evaluation	168
6.2.1	Content of the Outcomes Evaluation	168
6.2.2	Summary of Employment Outcomes	169
6.2.3	Summary of Recidivism Outcomes	170

6.3	Indirect Gains Associated with the Program	171
6.3.1	Content of the Indirect Gains Evaluation	171
6.3.2	Summary of Results Related to Indirect Gains	171
6.3.3	The Program in Terms of the Evaluation Component	173
6.4	Major Recommendations	175
6.5	Concluding Statement	183
6.5.1	The Cost of Crime and the Economics of Intervention	183
6.5.2	Reintegration and the Need for an Integrated System of Support	184
	References	187
	Appendices	
1	An Explanation of the Delay in Commencing the Evaluation	195
2	Location Specific Conditions Identified in the Program Process Evaluation	196

List of Tables

1.	Interviewees by location, provider, and job title	38
2.	Job Futures prison location delivery models	59
3.	Job Futures CCS location delivery models	60
4.	ACSO prison and CCS location delivery models	61
5.	Number and percent of characteristics reported as essential to an effective employment consultant	66
6.	Number and percent of client characteristics/support needs identified	67
7.	Number and percent of management tasks identified	68
8.	Number and percent of characteristics identified as ‘best features’ of CSEPP	71
9.	Number and percent of expansion, management, and practice-related suggested improvements	74
10.	Percentages of clients who received help	80
11.	Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) of ratings for how helpful CSEPP had been to clients	80
12.	Issues emerging from the process evaluation	82
13.	Number of referrals, registrations, placements, outcomes, and validations (July, 2002 – June, 2004)	108
14.	Number of referrals, registrations, placements, outcomes, and validations (July, 2004 – October, 2004)	111
15.	Progression: Referrals to registrations to placements to outcomes (July, 2002 – June, 2004)	114
16.	Progression: Referrals to registrations to placements to outcomes (July, 2004 – October, 2004)	118
17.	Re-offending rates of CSEPP clients	128
18.	Percent distribution of gender, education level and marital status for pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	142
19.	Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) of the physical and psychological health rating for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	145
20.	Percent distribution of diagnosed chronic medical and psychological conditions for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	146
21.	Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) of the effect of chronic medical and psychological conditions on daily lifestyle ratings for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	148
22.	Stability in housing for the new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	149

23.	Percent distribution and mean and standard deviation (in brackets) for specific employment characteristics for the new offender clients, and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	151
24.	Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) for variables associated with stability in employment for the new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	152
25.	Average reported impact of lack of money on five life domains for the new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	153
26.	Number and type of people who provide social support, as well as perceived level of support from family for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	154
27.	Percent distribution of drugs used prior to prison/past month, and extent that drugs and alcohol caused problems for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients	156

List of Figures

1.	The program model	41
2.	A chronology of significant events in the history of CSEPP	46
3.	Features of the consortium and single provider service models	54
4.	Consortium: Momentum-building model	55
5.	Independent Operator: Rocket-launching model	56
6.	Conceptual models of an ideal program and location development and delivery	100
7.	Number of male and female clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004	109
8.	Number of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004	109
9.	Number of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004	110
10.	Number of male and female clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	112
11.	Number of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	112
12.	Number of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	113
13.	Progression of male and female clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004	115
14.	Progression of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004	116
15.	Progression of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004	116
16.	Percentages of clients progressing through program: July, 2002 – June, 2004	117
17.	Progression of male and female clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	119
18.	Progression of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	120
19.	Progression of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	121
20.	Percentages of clients progressing through program: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004	122

21.	Progression (outcomes/registrations) for CCS locations: July, 2002 – October 31, 2004	123
22.	Progression (outcomes/registrations) for Prison locations: July, 2002 – October 31, 2004	124
23.	Average days between registration and outcome for CCS locations	125
24.	Average days between registration and outcome for Prison locations	126
25.	Re-offending rates of male and female clients	128
26.	Re-offending rates of prisoners and offender clients	129
27.	Re-offending rates of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients	129
28.	Recidivism as average number of offences per day for CSEPP and Non-CSEPP samples	131
29.	Average recidivism seriousness for CSEPP and Non-CSEPP samples	131
30.	Average number of offences for CSEPP and Non-CSEPP samples	132
31.	Average offences per day for CSEPP clients, pre and post CSEPP registration	133
32.	Recidivism seriousness for CSEPP clients, pre and post CSEPP registration	133
33.	Poly-recidivism for CSEPP clients, pre and post CSEPP registration	134
34.	How the Program works	174

Executive Summary

Background

This report is in relation to a comprehensive evaluation of the Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program that has been conducted during 2004. The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) was funded for two years as part of the Corrections Victoria commitment to reducing re-offending; a commitment reflected in many recent policy documents including the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy (CLTMS)*. An additional one year has been added to the pilot funding, and that year is nearing mid-point.

Program Description

The CSEPP provides direct employment assistance as well as referring and assisting clients into other relevant support services through a case management model. Prisoners and offenders register on a voluntary basis and are eligible for support for 12 months. The two primary program objectives for clients are sustained employment and reduced re-offending. The program operates from 17 Corrections Victoria locations, 7 prisons and 10 community corrections services. There are two contracted providers: Job Futures which is responsible for the program at 15 of the 17 locations and delivers the program through a consortium of provider members including The Brosnan Centre, The Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, Djerriwarrh Employment, The Education Centre, Employment Focus, Melbourne Citymission, VACRO, and Youth Projects. The Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) is the other provider and is responsible for two locations. Most of the provider organisations are not simply employment service providers, but more comprehensive social welfare organisations that provide a range of services relevant to the client group and have wide service networks.

Context for the Program

It is clear from a review of international and Australian literature that employment prospects for ex-prisoners and offenders are quite grim, that employment is a key element of successful reintegration, and that unemployment is associated with re-offending. The literature also suggests that ex-prisoners and offenders are among the most disadvantaged job seekers and have comprehensive support needs in relation to gaining employment. Mainstream employment services are not adequately skilled or possibly resourced to do so. The need for such a specialist program is well-supported by the literature. The cost of crime is another factor that makes programs that reduce re-offending extremely valuable.

The Evaluation

The program evaluation that forms the basis of this report has had three main components informed by a comprehensive review of relevant literature. The three components include a

process evaluation, an outcomes evaluation, and an evaluation of indirect gains associated with the program.

The process evaluation has investigated:

- the program model (program logic and design) in terms of its internal consistency and its coherence with current and emerging policy;
- program implementation in terms of coherence between the program model and the program as delivered, the context within which it has operated and the impact of operating environment conditions on delivery;
- service models and practices across providers and locations in terms of identification of implementation issues, best practice exemplars, and suggestions for improvement.

The outcomes evaluation has investigated:

- employment outcomes in terms of the number of referrals, registrations, placements, and 13 week outcomes achieved in the first two years and in the first four months of the third year, as well as rates of converting registrations to placements and placements to 13 week outcomes as a measure of program effectiveness;
- recidivism outcomes in terms of simple rates of re-offending for the whole program and advanced analyses on a large random sample of CSEPP clients compared with non-CSEPP clients, as well as pre and post program offending rates for CSEPP clients.

The indirect gains evaluation has investigated:

- differences in life conditions of 109 CSEPP clients in relation to length of time in the program;
- changes to health, housing, employment, finances, social network, substance use, and criminal justice involvement were investigated.

Major Findings in this Report

The major findings of the evaluation include:

- the program model is fundamentally sound in that it coheres with recommendations from the literature, Corrections Victoria policy, and the real world of employment support needs of prisoners and offenders as evidenced through the program as delivered;
- the program as it is delivered is quite robust, having moved through the establishment phase into a period of industrial unrest within Corrections that affected referrals, followed by the restructure that produced Corrections Victoria and a several month period of no assurance of contract extension, the program targets were very nearly met within the two years; in most cases, the program is held in high regard by Corrections Victoria location personnel, employment consultants charged with delivery, and program clients, all of whom were interviewed for the evaluation;
- the employment outcomes were near the target at the end of the two year period and performance in the four months of the third year far exceeded targets on a pro rata basis;

performance in relation to each of the other outcome measures used in the evaluation was very solid, again, the past four months showing extremely good outcomes;

- the recidivism outcomes were impressive, with a very low rate of re-offending for the client group as a whole; comparisons of a large random sample of CSEPP clients with non-CSEPP clients showed lower recidivism for CSEPP clients; investigation of pre and post program offending by CSEPP clients showed significantly lower offending following registration in the program;
- the evaluation of indirect gains showed improvements in employment by 9 months in the program with more of those clients reporting being employed, in the job longer, having higher earnings, and working more hours per week than those in the program for less time; fewer 9 month clients are on public assistance and more say that they have sufficient income to live adequately; no 9 month clients reported substance abuse treatment; there were no other differences between the groups.

Main Recommendations

The main recommendations contained in this report include:

- continue offering the program with adjustments to the program model that take into account realistic expectations about employer involvement; include reporting of other work-related outcomes such as training, work experience, volunteer work, etc; include reporting of micro-gains by clients; include one or more additional equivalent employment outcomes to reporting of employment outcomes;
- expand the program Victoria-wide; provide a 3 year contract to providers; current providers should play a significant role in the development plan (as providers and as advisors to the Department); extend eligibility by widening eligibility and making the period of eligibility longer;
- conduct a continuous monitoring and evaluation process in relation to the program to aid with program development and continuous improvement;
- conduct ongoing research investigating success in reintegration in order to identify more precisely the extent of client support needs, the rate of positive change, signs of breakthroughs and relapses, and the length of time generally required to make a successful life change for ex-prisoners and offenders.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 The Current Victorian Corrections Context

The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) is a pilot intensive employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders offered by Corrections Victoria. The program is part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the corrections system in Victoria, a redevelopment that places a great deal of emphasis on reintegration of prisoners and offenders as contributing members of the community. The corrections context within which the pilot program has operated is important to understanding why and how it has operated.

Since 2000, several significant projects have been conducted and resultant publications have been produced that form the basis of what has become the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*, a strategy that will guide redevelopment and delivery of corrections services in Victoria for the next ten years. The Strategy includes an expectation that corrections initiatives will be complemented, through a 'whole of government' approach, by supporting initiatives in crime prevention, police diversion, court based diversion, juvenile justice, and employment, education and training. One of the major goals of the Strategy is to reduce the number of prison beds by 600 by June 30, 2005 and then on-going.

The significant documents informing and forming the basis of the Strategy include:

- *Reducing Offending: A Comprehensive Coordination Strategy for Victoria*, Report prepared for Drugs Policy, Crime Prevention and Corrections Sub Committee of Cabinet, October, 2000;
- *Review of Community Correctional Services in Victoria: Report to the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner*, Arthur Andersen, December, 2000;
- *A Framework for Reducing Reoffending: Differentiated Case Management (DCM) in Victorian Corrections*, Felicity Dunne, September, 2000; and
- *Transition from Custody to Community: Transitional Support for People Leaving Prison*, Lisa Ward, June, 2001.
- *Reducing Re-offending Framework: Setting the Scene*, Paper No. 1, OCSC, 2002.

In addition to production of significant publications that underpin policy, in 2001 the Victorian State Budget included \$334.5 million over four years to redevelop Victoria's corrections system. This was for construction of new prisons and for comprehensive prisoner rehabilitation and prison diversion programs. The intensive employment assistance pilot program falls clearly within the second of the two purposes. The redevelopment of the system is well underway. One significant element of the redevelopment has been the restructure of the system, with the merging of the former Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner and the Public Correctional Enterprise (CORE), to form Corrections Victoria in July of 2004.

1.2 The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP)

The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) is essentially a reintegration program with employment and reduced re-offending as dual primary objectives. The program is offered on a voluntary basis within 10 Community Corrections Services locations and 7 prison locations throughout Victoria. CSEPP officially commenced in June of 2002, with an intention to operate as a pilot program for two years (25 months). An additional year of piloting the program was funded and commenced in July, 2004. The primary goals of CSEPP were to assist a total of 2,500 prisoners and offenders who are at medium or high risk of re-offending have high support needs and to place 450 of those clients into full-time (minimum 20 hours per week) sustained employment (13 weeks continuous employment) within the two year period. It may seem a subtle distinction, but the purpose of CSEPP is to assist clients with reintegration into the community through employment and to reduce re-offending.

It is recognised that employment plays a significant role in reintegration and, therefore, reduction of re-offending. This is consistent with Corrections Victoria's *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*, which has a main objective of reducing re-offending through significant investment in rehabilitation and prison diversion programs. Additionally, within the documentation relating to CSEPP, prisoners and offenders are acknowledged to have comprehensive and intensive support needs and to require specialist assistance. Some of the assumptions underlying the program include: need for long-term support; likelihood of slow and intermittent progress; need for basic skill development in relation to pre-employment preparation; and need for referral to other services such as housing, health services, and personal support services.

The commitment by Corrections Victoria to focus on 'high risk – high support needs' is central to the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*. At the basis of the commitment to focus on 'high risk – high support needs' clients is a recognition that successful reintegration into the community is a more comprehensive and long term resolution of the problem of recidivism. By taking a rehabilitative approach to reintegration, through CSEPP and other reintegration-related programs, the Department of Justice is contributing to the broader social agenda of the Victorian government as well.

The program uses a case management approach, and the employment service providers are expected to integrate provision of employment services, with housing, education and training, health and personal support services provided by other service agencies. It is expected that a range of other, non-employment outcomes will be achieved including that a number of program clients will:

- be placed and supported in part-time or full-time training or education;
- engage in work experience placements;
- be placed and supported in life-skills or other basic independent living courses/programs; and
- remain engaged with the program as an active client for a nominated period.

CSEPP clients are eligible for continuous service beginning prior to release (for prisoners) and during order completion for offenders other than those on parole. The program provides

individualised assistance for up to six months prior to release, and for up to 12 months post-release (for prisoners). Offenders serving community based orders are eligible for assistance throughout the term of their order, and may still be referred to the program up to twelve months after the completion of their order.

Service contracts include provision of the following service elements:

- initial assessment and vocational advice and training which includes a range of basic individual and tailored supports including appropriate literacy, numeracy and life skills programs, vocational counselling, job readiness training and assistance with résumé development and interview techniques;
- job search and placement which includes identifying appropriate job vacancies and communicating these to prisoners or offenders, job-seeking training, and assistance with applications and interviews; this stage of the program also includes intensive post-release assistance, acknowledging the range of other factors to be addressed such as housing/accommodation needs, re-establishment of family links, adjustment to independent living and addressing drug, alcohol, or medical issues;
- placement follow-up and support which includes regular follow-up and support to address emerging client and workplace issues, on-the-job training and supervision issues, maintenance of effective work habits, workplace communication, conflict resolution, personal support, maintaining initiative, motivation and involvement with the work/workplace; and
- employer support which includes building effective relationships with employers who employ CSEPP clients through regular contact visits to employers before and after a placement; and, where possible, engaging employers in information sessions to develop client job-seeking skills.

Reporting to Corrections Victoria by CSEPP providers occurs on a monthly basis. The focus of the reports is the number of referrals to the program, number of registrations, number of placements into employment, and number of clients achieving 13 weeks of continuous employment at 20 hours per week or more. The number of clients exiting the program during the month is also reported. Training outcomes are recorded, but not reported. Significant social outcomes of a less tangible nature (such as improved physical and/or mental health, reduced substance use, positive social network) are not recorded or reported formally. Likewise, what might be termed ‘micro-gains’ (small, incremental gains in work readiness, personal development, social development, or healthy lifestyle behaviour) are not reported.

It is an expectation of Corrections Victoria that the program will reflect several operating principles (extracted from OCSC RFT Evaluation – Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program, September, 2002):

- employment interventions provided must contribute to reduced re-offending rates among participants and contribute to achieving the Government’s ‘diversion from prison’ targets;
- assistance provided to clients must be multi-faceted, individualised and integrated to ensure pre-employment and employment needs can be met;

- the service should form part of a multi-agency strategy to reduce unemployment through strategic alliances of employment, education and training, housing, transitional support and health agencies;
- agencies providing employment assistance must have the necessary partnerships in place to address broader client needs such as substance abuse and homelessness;
- the need for long-term and intensive support to effectively achieve employment options for ex-offenders needs to be recognised;
- employment assistance should incorporate the principle of progression in which reintegration is seen as a series of intermediate stages beginning in custody and underpinned by an expectation of setbacks and detours; and
- services provided should focus on the quality and suitability of employment, thus minimising the likelihood of further alienation that can arise when the client/job match is poor.

In addition to adherence to these operating principles, certain types of prisoners and offenders have been targeted for inclusion in the program including sentenced prisoners, parolees, and those serving Intensive Corrections Orders (ICO), Community Based Orders (CBO) and Combined Custody and Treatment Orders (CCTO) assessed as being: moderate to high risk of re-offending; at risk of long-term unemployment; and motivated to find and maintain work, but not be able to achieve it and remain offence-free without assistance.

There are two contracted providers in the pilot program. One is a consortium, organised under the umbrella of Job Futures, Limited. The consortium members include The Brosnan Centre, The Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, Djerriwarrh Employment, The Education Centre, Employment Focus, Melbourne Citymission, VACRO, and Youth Projects. The Job Futures consortium is contracted to achieve 90 percent of the total program target employment outcomes. The Job Futures consortium services fifteen of the seventeen locations including nine of the ten Community Corrections Services locations and six of the seven prison locations included in the pilot program.

The Job Futures consortium CCS locations are: Bendigo; Dandenong; Frankston; Hume; Morwell; Reservoir; Ringwood; Shepparton; and Sunshine. The prison locations are: Dame Phyllis Frost Centre; Dhurringile; Fulham; Loddon; Tarrengower; and Won Wron. The other contracted provider is Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) which is contracted to achieve 10 percent of the total program target employment outcomes and operates from the other two pilot program locations: Geelong CCS and Barwon Prison. This structure is more fully elaborated in the program model diagram on page 41 of this report.

In the Community Corrections Services locations, the general eligibility criteria cited above pertain. In the selected prison locations, the following target groups also apply:

- Fulham, Won Wron, and Barwon prisons - those serving sentences of up to six months duration;
- Fulham, Won Wron, and Barwon prisons - prisoners aged between 18 and 29;
- Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Tarrengower prisons - female prisoners;

- Fulham, Wron Wron, Barwon, and Dhurringile prisons - those serving sentences of three years or more; and
- Loddon - prisoners assessed as being at moderate to high risk of re-offending.

This is a brief description of the program and the context and policy framework within which it operates. Like the program itself, the evaluation of CSEPP has been informed by the context and policy framework. It has also been informed by relevant international and Australian literature and the program's logic and design.

1.3 The CSEPP Evaluation

The CSEPP program model (its logic and its design) called for evaluation of CSEPP to coincide with commencement of the program itself, in accordance with a sound principle of evaluation research. However, as a result of several circumstances, the evaluation did not officially commence until much later, in March, 2004, although some preliminary meetings had been held earlier. The evaluation commenced at a point three months prior to the end of the initial two-year funding period for CSEPP. The delay in starting the evaluation has resulted in a shorter time frame within which to conduct the evaluation. (See Appendix 1 for a description of the delay.) Nevertheless, all elements of the original evaluation design have been retained, with minor modifications. Two compromises have been: cutting short a 'rapport-building' phase that was built into the original design and would have made relationship management much easier; and eliminating a first round of data collection and feedback that would have facilitated performance adjustments if more time had been available. In any case, the evaluation has been conducted within the specified timeframe and according to the original design. Modifications that were necessary were all negotiated and agreed with Corrections Victoria.

There are four components of this evaluation: a comprehensive review of international and Australian literature; a process evaluation; an outcomes evaluation; and an evaluation of indirect gains associated with program participation. The literature review focuses on: the context of employment for ex-prisoners and offenders; access and use of mainstream employment assistance; specialist employment assistance for ex-prisoners and offenders; successful reintegration; and costs associated with crime, criminal justice, and incarceration. The process evaluation focuses on: the program model (its logic and design); program implementation; specific program implementation issues; location specific conditions; 'best features' of the program; and limitations and improvements. The outcomes evaluation focuses on: employment outcomes (number, rates, and ratios in relation to registrations with the program, placements into employment, 13-week placements, and exits from the program); and recidivism (number of re-offences, speed of re-offending, seriousness of re-offending, and poly-offending). The evaluation of indirect gains associated with program participation focuses on: physical and psychological health; housing; employment and training; finances; social network; substance use; and criminal justice activities. This report is structured in terms of the structure of the CSEPP evaluation. There is a separate section for each of the components, presented in the order just described.

Section 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This review of literature is relevant to each of the three empirically based components of the CSEPP evaluation. The process evaluation component focuses on program logic and design as well as implementation issues, processes and activities associated with program delivery. The outcomes evaluation component focuses on program outcomes (employment outcomes related to referrals, registrations, placements, and outcomes; and rates of recidivism). The participant profiling component focuses on broader, indirect gains, ‘micro-gains’ and broader reintegration outcomes associated with program involvement. Employment is a key issue in the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners and offenders, and the CSEPP clearly and explicitly has been intended to accomplish broader reintegration outcomes, as well as employment outcomes.

The literature review will first discuss the context of employment for ex-prisoners and offenders. The personal and social characteristics that may contribute to the difficulties experienced by these groups in becoming job-ready, and obtaining and maintaining employment will be outlined as part of a broader discussion of the barriers imposed by the cycle of arrest and conviction (and for some incarceration/re-incarceration). As well, a discussion of the role of existing mainstream employment services in meeting the complex needs of these groups will be presented in order to highlight the need for specialist employment assistance for these groups. In the second section, there is a review of national and international programs that have provided specialist employment assistance to ex-prisoners and offenders, as well as identifying preferred practice in program development and delivery. In the third section, the key ingredients to successful reintegration of these groups are discussed, incorporating personal, community, and societal elements of change.

2.2 The Employment Context

Assisting ex-prisoners and offenders into employment is understood to be a complex process and part of that process includes preparing job seekers to meet the requirements of an employer. Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2002) identified numerous factors that appear to play a role in the hiring behaviour of employers in low-wage and low-skill employment settings that are typically experienced by ex-prisoners and offenders. First, most if not all employers seek applicants who are work ready, as well as those with basic technical skills (e.g., reading, writing, following instructions) and interpersonal skills (e.g., interacting with co-workers) relevant to the work setting.

Personal qualities such as reliability, honesty, punctuality, and a positive work attitude are generally reflective of a work-ready individual, while those individuals who demonstrate poor work attitudes and performance, possibly related to existing substance use and/or mental health problems, are viewed as non work-ready. Second, most employers are interested in job applicants with demonstrated job skills and/or credentials, and may screen out those without the desired characteristics, as well as avoiding those with criminal records. Third, there is a good deal of variation in the level of resources given over to hiring decisions, and the level of information and expertise in this area. Fourth, recruitment decisions and screening of job applicants may be

influenced by the background, attitudes, and experiences of the employer. Fifth, access to a suitable and constant pool of job applicants is affected by employee networks, geographical distance to community groups, and more generally, to labour market fluctuations.

The desired outcome for the ex-prisoner or offender is a job with a wage that allows the person to support themselves and any dependents. Besides this basic requirement, many of these individuals seek employment that has some potential for the future, with the inclusion of benefits (e.g., sick leave, recreation leave) that are widely available to the general population. As well, having a job with these components may be equated with having some social standing in the community, and thereby, allow ex-prisoners and offenders to view themselves and be treated by others as productive members of society. Research suggests that despite these common desires, the more likely outcome for this group is the receipt of a low-wage, lower-level job (e.g., Taxman, Young, & Byrne, 2002) that is likely to afford less respect within the community and merely allow the ex-prisoner to 'get by' on a daily or weekly basis.

There are numerous inter-related and wide-ranging barriers to employment for ex-prisoners and offenders. The personal characteristics and social characteristics of the ex-prisoner and offender may limit employment opportunities of these groups and make it more difficult for the job seeker to prepare for a job and meet the requirements of the employer. Specific employment-related barriers include lack of work experience, employer attitudes/restrictions, legal restrictions and/or reporting requirements, and drug and alcohol treatment and/or rehabilitation. In addition, lack of stable and appropriate accommodation can be a significant barrier to employment. These barriers mean that ex-prisoners and offenders may experience considerable difficulty in both obtaining and maintaining employment. This section reviews those barriers to employment. In so doing, the complexity and comprehensiveness of the support needs of ex-prisoners and offenders are made clearer, and consideration of specialist versus generic employment support services is more informed.

Personal characteristics that may serve as potential barriers to employment for ex-prisoners include various psychological conditions such as depression, low self-esteem, and low motivation (Fletcher, 2001; Helfgott, 1997), mental and/or health-related problems and disabilities (Dutreix, 2000; Hirsch et al., 2002), and behavioural problems such as anger management (Heinrich, 2000). In addition, a low level of skill development including basic life skills and key employment skills, together with limited education, low levels of numeracy and literacy, and poor social competencies (Christian, 2002) mean that this group is seriously disadvantaged in the labour market.

2.2.1 Mental Illness

Mental health problems are a prevalent health condition among prisoners. It is estimated that the incidence of mental illness (incorporating schizophrenia/psychosis, major depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder) among prisoners is at least twice that of the general population of the United States (Ditton, 1999), with many inmates also reporting a history of alcohol and/or drug abuse (Ditton, 1999; Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). Ex-prisoners and offenders with these personal characteristics are likely to find it very difficult to both obtain and maintain employment. Moreover, when job seekers are dealing with these sorts of personal issues, the provision of employment assistance and support are made more difficult, and the likelihood of achieving sustained employment is lower.

2.2.2 Educational Disadvantage

As well, personal characteristics and conditions related to education, previous work experience and finance may impede employment for these groups. In fact, ex-prisoners are one of the most educationally disadvantaged groups in society. In a 2001 census of 3,391 prisoners in Victoria (ABS, 2002) only 3.9% had achieved a tertiary level degree or diploma as their highest level of educational attainment, and only 6.1% had completed secondary level. Of concern, the majority of prisoners had only partly completed secondary level (83.6%). While this census did not directly compare rates of educational attainment of prisoners to the general Australian population, it is likely that the former group is seriously educationally disadvantaged relative to the broader population, given that 25% of adults had a diploma or higher as their highest level of education, and considerably fewer (57%) Australian adults did not complete secondary school (ABS, 2001).

A general pattern of educational disadvantage for prisoners is also reflected in international studies. In terms of educational attainment, a 1997 survey indicated that the majority of state (68%) and federal (49%) prison inmates in the United States had not received a high school diploma compared to 18.4% of the general population (Harlow, 2003). As well, low literacy levels have been noted among large samples of both British (Fletcher, 2001) and American (Haigler, Harlow, O'Connor, & Campbell, 1994) prisoners. For example, Haigler et al. (1994) reported that of approximately 1,150 state and federal prison inmates in the United States, the majority of prisoners (70%) scored at the two lowest levels of test proficiency on scales relating to prose, document, and quantitative literacy, compared to approximately half of 13,600 adults in the general community who were assessed in the National Adult Literacy Survey in 1993.

Lower proficiency on literacy tests may have implications for the employment of ex-prisoners given that greater difficulty is likely to be experienced in performing tasks involving the synthesis or integration of information from long or more complex sources or sequential operations, which is a skill inherent in many job tasks. In Victoria, a recent study of education and training provisions in prisons (Bearing Point, 2003) identified that 40% of the sample of 949 respondents had not completed Year 10 and only 20% had completed Year 12. Low level of educational attainment is widely recognised, but the issue of literacy is not really addressed in that study, and there does not appear to be any published figures on literacy levels for Australian prisoners or releasees, although anecdotal evidence suggests that these groups are similarly disadvantaged in terms of reading proficiency.

Given the generally low levels of educational attainment and literacy among prisoners and the typically low participation in education programs in prison (Lynch & Sabol, 2001), it is of no surprise that ex-prisoners and offenders appear to be similarly educationally disadvantaged. For example, just over half (52%) of 150 offenders assessed by the Inner London Probation Service demonstrated severe problems in areas including reading, writing, memory, and sequencing (Morgan, 1996, cited in Fletcher, 2001).

Likewise, the American Probation and Parole Association (1996, cited in Rahill-Beuler & Kretzer, 1997) reported that 40% of released inmates could not read and relatively few (25-30%) had completed high school. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (1997) reported that the median education level of parolees in the United States was 11th grade, with 13% of parolees having achieved less than 8th grade education level and 45% having achieved between 9th and 11th grade education. The lower education and literacy levels commonly observed among prisoners, ex-prisoners, and

offenders have significant implications for employment given that inadequate qualifications have been identified by ex-prisoners as one of the primary barriers to getting a job (NACRO, 1997).

2.2.3 Financial Pressure

Limited financial resources can also impact significantly on success in reintegration for ex-prisoners, as well as being a primary concern for offenders. Limited finances impact directly on the individual's ability to obtain and maintain employment by negatively affecting interview attendance, purchase of clothing or equipment relative to the job role, and meeting any transportation costs associated with employment (Webster, Hedderman, Turnbull, & May, 2001). As well, lack of money has broader implications for obtaining suitable housing, reconnecting and strengthening family ties, and accessing physical/mental health treatment, among others.

Prisoners are usually released with a small amount of money, primarily their earnings from prison industry participation. In the US, release funds have been reported to vary between \$US25 and \$US200 (Travis et al., 2001). In some cases, prisoners are released without funds which creates a greater urgency to obtain money from gainful employment, or other (often illegal) sources. Within Australia, similar patterns of low release funds are probable, however, prison work is usually mandatory (at very low pay), and Centrelink emergency payments are usually organised pre-release, increasing the amount a prisoner is likely to have upon release. Even so, amounts are likely to vary between \$AUS200 and \$AUS800.

Employment is clearly critical to alleviating the financial pressure typically experienced by ex-prisoners and offenders, and as such, is a significant factor in the successful reintegration of these groups in the community. The opportunity to take some financial responsibility for themselves and any dependants may originate from the support provided by employment programs to assist these individuals in obtaining employment and keeping a longer-term job. Meeting the high support needs of this group as they relate more broadly to employment may help break the cycle of a return to crime related to poverty.

2.2.4 Lack of Social Support

In addition to the numerous personal characteristics outlined above, social characteristics such as level of family and friend support may also be influential on employment outcomes for ex-prisoners and offenders. For example, in a study of the post-release outcomes of 49 ex-prisoners in the United States, Nelson, Deess, and Allen (1999) found that those ex-prisoners who indicated that their family and/or friends were supportive of them typically had the greatest success in reintegration than did those with less perceived family support. Success was viewed in terms of increased likelihood of getting a job, lower levels of drug use, and a lower level of continued criminal activity. The ex-prisoners obtained jobs largely through old contacts, with many (8 out of 12) returning to jobs that they had held in the past, and some utilising contacts from family and friends to find jobs. These findings suggest that ex-prisoners who have greater family support do better in terms of both obtaining employment and having greater stability in employment than those with less perceived support.

2.2.5 Accommodation Instability/Issues

Accommodation plays a key role for ex-prisoners in the successful transition to community life, as well as having direct implications for employment. Ex-prisoners who are faced with limited housing choices are often forced to access crisis accommodation such as backpacking hostels and transient hotels which may provide a 'breeding ground' for substance abuse, as well as restricting the individual's social network to those with similar backgrounds (Rowe, 2002). As well as exacerbating the difficulties of ex-prisoners with histories of substance abuse, unstable and unsafe accommodation are more disruptive to medical adherence and continuation of care for those with medical and mental health problems (Hammett, Roberts, & Kennedy, 2001) which, once again, may impact on employment. It is likely, therefore, that the poor housing conditions typical of many ex-prisoners may limit opportunities and incentive for both obtaining and maintaining employment, as well as making the provision of employment assistance and support more difficult.

Accommodation issues are clearly of great concern to many prisoners approaching release. As part of the Bridging the Gap program, 331 Victorian prisoners with drug or alcohol issues developed individual prison release plans. Accommodation was the most frequently cited post-release goal (92%), with drug or alcohol treatment (88%), and employment or training (82%) also frequently nominated as a release goal. Further, only half (51%) of 173 participants who were assessed at six months after their release had found stable housing, and 33% had moved three or more times over the same period.

While it is generally understood that the type and level of accommodation impacts significantly on numerous life domains for ex-prisoners and offenders, there has been virtually no empirical work directed toward understanding the relation between unstable housing and other key variables including employment. In one of the few studies addressing this question, Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone, and Peeters (2002) interviewed 194 participants in New South Wales and 145 in Victoria just prior to leaving prison, and again at 3, 6, and 9 months post-release. Results indicated that those individuals with family support or good agency support were more likely to be employed and have stable housing. As well, among other variables, employment was predictive of staying out of prison. Perhaps because of the limited research on housing issues for ex-prisoners, operational definitions of housing stability have tended to be overlooked in the literature. In related work on homelessness among adults, however, unstable housing has been defined as housing that is maintained for less than 30 consecutive days (Zlotnick, Robertson, & Lahiff, 1999). Longer-term (or more stable) housing may be viewed as accommodation which is maintained for 3-months or more.

2.2.6 Employment Difficulties

While personal characteristics, social characteristics, and accommodation are clearly influential on employment outcomes for ex-prisoners and offenders, there are numerous other factors directly related to the employment experience itself that also serve to restrict employment opportunities for these groups. Compared to the general population, ex-prisoners are underemployed, and typically experience numerous barriers to finding and maintaining employment including patchy work histories, lack of basic skills, and employer discrimination, to name a few. On the basis of a review of literature and interviews with a small group of prisoners/ex-prisoners, Webster et al. (2001) reported several conditions that serve to restrict employment outcomes for these groups. Those conditions included: attitudes of employers to ex-prisoners and crime; lack of job contacts due to segregated social networks; numerous financial difficulties impacting on interview attendance;

purchase of clothing or equipment; and problems making the transition from benefits to employment. Additional difficulties related to gaining sustainable employment for ex-prisoners include a lack of equal opportunity policy among employers, a lack of appropriate recruitment procedures, and the problem of meeting the key skill requirements of employers (Employment Support Unit, 2000).

Others have also identified wide-ranging difficulties for these groups with respect to employment. Heinrich (2000) identified a number of complex variables that may impact on success in employment for ex-prisoners including the stigma associated with having a criminal record, employer attitudes, legal, educational and financial barriers, mental health and substance abuse problems, low literacy levels, lack of occupational skills, and difficulties finding stable accommodation. A later study by Fletcher (2001) reported that in 26 interviews with ex-offenders in the United Kingdom, employer discrimination was identified as the most common labour market disadvantage (54%) followed by a lack of educational and/or vocational qualifications (42%), and low self-esteem (27%). To a less extent, drug and/or alcohol-related problems (19%), health problems (15%), poor work discipline (15%), and low pay (12%) were identified as barriers to employment. Problems adjusting to the routine of work have also been reported as a potential barrier to employment (Visher & Travis, 2003). Clearly, these barriers to employment are very complex and make it extremely difficult for mainstream employment services to meet the numerous and varied needs of ex-prisoners and offenders.

There are numerous legal barriers such as job restrictions and court-ordered requirements for release (e.g., daily reporting) that may impact significantly on both obtaining and maintaining employment for ex-prisoners. For example, laws that prohibit entry into particular job positions may impact on employment by significantly reducing job options. In addition, laws that enable employers to access a prisoner's criminal record (in some cases) may impact negatively on employment outcomes (Mukamal, 2001). Corporate policy restrictions on hiring ex-prisoners add to the difficulties of this group in re-entering the workforce (Taxman et al., 2002). Similar formal restrictions and corporate policy restrictions are placed on the employment of ex-prisoners in Australia. Additional problems may relate to the difficulty meeting several responsibilities required for release, including finding employment, random drug screenings, day reporting, and regular parole or probation-officer meetings (Buck, 2000). These formal and informal restrictions can also make it extremely difficult for the provision of employment assistance and support to ex-prisoners and offenders, as they are exclusive to these populations and not easily dealt with by mainstream employment services.

2.2.7 Substance Abuse and Treatment

As well as the difficulties identified above, ex-prisoners and offenders frequently have rehabilitation and/or counselling needs that may serve to limit employment opportunities. A large number of ex-prisoners and offenders are disadvantaged by substance abuse problems which require immediate and responsive programs to deal with the substance abuse problem itself, and the broader consequences associated with longer-term addiction. As well as drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation, the need for psychological counselling and basic post-release programs (e.g., employment) are often critical to successful long-term reintegration. High drug dependency among prisoners is evidenced by recent figures indicating approximately 80% of prisoners in the United States have some type of drug or alcohol problem (Belenko, 1998), with over 50% reporting that they were affected when they committed the offence associated with their imprisonment (Mumola, 1999).

In Australia, a similar pattern of drug dependency was noted among a large sample of people detained by police and taken to a police station of which a large proportion of the detainees had prior arrests in the past 12 months (56%) or had been in prison (22%) in the past year (Makkai & McGregor, 2003). A survey of prisoners in Victoria revealed that 66% of respondents reported illicit drug use in the year prior to their imprisonment, with many (about 40%) indicating that they had taken illicit drugs or alcohol while in prison (McLachlan, 2000, cited in Melbourne Criminology Research and Evaluation Unit, 2003). Furthermore, in Victoria in the 10-year period between 1990 and 2000, more than 80% of prisoners reported drug problems related to their reason for imprisonment (Victorian Department of Justice, 2000–2001).

High dependency levels are similarly indicated among prisoners awaiting release, with Beck (2000b, cited in Travis & Petersilia, 2001) reporting that 74% of prisoners in the United States who are awaiting release within the next 12 months have a history of drug use and/or alcohol abuse. Substance use problems have also been reported among ex-offender samples, with 48% of 739 British ex-offenders who had recently completed a supervision order or community sentence having experienced drug or alcohol-related problems (Bridges, 1998, cited in Fletcher, 2001).

Clearly, physical and mental health problems, as well as substance use issues, may impact significantly on the ability of both ex-prisoners and offenders to obtain and maintain employment. For example, in their study of 49 ex-prisoners, Nelson and colleagues (1999) reported that of the 31 participants who did not find a job, the majority were unemployed at the time of their arrest (23 of 31 participants), as well as having deeply entrenched substance use problems. These problems, while not exclusive to this population, clearly have implications for the delivery of employment support to ex-prisoners and offenders.

2.2.8 Employer Attitudes

In addition to the difficulties identified above, ex-prisoners and offenders often have to deal with discriminatory attitudes of employers and the general population that may serve to restrict their opportunities for employment in mainstream society. Discriminatory attitudes on the part of employers add to the difficulty of mainstream employment services to place and support ex-prisoners and offenders.

Several studies have examined employer attitudes toward hiring ex-prisoners. Albright and Denq (1996) surveyed 83 of 300 employers currently advertising professional or skilled positions in order to examine the effect of the following variables on willingness to hire: level of education received while incarcerated, government incentives, type of offence committed, and relationship of the crime to the job. Results indicated that relatively few (12%) employers agreed or strongly agreed that they were inclined to hire an ex-prisoner; this figure was subsequently used by the authors to reflect a baseline measurement of general willingness to hire. Albright and Denq (1996) reported that ex-prisoners who were identified as having completed either a college degree, vocational trade, or two training programs were viewed more positively by employers. There was no significant difference, however, between the measured baseline attitude and those who had completed on-the-job training while incarcerated. Employers were also generally more willing to hire ex-prisoners on the basis of various government hiring incentives including those who are bonded, licensed, and insured. In addition, type of offence was influential on employer willing to hire, with employers generally unwilling to hire an ex-prisoner convicted of a violent offence or crimes against children. When the convicted crime (e.g., embezzlement) was not linked to the

advertised position (e.g., factory work) employer attitudes were generally more positive (Albright & Denq, 1996).

The impact of type of offence on employer attitudes has been reported elsewhere, with some studies indicating that employers are more likely to hire an ex-prisoner convicted on a non-violent offence than a violent offence (e.g., Hulse, 1991), and others suggesting that offenders convicted of drug/alcohol-related crimes are less likely to be hired than those convicted of other offences (e.g., Whiting & Winters, 1981). Likewise, Conalty and Cox (1999) questioned a range of employers about their concerns for hiring ex-prisoners with the most common concern being that they might re-offend against the company and the least common concern that they would be difficult to manage or may demonstrate a poor work attitude.

Another study of employer attitudes toward hiring a person with a criminal record involved a large-scale survey of over 3,000 employers from four major cities in the United States (Holzer, 1996). Without regard to the offence, nearly two-thirds of all employers reported that they would not knowingly hire a person with a criminal record. In fact, employers indicated that they would be more likely to hire welfare recipients or individuals with minimal work experience than someone with a criminal record, whether real or suspected. Of interest, a large proportion (30–40%) of those employers likely to hire less educated workers indicated that they conducted a background check of the criminal history records of their most recently hired employees. This study confirms a general reluctance by employers to hire someone with a criminal record.

A later survey of 619 employers in Los Angeles by Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2003) confirmed that self-reported willingness to hire did correlate with the actual hiring behaviour of these firms. Once again, relatively few (20%) employers indicated that they would definitely or probably hire a person with a criminal record. Rather, the majority of employers were willing to hire an applicant with a spotty work history (66%), a history of unemployment (80%), a high school equivalency diploma, rather than a high school diploma (97%), or a former or current welfare recipient (93%). Actual hiring rates for ex-offenders were quite low, with only 20% of employers indicating that they had hired an ex-offender over the past year while 30% indicated that they had recently hired a welfare recipient. These figures suggest that employers' willingness to hire is consistent with their actual behaviour; with those employers who indicated a willingness to hire ex-offenders having a greater likelihood of hiring an ex-offender over the past year.

In a recent Australian study, Graffam and colleagues (2004a, 2004b) surveyed 1,180 employers, employment services workers, corrections workers, and prisoners and offenders, on their attitudes toward the employability of ex-prisoners and offenders. Ex-prisoners and offenders were rated somewhat less likely to obtain and maintain employment than several other disadvantaged groups, even though both groups were rated only slightly less likely than the general workforce to possess 21 skills and characteristics associated with employability. The indication is that attitudes are generally poor across all relevant stakeholder groups.

Employer discrimination clearly plays a large role in the difficulties experienced by ex-prisoners and offenders in re-establishing themselves within the community. This may be apparent by formal procedures used to screen out job applicants who have a criminal record, or more subtle (and perhaps unintentional) screening out of those individuals without the personal qualities and qualifications appropriate to the job, of which these groups often fall short. For example, a British study reported that nearly half (42%) of 200 ex-prisoners said that their criminal record was

identified by employers as the main reason for being unsuccessful at the job interview stage (NACRO, 1998).

Similarly, 54% of a sample of 26 ex-offenders reported employer discrimination as their main barrier to employment (Fletcher, 2001). Obviously employer discrimination rates are difficult, if not impossible, to determine, and are likely to be considerably higher than estimated given that many employers do not explain the reasons for their recruitment decisions (Ward, 2001). As well as the experience of discriminatory attitudes toward hiring ex-prisoners and offenders, other social barriers include loss of social standing in the community, fear and hostility among the general community, and a tendency to enquire about and, in many cases, reject applications for housing, employment, and further education (Helfgott, 1997).

2.2.9 Complex Support Needs

Several studies have examined the inter-relationship between the numerous barriers to reintegration for ex-prisoners, including those relating to employment. As part of a larger study, Helfgott (1997) interviewed 16 prisoners approaching release and four ex-prisoners about their experiences. The ex-prisoners affirmed the many difficulties they faced upon release, indicating that their immediate needs related to getting a job, housing, education, medical care, counselling for substance abuse, auto and health insurance, clothing, transportation needs, and voice-mail access. As a group, they lacked support from friends and family and emphasised their need to develop more positive social networks. Employment was identified as a difficult need to meet, although obtaining adequate housing was their most pressing concern upon release. Finding meaningful employment was frequently mentioned as a short-term goal. Discrimination in employment, housing, and social relationships were also viewed as problematic. Given the small sample size, those results must be treated as only suggestive.

Further support for the complex support requirements of this group was reported by Nelson et al. (1999) who tracked 49 adults over the first month of their release from prison/jail in New York. Affirming earlier studies, the main challenges for this group related to getting a job, finding a house, and gaining access to health care services. About one third of the participants (18 of 49) did get a full or part-time job within the first month, but this was usually secured through family and friends or ex-employers. Relatively few ex-prisoners were able to find employment on their own because of limited job search skills, emphasising the need for specialist employment support. The average age of the 31 individuals who remained unemployed over the first month was slightly older at 37 years compared to an average age of 30 years for those who did find jobs. As well, most ex-prisoners were unemployed at the time of their arrest (23 of 31 participants), and 13 ex-prisoners had either not worked in a long time or never worked, indicating the need for intensive employment support. Some ex-prisoners did not search for a job because of more pressing concerns, typically related to obtaining insurance and medical attention because of HIV status. Virtually all of the ex-prisoners (46 of 49 participants) reported alcohol or drug use in the year prior to their incarceration, with half reporting daily drug use (Nelson et al., 1999). This study indicates that ex-prisoners are seriously disadvantaged by a range of complex barriers to employment.

2.3 Employment Participation

The impact of these wide-ranging barriers to employment for ex-prisoners and offenders are evident in employment participation rates. While it is difficult to estimate employment rates of ex-prisoners and offenders, what little we know suggests that these groups are very much disadvantaged. In the Bridging the Gap program in Victoria, only 11% of 198 participants were employed full-time at six months or at program completion, and 9% were employed on a casual basis, although these participants were identified as a group with high support needs and drug and/or alcohol issues. In Britain, more than half (60%) of the general population are employed compared to only 21% of over 1,000 offenders under probation supervision (Mair & May, 1997), while employment rates for ex-prisoners have been reported as closer to 10% (Sarno, Hearnden, Hedderman, Hough, Nee, & Herrington, 2000). In North America, employment participation rates of ex-prisoners were somewhat higher in New York at 40% in 1999 (Meredith, 2000, cited in Nelson & Trone, 2000).

Disadvantage in employment that may be experienced by ex-prisoners and offenders is also apparent in the disparity in wage earnings between these groups. There is some evidence that ex-prisoners who do find employment upon prison release earn substantially lower wages than convicted offenders who did not go to prison. For example, Waldfogel (1994) reported that the employment rates of ex-prisoners who had been imprisoned for larceny and fraud were 5 to 12% lower than for offenders who were convicted of these crimes, but were not imprisoned. Likewise, the ex-prisoners had substantially lower incomes (16% to 28% lower) than the convicted offenders who did not go to prison. Employment options for ex-prisoners are largely restricted to low skilled jobs with no provision for benefit packages (Taxman et al., 2002), which may in part, be attributed to formal legal restrictions and informal corporate restrictions on hiring this group.

Given the range of difficulties experienced by these groups, it is unlikely that mainstream employment services such as Job Network can adequately prepare and support these clients in obtaining and maintaining employment. Rather, there is an urgent need for specialist support agencies that are more comprehensive in their approach toward assisting and supporting these individuals into employment, and that are better suited to dealing with the full range of difficulties that may impact on job readiness and job retention.

2.3.1 Commonwealth Employment Assistance Programs

Within Australia, unemployed people are assisted into employment through the Job Network. There are 109 Job Network Providers operating from more than 2,700 outlets. Since 2003, the service model has included two main forms of assistance: Job Search Support which provides minimal assistance and Intensive Support which is designed for disadvantaged and long term unemployed people (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2004). Clients come to the Job Network via referrals from Centrelink. As of May, 2002, there were a total of 680,808 Centrelink Newstart Allowance (NSA) and Youth Allowance (YA) clients. Receipt of the Newstart Allowance peaked for 21-29 year olds and gradually dropped in relation to age of client. Of the total client base, 57% (approximately 388,000) had been on income support for one year or more (labeled LTs), 40% (approximately 272,000) of the total had been on income support for two years or more (labeled VLTs) (Blackham, Gregory, Devereux, McConnell, & Iolovska, 2003). Of the total LTs, less than half were minimal assistance Job Network clients utilising the Jobseeker scheme. More than half were: 28% intensive assistance clients; 7% in training, approximately 12%

incapacitated; and the remainder 'other'. The cost of an intensive assistance client was \$2,200. The cost of achieving an employment outcome for an intensive assistance client was \$6,200.

By 2003–2004, long term unemployment figures had dropped with continuing strengthening of the economy and increased movement of long term unemployed people onto the Disability Support Pension. It is very difficult to comment on overall Job Network performance on the basis of DEWR figures because published results are not complete. DEWR reports refer to number of unemployed people, but not registered clients, and refer to number of 13 week employment outcomes without providing information on conversion of registrations to outcomes, an important measure of performance. In the year to end of October, 2004, 147,400 disadvantaged job seekers and those unemployed for more than 3 months achieved 13 week employment outcomes. Based on rough calculations, that is an estimated success rate of 30%. However, the client group in question is arguably far less disadvantaged, on the whole, than CSEPP clients. As a referent, during 2003-2004, a 'four star' (highly rated) Job Network provider with several locations specializing in Intensive Support long term unemployed clients reported placing 3,760 intensive support, long term unemployed clients into jobs for at least 13 weeks, a 31% success rate (WISE Employment, 2004). That can be used as a relevant benchmark for comparing CSEPP performance in achieving its employment outcomes.

Accurate figures on prisoner and offender receipt of Disability Support Pension and Personal Support Program funding are non-existent, in that the client populations of those programs are not distinguished in relation to criminal history, and the Privacy Act protects clients from a requirement to report criminal history in order to receive support. Therefore, official figures do not reflect use of the schemes by ex-prisoners and offenders.

2.4 Specialist Employment Assistance for Ex-Prisoners and Offenders

The personal and social characteristics of the population of ex-prisoners and offenders and the comprehensiveness of their support needs strongly suggest the need for specialist employment services to support these groups. Such services do exist in North America and the United Kingdom and have been described and reported upon in the literature. In fact, there is a range of activity within prisons that is designed to improve employability of prisoners upon their release. This may include job fairs and efforts to place prisoners in employment prior to release (e.g., Buck, 2000). However, there are relatively few programs that have been formally evaluated in order to ascertain the extent to which they improve participants' employability and employment outcomes or reduce recidivism. As well, relatively little is known about which types of programs are more effective in meeting key employment outcomes. Some of the programs that have been systematically evaluated with clear and measurable outcomes will be elaborated below. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the characteristics of the client group and the multitude of barriers to employment that they face will undoubtedly mean that the outcomes are modest at best even when specialist providers are involved.

2.4.1 Employment and Training

Piliavan and Gartner (1984, cited in Western, Kling, & Weiman, 2001) reported on the National Supported Work program that provided longer-term (12 to 18 months) close supervision of ex-prisoners. Results indicated that the effect of the program on employment and wage earnings were positive, but largely insignificant, as was the effect on recidivism. Uggem (2000) in a later analysis of the original data, indicated that older program participants (over 27 years) reported illegal earnings that were 7% lower than those ex-prisoners in the control group of non-program participants.

Finn and Willoughby (1996, cited in Buck, 2000) compared employment outcomes for ex-offender participants (n=521) who participated in Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs in Georgia over a two-year period (1989-1990) to that of a random sample of non-offender participants (n=734) of the JTPA programs. Both groups were matched in terms of employment barriers or economic disadvantage. Of interest, results indicated that the criminal background of the ex-offender had no effect on employment outcomes. However, prior employment status did influence employment outcomes, with those participants who were unemployed 15 months prior to JTPA participation being less likely to be employed at the end of the program. As well, evidence for positive effects of employer-based training was found; participants involved in such training were more likely to be employed at the end of program and at a 14-week follow-up than those who were not involved in employer-based training. Implications of this study are that the skill level and work experience of the ex-offender play a greater role in employment outcomes than ex-offender status.

Some positive program effects were observed by Saylor and Gaes (1997) in a study of over 7,000 federal prisoners who participated in academic, vocational, and work experience programming (PREP). The authors reported that 12 months after release over two thirds (72%) of the participants in the program were employed compared to 63% of those in a comparison group of non-program prisoner participants. As well, prisoners who received work experience while in prison had lower recidivism rates following their release than the comparison group.

In Reading, England, a training scheme was developed for young offenders aged 17-21 years. Prisoners on day release participated in a six-day course that combined theoretical and practical aspects associated with forklift truck driving that afforded them entry to a nationally accredited qualification. More than 70% of 50 prisoners were employed following participation in the project. Following an extension of the project, more than 80 prisoners had received training. The estimated recidivism rate was low at 6% (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

Sarno et al. (2000) provided an evaluation of two innovative employment and training schemes for unemployed young offenders on probation. The ASSET project provided skills training and work experience to young offenders aged 16-25 in London. From July 1997 to March 2000, a large number of offenders (n=758) were referred and later assessed by the program. Qualitative feedback from 111 offenders indicated that over 80% felt that they received the help they wanted. Likewise, probation officers involved in the project were also positive about the outcomes. Some results were less encouraging; over the course of the project 27 participants obtained qualifications, 66 trained participants obtained jobs, and only 102 offenders (13%) obtained employment. The recidivism rate for those offenders who participated in the first year of the ASSET project was 43%, which was significantly lower than the recidivism rate of a comparison group of non project participants, at 56%. Those project participants who did re-offend had a larger time delay between their first and second offence than the comparison group who did not attend

ASSET. Despite the low employment rate (13%), this project was viewed as filling a required need.

As well, Sarno et al. (2000) reported on a second scheme established in Surrey named the Springboard Project. This scheme provided assistance in the areas of employment, training, housing, and leisure to young offenders on probation. Over a three year period, 1,957 referrals were made to the service, with employment being the main reason for referral. Over the three years, 452 offenders were employed. Offender feedback on the project was generally positive, with improved prospects for employability often attributed to the project. The recidivism rate for offenders who were involved in the project in the first year was 32%, although this figure increased to 45% when the age range was restricted to those offenders aged 16–25 years who were targeted for the project. Providing a multi-faceted approach to reintegration was viewed as an ideal approach.

2.4.2 Post-release Support Programs

Finn (1998) reported on a program based in New York City designed to assist ex-prisoners to prepare for, find, and remain in jobs. The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is a unique program because it provides day-labor for ex-prisoners at a critical period - one week after their prison release. The work crews to which participants were assigned provided a daily income to the ex-prisoner immediately upon their release, as well as other benefits including providing them with structure and activity, promoting good work habits, and measuring their readiness for longer-term employment. The provision of intensive job placement services at such an early and critical stage of their reintegration is a key feature to the program. In addition, on-going support is provided to program participants for at least 6 months following their placement into employment.

Over a five year period from 1992 to 1996, an average of 766 participants in CEO were placed in full-time jobs each year (within 2 to 3 months of their participation) which equated to an average yearly placement rate of approximately 70%. The majority of these jobs entailed above minimum wage with additional fringe benefits. As well, job retention rates were quite high, with approximately 75% of participants placed in employment remaining in the same job after one month, 60% remained employed after 3 months, and 38% were still employed after six months.

Within Australia, the state of Queensland commenced a post-release employment assistance program in 2000–2001 to provide assistance to prisoners and ex-prisoners who were identified as at risk for long term unemployment. That program is still in operation with continuing pilot status. Participants are able to register for the program either within two months prior to their release date or up to two months following prison release. The program provides a range of support services including literacy and numeracy assessment and referral, vocational training in specific need areas, job search skills, support in job placement, post-release employment placement support, referral to other specialized agencies, and work experience. Cox (n.d.) reported on the evaluation of the pilot program, indicating that of 721 prisoners/ex-prisoners in the program, approximately one third (n=225) had been placed into supported employment. Interviews with the stakeholders suggested that the program had been successful in both assisting the participants to become work ready, as well as in the achievement of satisfactory employment outcomes. The pilot program has also been described as having a considerable cost benefit.

A recent article by Job Futures (2004) has reported outcomes for the CSEPP program which is the subject of this evaluation. The article reports a 14.3% employment placement rate for prisoner

clients, with 48.5% of those placed into employment sustaining 13 weeks of employment. Community corrections clients achieved a 46.3% placement rate, with 50.9% of those placed into employment sustaining 13 weeks of employment. Reported recidivism rates were 4.7% for those registered in the program and 3.8% for those placed in employment. These figures are generally consistent with those reported in Queensland and well below general recidivism rates. It is noteworthy that the Job Futures consortium is responsible for 90% of the total CSEPP program delivery.

In Victoria, the Bridging the Gap program has been operating since 2001, and more than 500 Victorian prisoners have participated in the program which provides intensive post-release support to offenders who are eligible due to high support needs and substance use issues. Five community-based agencies have provided intensive post-release support to specific target groups that fit the eligibility criteria. A range of areas are covered by the program including employment and training, accommodation, education, health, and access to drug and alcohol treatment. Results of an evaluation of the first two years of the program indicate some success in reducing re-offending by participants as well as slowing their return to prison, although in the longer-term, these positive effects diminished. In addition, those individuals involved in the program had higher participation rates in drug treatment programs, and improved post-release outcomes when drug dependence was reduced (Melbourne Criminology Research and Evaluation Unit, 2003). Many of the Bridging the Gap providers are members of the Job Futures consortium. This adds strength to the entire pre and post release service network of the consortium.

2.4.3 Program Practices

Given that there are numerous challenges to employment for ex-prisoners and offenders, and that the client group has such comprehensive support needs generally, intervention programs clearly need to be prepared to deal with numerous and wide-ranging issues that can impede employment. In short, client support needs are often intensive and extensive, and costs of intervention likely to be high. It is essential that we learn from prior and existing national and international programs that are designed to both improve the employability of ex-prisoners and offenders and support them in the employment setting. Fortunately, there is some literature that can contribute to an understanding of preferred practice for delivery of effective employment assistance to these groups.

Holzer et al. (2002) recently identified preferred practice of employment programs for ex-prisoners after undertaking a review of employment programs in the United States that were more comprehensive in their approach toward tackling barriers to employment, as well as showing some success in promoting employer interest in hiring this group. Holzer and colleagues emphasized that while not all programs provided each of the services or activities listed below, they did often include case management services incorporating referrals for substance use treatment and other relevant support. As well, the employment programs included some education or training activities such as those relevant to improving so-called soft skills, and those related more specifically to the needs of the employer.

An important component identified by these authors was pre-release training and support which included assisting the individual to obtain any documentation so that gainful employment may be secured without unnecessary delays. Transitional work experience over a 3 to 6 month period was also identified as important to improving work-readiness skills, and as an indication to employers that the individual can maintain short-term employment. In addition, the provision of job

placement assistance, and the existence of post-employment support such as job-coaching activities were nominated as important features of employment programs for ex-prisoners.

Preferred practice of successful employment programs for ex-prisoners also include collaboration with other support services, provision of support services, and direct follow-up with participants (Sarno et al., 2000), given that existing research suggests that those programs that had developed strong partnerships with local services did better and had more productive links to employers. Roberts, Barton, Buchanan, and Goldson (1997) affirmed that the establishment of strong local partnerships was one of the main factors contributing to the success of many employment schemes. The importance of ensuring training is matched to employment opportunities and needs in the local community is also a key feature of preferred practice.

Recent research in Australia also emphasizes that well-designed intervention programs that are appropriately matched to the target population can be effective in reducing re-offending. As well, access to good programs may impact significantly on outcomes for prisoners or offenders under community supervision (Dunne, 2000; Ward, 2001). Numerous features were identified in the Bridging the Gap program that may inform best practice for program delivery in general. Those included improving links between prison-based drug treatment and post-release drug treatment programs, recognition of the importance of effective interpersonal relationships between participants and program workers in encouraging participation in treatment programs, and the development of a coordinated transitional support service model that is able to integrate the wide-ranging programs, agencies, prison, and community corrections services (Melbourne Criminology Research and Evaluation Unit, 2003).

A certain amount is also known about what might constitute poor practices or characteristics associated with failure to perform effectively in providing employment assistance and support. For example, failure of employment programs has been linked to limited and short-term funding (Downes, 1998, cited in Sarno et al., 2000; Roberts et al., 1997). Programs have also been criticized for inadequate recruitment procedures, the quality of their selection criteria, the lack of breadth in employment training, and for neglecting to consider the ambitions and interests of the client (Downes, 1998, cited in Sarno et al., 2000).

2.5 Recidivism

Recidivism may be viewed as the failure to desist from crime (Visher & Travis, 2003) and is typically quantified by an individual's re-arrest, re-conviction (which may or may not result in a prison sentence), or their return to prison (e.g., Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, & Visher, 1986; Langan & Levin, 2002). Recidivism is a measure that is easy to conceptualise and measure, and subsequently, has been applied extensively in the correctional services field. Studies that have used recidivism as the critical outcome measure generally seek to understand the correlates of a return to prison.

Ex-prisoners have a high risk of failure given that they are typically ill-equipped for life outside prison and have usually received insufficient assistance with reintegration. A recent estimate that 62% of prisoners released from State prisons in the United States were re-arrested within three years of their release (Burke, 2001) affirms the high likelihood of failure. In Australia, the majority of ex-prisoners are reconvicted and returned to prison, usually within a few years. In fact, at least 31 of every 100 prisoners released from Victorian prisons in 2000/2001 returned to prison within

two years, while nearly 40 of every 100 returned to corrective services (either prison or community corrections) (Report on Government Services, 2004). The observation that 58% of the Australian prison population in 2003 had been in prison before emphasises the severity of this problem (ABS, 2004).

The financial implications of this cycle of incarceration and release are profound, as evidenced by the dramatic increase in corrections expenditure over the last 20 years. In the United States, spending on corrections increased from \$9 billion in 1982 to \$44 billion in 1997 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). Comparable increases in funding for corrective services are noted in Australia as well, with the system-wide recurrent expenditure increasing from \$A1064 million in 1997-1998 to \$A1.7 billion in 2002-2003 (Report on Government Services, 2004).

Given these inter-related concerns, a balance needs to be established between promoting public safety on the one hand, and supporting the individual's transition from incarceration to a fully productive member of the community, on the other. Understanding, supporting, and improving the process of reintegration for ex-prisoners is clearly a critical issue, with employment central to post-release success.

2.5.1 Recidivism and Personal Characteristics

There is a large body of research examining the conditions that contribute to recidivism among ex-prisoner samples. A number of recidivism studies have examined the relation between personal characteristics and a return to prison. Langan and Levin (2002) examined conditions that predict recidivism among approximately 300,000 prisoners released in the U.S. in 1994. The majority of prisoners (67.5%) were re-arrested within a 3-year period and 51.8% returned to prison. Men (53%), African-Americans (54.2%), and non-Hispanics (57.3%) were more likely than their counterparts to return to prison.

An individual's personal situation prior to entering prison may also be predictive of criminal recidivism. Numerous factors in pre-prison life including employment history, substance use, social support, physical health, and mental health have been associated with recidivism. An early study by Hare (1994, cited in Buck, 2000) explored the relation between numerous characteristics of the ex-prisoners and recidivism in a study of 1,205 federal U.S. prisoners released over the first six months of 1987. Noteworthy results indicated that ex-prisoners who had prior full-time employment or who had attended school before they entered prison had a significantly lower recidivism rate than those who did not meet these criteria. Lower recidivism has also been associated with employment in a number of studies (Rahill-Beuler & Kretzer, 1997; Soothill & Holmes, 1981; Uggen, 2000). In fact, Corrections Victoria estimates that approximately 60–70% of people who re-offend are unemployed at the time that they re-offend (Victorian Department of Justice, 2000–2001), indicating that unemployment is a key factor in recidivism.

Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996) provided a meta-analysis of the recidivism literature relating to adult offenders. While most of the predictors of recidivism were modest, the strongest predictors included criminal background, prison misconduct, identifying with or having a close relationship to their peers, anti-social personality, displaying attitudes supportive of a criminal lifestyle, and lack of education or employment skills. As well, conflict with family and other significant persons, family rearing practices, and substance use were also predictive of recidivism. The weakest predictors of recidivism included family factors (i.e., separation from parents, broken home), social

class of origin, intellectual functioning, and particular indices of emotional state including anxiety, depression, neuroticism, and psychiatric symptomatology.

More recent individual studies have produced contrary results with respect to the role of emotional state to recidivism. For example, anger has been found to be associated with recidivism among some offender samples, most particularly sex offenders (Hanson & Harris, 1998, cited in Mills & Kroner, 2003). Other studies have suggested that anger among both violent and non-violent offenders is not useful as a predictor of criminal recidivism (Loza & Loza-Fanous, 1999a, 1999b; Mills & Kroner, 2003), although the findings of Loza and Loza-Fanous (1999) may reflect under-reporting by participants given the restricted range of their data set.

A few studies have compared levels of depression among recidivist and nonrecidivist samples. For example, Katsiyannis, Zhang, Barrett, and Flaska (2004) assessed 299 adolescent males in order to examine the relation between numerous background and psychosocial factors to recidivism. Of interest, they found that recidivists had significantly lower scores on depression than nonrecidivists when selected variables were controlled for including age at time of commitment and academic functioning.

2.5.2 Recidivism and Programming: Prison-based and Community-based Treatment Programs

There is some evidence that participation in prison-based treatment programs and community-based treatment programs may produce positive outcomes, including lower recidivism rates (Lawrence, Mears, Dubin, & Travis, 2002). There have been at least 34 meta-analytic reviews of offender treatment or rehabilitation (Gendreau, Goggin, French, & Smith, in press) that have provided support for the efficacy of prison-based and community-based treatment programs in reducing recidivism (e.g., Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Gendreau, & Cullen, 1990; Dowden & Andrews, 1999b, 2000; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Losel, 1995; Wilson & Gallagher, 2000). For example, reduced recidivism has been associated with program participation in prison, including those aimed at improving employment prospects and job skills, developing cognitive skills, and reducing substance abuse (e.g., Cullen, 2002; Gaes, Flanagan, Motiuk, & Stewart, 1999; Inciardi, Butzin, Hooper, & Harrison, 1997; Saylor & Gaes, 1997).

The findings from several early large-scale meta-analytic reviews of treatment programs (e.g., Lipsey, 1992; Losel, 1995) indicated about a 10% reduction in recidivism (Gendreau et al., in press). This figure indicates that those individuals who had participated in treatment programs had a 45% likelihood of being arrested compared to comparison group participants who had a 55% likelihood of rearrest (Gaes & Kendig, 2003). The most effective programs were those with a cognitive behavioural focus, a high degree of structure, community-based, and were demonstration programs (Gendreau et al., in press). Lipsey and Wilson (1998) provided additional support for the role of treatment programs in reducing recidivism.

McGuire (2000) combined the 18 meta-analytic reviews conducted between 1985 and 2000 in order to provide a 'review of the reviews'. This analysis comprised over 2,000 independent outcomes relating to various types of prison-based and community-based treatment programs. The bulk of these reviews and the studies included for analysis originated from North America, and focused largely on young offenders. Some of the individual studies included adult offenders and the majority related to the outcomes of male offenders. Results of the meta-analytic reviews indicate a reduction in recidivism of between 5% and 10%, although some individual studies

produced larger effect sizes (McGuire, 2000), indicating that some interventions are more effective at reducing recidivism than others. This view is consistent with that of Gaes et al. (1999) and Gendreau et al. (in press) who reported that correctional programs had an average effect size of .10 (i.e., 10% reduction in recidivism) on the basis of a review of the meta-analysis literature.

In addition, there have been a number of meta-analytic studies that have focused on identifying clinically and psychologically relevant principles related to prison-based and community-based treatment programs. These principles relate to the appropriateness of the treatment program, the extent and type of criminogenic needs targeted by the program, and the match between the level of treatment services (e.g., intensity) and the risk level of the offender (see Gendreau et al., in press for a discussion of these principles). For example, Andrews and colleagues (1990) examined the effectiveness of offender treatment programs in terms of their 'appropriateness', with those defined as appropriate being behavioural (i.e., general responsivity) and focused on the criminogenic needs of offenders at higher risk of reoffending. Their meta-analytic review indicated that appropriate treatment programs produced a reduction in recidivism of 30%, with community-based interventions more effective than prison-based programs.

More recently, the principles of risk, need, and responsivity of offender treatment programs have been examined in addition to several other principles of treatment effectiveness, such as the therapeutic integrity of the program (see Andrews & Bonta, 2003). Dowden and Andrews (2000) included 35 individual studies in their meta-analytic review of the effects of correctional treatment programs on violent recidivism among male, primarily adult, offenders, in prison, institutional settings, and community-based settings. Results indicated that the overall mean effect size for the intervention and control groups represented a recidivism rate of 46.5% and 53.5%, respectively, suggesting that correctional treatment did play a role in reduced recidivism rates. Like earlier studies (e.g., Andrews et al., 1990; Dowden & Andrews, 1999a,b; Lipsey, 1995), Dowden and Andrews (2000) found that larger effect sizes indicative of reduced recidivism were associated with behavioural/social learning programs than for non-behavioural treatment programs. As well, those programs that targeted criminogenic needs were more effective in reducing violent offending than those programs that focused on noncriminogenic needs. While Lipsey (1995) found that programs designed to meet a wide range of needs areas produced larger effect sizes indicative of reduced recidivism, Dowden and Andrews (2000) found that increasing the number of criminogenic needs to be targeted for intervention was related to reduced violent recidivism.

More specific program effects were investigated in a later study by Dowden and Andrews (2003) that provided a meta-analysis of 38 studies in order to determine the effectiveness of family intervention programs for reducing recidivism among young, primarily male, offenders. The overall mean effect size was .21 which indicated that the treatment group participants had a 39.5% chance of being arrested compared to a recidivism rate of 60.5% for the control group, providing support for the effectiveness of family intervention programs in reducing recidivism among this population. Moreover, those programs that incorporated the principle of general responsivity (i.e., used behavioural-social learning strategies) were more effective in reducing recidivism than those programs that used non-behavioural strategies, and those programs that targeted the criminogenic needs of the group were more effective than those that focused on non-criminogenic family needs. These positive program effects were maintained even when the programs were subsequently evaluated at the strictest level of methodological rigor employed in their research design.

While these results of the meta-analytic studies on prison-based treatment programs indicate that correctional programs are effective in reducing recidivism, it is important to point out that little

attention has been paid to the external validity of the studies and the extent to which the results can be generalised to the wider inmate population (Gaes & Kendig, 2002). The participant pool in the literature on program effectiveness is comprised largely of volunteers who stand to benefit from the interventions. Selection bias in correctional programming contributes to the difficulty in identifying positive effects related to programming and effects related to the characteristics of the participant, such as their motivation, behaviour, background, and so forth (Lawrence et al., 2002). Given that many prisoners do not participate in prison-based treatment programs, it is possible that positive program results may overstate the impact on post-release success (Gaes & Kendig, 2002). Other methodological problems in the literature on the effectiveness of prison-based treatment programs have also been raised (Lawrence et al., 2002).

Individual studies have also indicated that lower recidivism rates are associated with the attainment of higher levels of education during incarceration (Harer, 1994), with recidivism rates estimated to be in the range of 16–62% (Bearing Point, 2003). A number of studies in the United States have reported that recidivism rates are lower for prisoners who have gained college degrees in prison compared to those who did not participate in prison education (Cure, 2002, cited in Bearing Point, 2003). For example, of 833 inmates in the United States who earned college degrees during their incarceration, the recidivism rate was about 25% over an eight year period (WSS, 1994a, cited in Albright & Denq, 1996). The recidivism rate was considerably lower (up to 4.5%) for those prisoners who earned a post-graduate degree while incarcerated (WSS, 1994c, cited in Albright & Denq, 1996). While not strictly recidivism studies, Australian prisoner statistics support the relation between re-offending and low education, with prisoners with one prison sentence having typically higher levels of education than those with two or more periods of incarceration (Rawnsley, 2003). For its part, ACSO has developed an education initiative with Deakin University and the Gordon TAFE in Geelong to promote education opportunities for ex-prisoners and offenders.

Numerous individual studies have examined the impact of family contact while incarcerated on recidivism; most of which were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Family contact has been evaluated in various ways including the mean number of letters and visits received by recidivists versus nonrecidivists (Adams & Fischer, 1976), the number of different visitors in the year prior to release (Holt & Miller, 1972, cited in Visher & Travis, 2003), participation in a furlough program (Leclair, 1978), and participation in a family reunion program (Howser, Grossman, & Macdonald, 1983). These studies have found that lower recidivism rates were associated with prisoners who had more family contact during their incarceration. More recent studies have also established that the level of family and friend contact while incarcerated may impact on post-release outcomes for ex-prisoners, with stronger relationships during prison associated with reduced recidivism (e.g., Courturier, 1995).

2.5.3 Recidivism and Offence History

Recidivism has been related to variables associated with offence history including sentence length, length of criminal record, and type of offence. As indicated above, adult criminal history was found to be one of the strongest predictors of recidivism among adult offenders in a meta-analysis of 164 studies (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996). Similarly, Langan and Levin (2002) reported that younger prisoners and those with lengthy criminal backgrounds were more likely to be recidivists than older prisoners or those with shorter criminal records. As well, length of prison sentence has been related to recidivism, with both high and low-risk prisoners who are serving

longer sentences demonstrating higher recidivism rates than those serving shorter sentences (Gendreau & Goggin, 1994).

More recently, Gendreau, Goggin and Cullin (1999, cited in McGuire, 2000) reported that prisoners who had served longer sentences had an increased rate of recidivism of 2–3% than did their counterparts with shorter prison sentences. Over a series of studies that were reviewed, these authors found a small, but positive, correlation between length of prison sentence and subsequent reconviction rates. The fact that the majority of state prison inmates in the U.S. have one or more prior sentences (76%) or incarcerations (65%) adds weight to the role of offence history on recidivism.

Recidivism rates have also been shown to vary with the type of offence with which the prisoner was most recently convicted. Recidivism rates in the U.S. are highest for offenders convicted of a drug offence (45%) than for any other offence type, including property crimes (24%) and violent felony offences (23%) (Department of Correctional Services, 2000). The link between drugs and recidivism is also evident in the number of prior convictions of an offender, with relatively few first-time offenders in state (41%) and federal (25%) prisons having used drugs regularly, compared to 63% (state) and 52% (federal) with two convictions. Offenders with five or more convictions are invariably drug users, with 81% of state and 71% of federal prisoners with this many offences having a history of regular drug use (Belenko, 1998).

2.5.4 Recidivism and Post-Release Experiences

Hare (1994, cited in Buck, 2000) alluded to the influence of family conditions on recidivism, with the finding that people living with a spouse after release had lower recidivism rates compared to those who did not have a live-in partner post-release. As well, numerous local and international programs that have provided post-release support in employment and training and other areas of need (e.g., Bridging the Gap, Springboard Project, ASSET project, PREP) have demonstrated reductions in recidivism associated with program participation (see Section 2.4).

2.6 Successful Reintegration

Employment, along with housing and drug and alcohol treatment, comprise the three basic ingredients in reintegration of ex-prisoners and offenders within the community. Reintegration has been considered broadly to refer to “the introduction/return of the ex-prisoner to functional, personally fulfilling and responsible participation in wider society” (Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone, & Peeters, 2002, p. 2). Other elements critical to this process include financial stability, supportive interpersonal relationships, and healthy psychological functioning. There are a few studies that have attempted to identify those components that are associated with successful reintegration into the community for ex-prisoners.

Solomon, Gouvis, and Waul (2001) identified several factors critical to success in reintegration on the basis of a focus group with 14 ex-prisoners. Successful reintegration was defined as: (1) being employed; (2) no reports of criminal activity; and (3) a settled family lifestyle (most were married and lived with their family). Time elapsed since imprisonment ranged from one year to about 30 years, with a mean release time of 10 years. Although this study may be criticised in terms of sample size and validity of the success criteria, the findings confirmed that the inter-related

challenges of obtaining stable employment and housing, reunifying with families and assuming a role of responsibility within the family structure, maintaining sobriety, and creating positive support networks and avoiding negative ones were all essential to successful reintegration for ex-prisoners. It did not address the important question of the extent to which assistance with reintegration was essential or contributory to success.

2.6.1 Readiness to Change

Of particular interest, the ex-prisoners interviewed by Solomon et al. (2001) affirmed that a critical element to their success was a readiness or resolve to change. Having this resolve was described as a motivator to make use of the range of transition and support services available. The importance of readiness to change to offender groups has been reported elsewhere (e.g., Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, & McPherson, 2004) and has particular relevance to both job acquisition and retention. As well as internal psychological change related to readiness to change, numerous service needs were identified by Solomon et al. (2001) as important in helping the ex-prisoners to improve their basic skills and overcome dependency problems. Program needs included those relating to jobs and job training, education programs, in-prison treatment programs and treatment upon release, and assistance with the actual transition process. The issue of discrimination was also identified as an important factor inhibiting community involvement of ex-prisoners. Participants described a feeling of being looked at with suspicion and being restricted in terms of job opportunities and access to housing which may be met, in part, by relevant program support.

More recently, an Australian study by Graffam et al. (2002, 2004) examined variables that may affect successful transition to a positive, healthy lifestyle for 12 adult offenders who had all been convicted and were on bail while awaiting sentencing. As well, 22 professionals including seven from the criminal justice system, four from the accommodation and housing sector, seven from employment support services and four from rehabilitation programs were interviewed. That preliminary study is one of only a handful of empirical studies on post-release issues affecting offenders that includes perspectives from professional service workers.

Results indicated that successful transition to a positive lifestyle was dependent on a number of variables including: the state of 'readiness to change', and being able to resist deeply entrenched habitual behaviour; coping with profound social isolation and boredom, and being alienated from former friends, family, and within the community; creating a stable housing situation; avoiding any further difficulties, including antagonistic interactions with police, complying with court-ordered mandatory reporting, and managing to integrate those obligations into a recovery schedule that might include a range of training and support activities, as well as employment; succeeding at drug rehabilitation, often with little or no substantial formal support in the attempt, apart from mandatory testing and reporting and occasional brief counselling sessions about 'how things are going'; remaining free of drug and alcohol dependency; addressing basic education and training needs; being patient and realistic enough to keep to a process of slow growth and recovery; and finding a source of support that will provide long-term, ongoing assistance in all aspects of the process of obtaining and maintaining employment.

2.7 Costs Associated with Crime and Criminal Justice

No research has been done to date that includes a complete analysis of the costs of crime. Most large scale cost studies focus on criminal justice system costs. Nevertheless, a small number of attempts have been made to quantify the total costs, even if with estimates. Miller, Cohen, and Wiersema (1996) found total victim costs in the US to be \$US450 billion. More recently, Brand and Price (2000) produced a UK Home Office study of the economic and social costs of crime. They broke down costs into: anticipation costs (security and insurance) £5.5 billion; consequence costs (property, psychological and physical impact, lost output, victim services, health services) £40.9 billion; and response costs (criminal justice system) £11.6 billion. Total cost was estimated at approximately £60 billion or approximately £1,000 per citizen. Violent crime accounted for 5% of the crimes and 53% of the costs. Sex offences accounted for 1% of the crimes and 8% of the costs.

In Australia, Walker (1992, 1997) twice estimated the total costs of crime in Australia. In the initial paper, total costs were estimated in the range of \$AU11 billion and \$AU21 billion per year, and in the latter paper the minimum total costs were estimated between \$AU11 billion and \$AU13 billion per year. More recently, Mayhew (2003) and Mayhew and Adkins (2003) estimated costs of crime in Australia as well. Mayhew broke down total costs into 'crime costs' and 'costs of dealing with crime'. Crime costs were divided into property, medical, lost output, and intangible costs (\$AU19,030 million), and the costs of dealing with crime was divided into criminal justice system, victim services, security, and insurance (\$AU12,750 million). The total estimated costs of crime per year was \$AU31,780 million. This is an average annual cost of almost \$AU1600 per Australian resident.

Criminal justice system costs in Australia are estimated to be \$AU6,400 million (Mayhew, 2003), just over 20% of the total cost of crime. In Victoria, between 1994 and 2003, the state's prison population increased by more than 50%, and the costs of incarceration are high; currently calculated at between approximately \$40,000 per annum, per prisoner for minimum security and approximately \$76,000 per annum, per prisoner in maximum security prisons (Auditor General Victoria, 2003).

There are numerous intangible benefits associated with employment of ex-prisoners and offenders including those related to the individual (e.g., increased social contact, improved self-esteem and confidence, personal satisfaction, reduction in psychiatric symptoms, and improved financial conditions), as well as wider system level benefits including reduced crime and re-incarceration rates, reduced costs within the corrections system, improved community safety, and the addition of capable and enthusiastic workers into a shrinking workforce. In addition, potential social justice benefits related to employment include improved attitudes of employers toward hiring ex-prisoners and offenders, promotion of equality of opportunity, and improved societal attitudes related to the inclusion of ex-prisoners and offenders in labour market activities. A significant factor in employment is reduced costs to government in terms of lower recidivism rates. Corrections Victoria estimates that approximately 60% of people who re-offend are unemployed at the time that they re-offend (Victorian Department of Justice, 2000–2001), indicating that unemployment contributes significantly to recidivism.

2.8 Summary of the Review of Literature

In summary, provision of employment assistance to ex-prisoners and offenders must be considered a very labour-intensive and resource-intensive endeavour. The number and scale of barriers to employment, together with the level and extent of support needs of the client group as a whole, make achieving sustained employment very difficult. Barriers include lack of work history, low level of education and training, gaps in personal and work history, history of dependence on benefits, high level of substance abuse, reporting requirements impinging on work schedule, chronic medical conditions, undiagnosed mental illness and several issues related to employer reluctance to employ. Support needs include employment assistance, housing assistance, family and personal counselling, social support when family and social network are not sufficient or appropriate, need for training in finances and budgeting, and drug and alcohol treatment in many cases.

Beyond employment per se, achievement of reintegration within the community also appears dependent on several variables and, therefore, also must be considered difficult to achieve. On the other hand, the social and economic costs of not providing such assistance are undoubtedly much greater than the effort required to achieve positive outcomes. Social costs include, but not exhaustively: loss of a significant number of potentially contributory members of the community; loss of potential workers from a currently shrinking workforce; victim impact of crime; impact of crime on community safety; and security concerns. Economic costs of crime include, but also not exhaustively: costs of property loss due to crime; and costs of criminal justice (police, courts, community corrections orders, etc.).

So, the cost of crime is high. The picture that emerges from this review, and one that has been suggested widely in the past by others, is one of social disadvantage rather than ‘character defect’ leading to criminal behaviour. Reintegration support for people who have a history of disadvantage and social exclusion leading to criminal behaviour and criminal history does not just make ‘good sense’ on the basis of social and economic cost reduction. It also makes good moral sense in terms of redressing some of the disadvantages that have contributed to criminal outcomes and making Victoria, and Australia, a more equitable society. The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) is an attempt to meet the challenge of work and life skills preparation, placement and retention in employment, and assistance with broader issues associated with reintegration of ex-prisoners and offenders.

Employment is an important element in desistance from crime and reintegration into the community. However, prisoners and offenders, in general, have comprehensive and complex support needs that impact on gaining and sustaining employment. We can see from the literature that certain program characteristics stand out as “best practice” for employment assistance programs. The literature suggests a number of desirable characteristics of employment assistance programs for prisoners and offenders.

- Programs should be based on client motivation and ‘readiness’ to change, therefore, voluntary.
- Programs should begin pre-release for prisoners, at or near commencement of orders for offenders.
- Programs should provide continuity of support (assistance pre and post release and across locations).
- Programs should provide comprehensive employment assistance (assessment, pre-employment preparation, job search, job matching, in some cases marketing the client, post-placement support, other employment-related support options such as training courses and work experience, and material assistance such as uniform, equipment, and/or travel allowances).
- Programs should be well-networked and provide a case management function in terms of assisting clients in getting access to other needed assistance such as housing assistance, drug and alcohol treatment, personal and family counseling, medical and mental health services, and financial assistance for those not yet employed.
- Programs should have the capacity to provide emergency relief (financial assistance with food and shelter) in relation to ‘crisis management’.
- Programs should engage employers in job fairs, expos, and other awareness-raising and promotional activities that improve receptivity of employers.
- Programs should operate with the expectation that client achievements will be moderate and that the timeframe for achieving outcomes will be longer than for other, less disadvantaged client groups.

Section 3: Program Process Evaluation

3.1 Introduction

A process evaluation generally focuses on the logic and the logistics of a program, that is, the conceptual basis of the program as well as the structures and processes that are put in place to implement the program. This process evaluation does just that. This section of the report begins with an analysis of the program logic and design that underlies CSEPP. Following that, a chronological development of the program is provided that includes a description of the environment within which the program has operated and a description of program implementation in general terms. Some observations are made about the congruity between program model and program implementation.

Next, an analysis of service models is provided, based on results of an in-depth investigation of specific structures and implementation processes. Results related to program implementation issues are then discussed. Those results refer to: skills and characteristics of employment consultants and clients; central management issues and concerns that relate to the Department of Justice, the Job Futures consortium, and ACSO; location specific conditions; ‘best’ features of CSEPP; and program limitations and need for improvement. Finally, client perspectives on the helpfulness of the program are presented. The CSEPP process evaluation has been conducted through review and analysis of relevant documents and through interviews with stakeholders including employment consultants, managers of provider organisations (and managers of the consortium), relevant personnel (and former personnel) from Corrections Victoria, and CSEPP clients.

3.2 Summary of this Section

Key Findings: Program Structures and Processes

- The logic and design of the program cohere or ‘hang together’ extremely well. If we consider the assumptions underlying the program and its main design features, they make very good sense in relation to the relevant literature and in relation to the immediate corrections operating context, with its focus on reintegration. There is a great deal of internal consistency between the logic and the design of the program as well.
- The pilot program has been conducted within a context of profound change to Corrections Victoria, as well as the predictable uncertainties of any new program. Together, these conditions have contributed to a great deal of disruption that evidence suggests impacted negatively on providers, but not on the program’s performance. By the end of the first two years, stability has been achieved in the operating context.

- The two providers have developed different service models. The consortium model includes a management structure that centralises most management functions and localises delivery functions. Resources (funds, staff, knowledge, information) are shared across locations as required. There is a strong emphasis on prisoner client involvement. Attention was paid to getting structures and processes ‘right’ early on, with accompanying attention to continuous improvement. A momentum-building approach to performance is another characteristic of the model. The single provider model developed by ACSO includes a flat management structure, with the manager providing direct service as well. Staff roles are partly shared, partly complementary. Early focus was on community corrections clients, with a later shift to prisoner clients and service development through project initiatives. Service to the two locations is more or less independent of each other.
- Although there may not be one ideal service model, there are a few superordinate conditions that must be built into all service models in order for them to reflect what we consider to be best practice, including: connectedness among providers; multiple locations covered by each provider; a holistic approach; a prisoner/offender-friendly culture with equal measures of employment and social welfare values that support clients and employment; and momentum-building as the underlying strategy. There are also expected variations in delivery models across locations.
- Certain program management conditions and issues have been identified as important to effective program management and delivery including: PIMS is described as ‘not user friendly’, outdated as a technology, and providing unreliable information; reporting does not allow for recording of qualitative outcomes and so-called micro-gains; turnover has been high within CSEPP and is moderate to very high, among CCOs in Corrections Victoria; there is a need for constant communication between providers and location personnel; and questions persist about reporting requirements in terms of involvement with CV clients who are also CSEPP clients. There have been reports of instances of values differences (mainly in relation to maintaining confidentiality, disclosure of criminal record to employers and others, and disclosure of “cash in hand” earnings).
- Issues and conditions related to management of the program by the Department of Justice were also identified including: Department staff could be more directly involved and have more direct contact with the program; more information could and should be provided about changes to the structures and management of Corrections Victoria, especially on changes affecting operations of locations and the CSEPP; more content and regularity of feedback to providers on performance and Department perceptions would improve relations, in short, more of a collaborative partnership approach is possible and preferred.

Suggested Improvements to Structures and Processes

Extend the Timeframe for Achieving Outcomes – The time frame for achieving and reporting employment outcomes should be extended. Two options for achieving validations should be offered. In addition to the existing 13 weeks of continuous employment, the suggestion of 20 weeks over a 26 week period should be adopted. This would provide greater flexibility and acknowledge the tendency to begin an employment history with shorter-term jobs.

Include Reporting of Micro-Gains in Employment – Micro-gains in employment should be included in the reporting schedule, including completion of résumé, number of applications completed, and number of interviews attended. Such apparently small steps are important to client development and progress, as well as being generally labour intensive for consultants.

Report Non-Employment Outcomes – Non-employment outcomes should be included in the reporting schedule, including courses completed, licences gained, and work-related skills training completed. Such outcomes contribute to an individual's employability, and the investment by the employment consultant in assisting a client through to course completion can be significant.

State-wide Expansion of the Program – On the basis of the program's success in achieving employment outcomes and reduced rates of re-offending (see results in following section), it is suggested that the program be expanded across the entire state. A combination of service models is suggested for the expansion of the program. Consortium involvement in overseeing the expansion is suggested, with local service models reflecting local conditions.

Expand the Involvement of Current Providers – In expanding the program, the current providers should be given the opportunity to expand their involvement. As a large provider, the Job Futures consortium has developed a culture that fits program objectives very well and a way of managing and working that is effective across provider members and several locations. ACSO has performed well above its targets throughout the pilot period.

Three-Year Funding Contracts – Three-year contracts should be offered to CSEPP providers, consistent with the Job Network system. The three year contract is really an industry standard for employment services and should be adopted because it would provide greater job security for consultants and reduce any threat of them being attracted to mainstream employment service providers.

3.3 Methodology for the Process Evaluation

3.3.1 Participants

At the time of interviews, there were 17 employment consultants working in the program. Due to changeovers in responsibilities, as well as differences in the way that locations have been managed and services delivered, some employment consultants (ECs) were interviewed in relation to more than one location (having worked in more than one location). There are nine provider organisations in the CSEPP (eight in the Job Futures consortium, plus ACSO). Managers of provider organisations responsible for more than one location were interviewed in relation to all of their

locations. Location managers and other key personnel from the seventeen locations were also interviewed, as were 66 clients. A description of client interviewees is provided in the client perspectives sub-section further into this section of the report.

A total of 127 program stakeholders were interviewed. Interviewees included all 17 employment consultants, 11 provider managers relevant to all of the seventeen locations, and 34 Corrections Victoria location personnel relevant to all seventeen locations. A round of interviews was conducted with 66 CSEPP clients as well, obtained through Corrections Victoria location personnel. Table 1 below explains who has been interviewed from each location.

Table 1: Interviewees by location, provider, and job title.

Location	Providers	Corrections	
Bendigo CCS	Youth Projects/VACRO	2 ECs, 2 Managers	LM and SCO
Dandenong CCS	Bro St Laurence	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and SCO
Frankston CCS	Bro St Laurence	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and SCO
Hume CCS	Youth Projects	3 EC, 1 Manager	SCO and SCO
Morwell CCS	Education Centre	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and SCO
Reservoir CCS	Youth Projects	3 EC, 1 Manager	SCO and SCO
Ringwood CCS	Employment Focus	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and SCO
Shepparton CCS	Youth Projects/VACRO	2 ECs, 2 Managers	LM and SCO
Sunshine CCS	Djerriwarrh Employ Ed	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and SCO
DPF Centre	Melb Citymission	1 EC, 1 Manager	PM and Ed Coord
Dhurringile Prison	VACRO	1 EC, 1 Manager	PM and CM
Fulham Prison	Brosnan Centre	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM/PM
Loddon Prison	VACRO	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM, CM, Ed Coord
Tarrengower Prison	Melb Citymission	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM, CM, Ed Coord
Won Wron Prison	Brosnan Centre	1 EC, 1 Manager	PM
Geelong CCS	ACSO	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and CCO
Barwon Prison	ACSO	1 EC, 1 Manager	LM and PM

Note: CCS = Community Corrections Service; EC = Employment Consultant; LM = Location Manager; SCO = Senior Corrections Officer; CCO = Community Corrections Officer; PM = Programs Manager; CM = Custodial Manager; Ed Coord = Education Coordinator

3.3.2 Structure and Content of the Interviews

The interview schedule is semi-structured, with 10 open-ended questions. Most questions contain more than one part. Questions were routinely modified to fit the specific experiences of the interviewee. Relatively recently appointed ECs, for example, were asked to report on their own history of involvement rather than total program history. Likewise, certain questions are more relevant to prison locations, others more relevant to community corrections locations. Variability in interviewee experiences and stakeholder group variations and differences in perspective have been taken into account in the conduct of interviews. However, in all cases, the content of the interview has included:

- a description of the history of program development in the location since its commencement including: what were the biggest tasks in the first 6 months and the first year; what activities take up the most time at this point; what activities are most important to success of the program; and who has been most helpful in developing and maintaining the program.

- an explanation of location performance in relation to targets and factors that explain this performance.
- an explanation of the impact of central management factors such as program objectives, contract obligations, eligibility criteria, data system access and reporting, and CSEPP program management practices on program delivery.
- a description of local factors such as local economy and labour market, local population demographics, local community services, availability of housing, and how they impact on program delivery.
- an explanation of the impact of any local ‘political’ or ‘logistical’ factors on program delivery.
- a description of any active partnerships important to program delivery.
- a description of any special characteristics of this client group and any specific skills, abilities, and considerations necessary to be effective in working with this client group.
- nomination of any ‘best features’ of the CSEPP program.
- nomination of any elements, aspects, or conditions of the CSEPP that would be described as ‘current limitations and possible improvements’.
- nomination of any issues not covered in the preceding questions.

3.3.3 Procedures in Conducting the Interviews

All interviews were conducted at sites nominated by the interviewees. Thirteen employment consultants were interviewed at their own CSEPP location offices, while three were interviewed at CCS location offices, and one at a private location. Managers were interviewed at their own CSEPP location offices, except one who was interviewed at a CCS location office. Corrections Victoria location personnel have all been interviewed at their respective locations. Employment consultants were all interviewed individually, as were provider managers. Corrections Victoria location personnel were given the choice of individual or collective interviews. Of the seventeen locations covered, twelve chose collective interviews, with two or three location personnel contributing to the interview. One CCS opted for separate interviews with the location manager and senior corrections officer. Two prisons nominated only the programs manager to be interviewed.

The standard procedure for conducting the interviews was audio-taping of the interview, with the interviewer taking extensive written notes as well. All stakeholder interviews were conducted by the leader and project manager of the research team. Interviews were then transcribed, transmitted to interviewees for revision, clarification, or elaboration, so that the transcript reflects precisely their intended stated view. The revised transcripts were returned to the University and became the formal and official account of the interviewee’s statement.

In all cases, the interview commenced with the question related to the history of program development in that location and the interviewee’s experience in the program. The interviewer allowed interviewees to deviate from the sequence of questions to suit their own style of responding and way of conceptualising issues and processes in question. In conducting all interviews, the interviewer ensured that each question had been addressed to the satisfaction of the

interviewee before moving ahead. Interviews with employment consultants varied little in duration, ranging between 1.5 and 1.75 hours. Duration of interviews with managers ranged between 1.5 and 2.25 hours. Duration of interviews with Corrections Victoria location personnel varied little, ranging between 1.5 and 1.75 hours. Interviews with 66 CSEPP clients were conducted as well. Those interviews were much briefer, ranging between 10 and 20 minutes each.

3.4 Results

Results of the process evaluation component are presented in relation to: program logic and design; program implementation; service models and specific location delivery models; specific program-wide issues; ‘best features’ of the program; and current limitations and possible improvements. The coherence of the program model and the congruity between the model and its implementation are a focus of the evaluation, as much as program delivery in its own right. Issues relevant to all three of these foci are raised within the presentation of results.

3.4.1 Program Logic and Design

The logic behind CSEPP is that employment plays a significant role in reintegration and, therefore, reduction of re-offending. This is consistent with Corrections Victoria’s *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*, which has a main objective of reducing re-offending through significant investment in rehabilitation and prison diversion programs. Additionally, within the documentation relating to CSEPP, prisoners and offenders are acknowledged to have comprehensive and intensive support needs and to require specialist assistance.

Some of the explicit assumptions underlying the program include: need for long-term support; likelihood of slow and intermittent progress; need for basic skill development in relation to pre-employment preparation; and need for referral to other services such as housing, health services, and personal support services. (This is accompanied by explicit references to partnerships, strategic alliances, and integrated service as an expectation on the part of the Department of Justice). The underlying program logic is made even more explicit through the CSEPP contractual conditions and expectations. Figure 1 depicts the model.

The phases of client engagement include referral leading to registration, registration leading to employment preparation, preparation leading to placement into a job, and placement leading to sustained employment (a 13-week outcome). Following referral, prisoner clients are engaged by prison employment consultants (PECs) pre-release. In addition to any prison programs received by them, they also are assisted by PECs in preparation for employment upon release. When released, they are transferred from their PEC to a community employment consultant (CEC) from the location in the community to which they relocate. For community located offenders, following referral and registration, the process involves working with their location CEC. For both groups, the CEC assists them into employment preparation and placement or into a training course, as well as other support services required (mainly by referral).

The program model calls for a high degree of interaction among stakeholder groups. The model suggests collaboration between employment consultants and Corrections Victoria location personnel in relation to referrals, registrations, client progress, and outcomes. Clients are expected to maintain contact and communicate with both employment consultants and Corrections staff in

relation to their CSEPP involvement. Provider managers and employment consultants are expected to interact with relevant service providers in relation to advocacy and referrals to other needed services. Employers are expected to interact with the program through events such as job fairs, provision of client training in some cases, and through employment consultants marketing the program or individual clients.

This comprehensive model of support is intended to lead to sustained employment, increased stability across life domains, and reduced re-offending. The model and how it is intended to work is explained in more detail in the text below Figure 1.

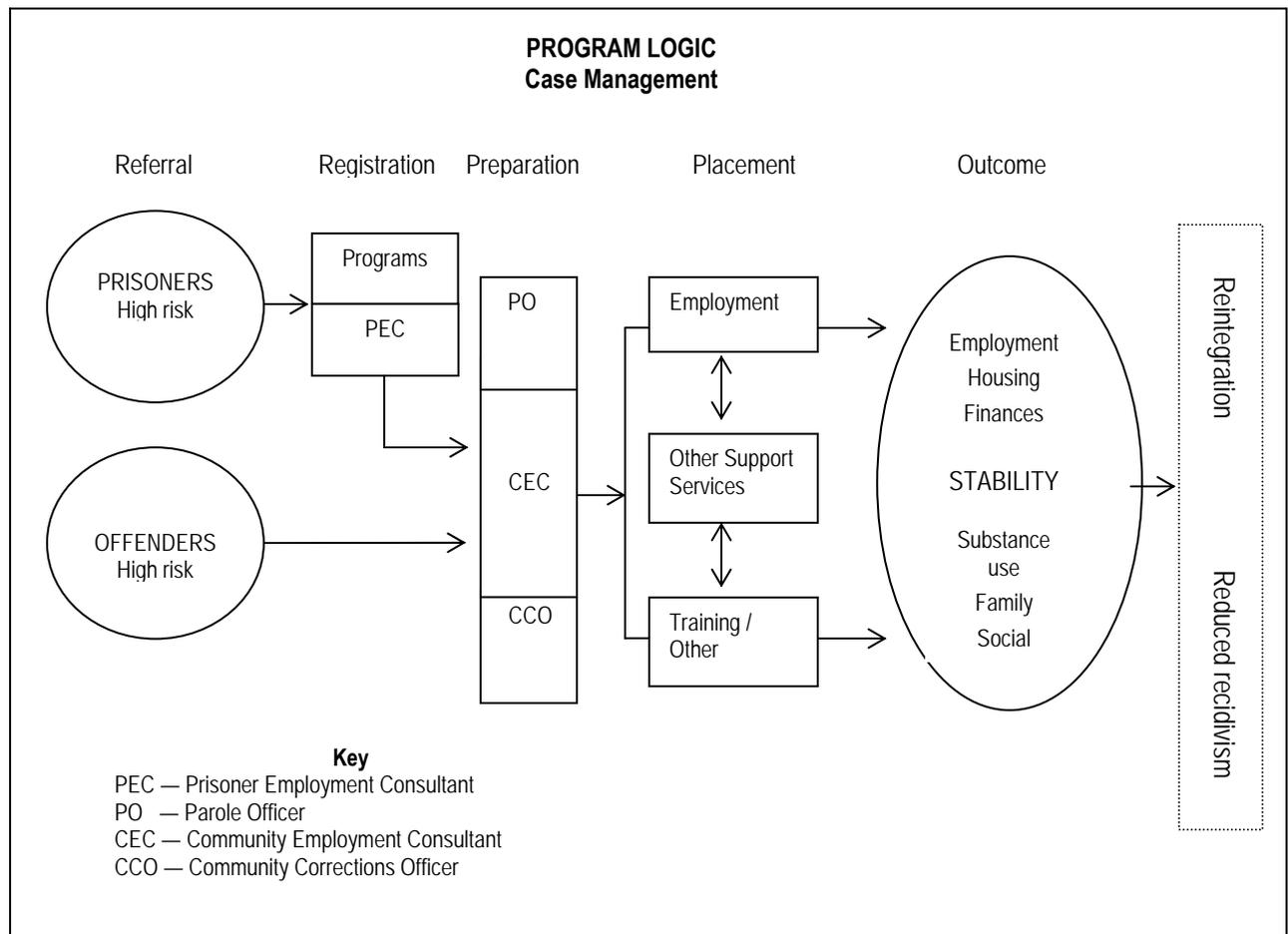


Figure 1: The program model.

To elaborate further on the program model, the primary employment assistance focus of the program is clear from the service contracts that refer to the following service elements:

- initial assessment and vocational advice and training, including individualised supports such as literacy, numeracy and life skills programs, vocational counselling, job readiness training, and assistance with résumé development and interview techniques;
- job search and placement support including identifying appropriate job vacancies and communicating these to clients, job-seeking training, and assistance with applications and interviews;

- placement follow-up support to address post-placement issues, including on-the-job training and supervision issues, maintenance of effective work habits, workplace communication, conflict resolution, personal support, maintaining motivation and involvement with the work/workplace;
- employer support including building effective relationships with employers who employ CSEPP clients through regular contact visits to employers before and after a placement; and
- engaging employers in information sessions to develop client job-seeking skills.

Reporting to Corrections Victoria by CSEPP providers reinforces the primary employment focus of the program. The focus of reports is on number of referrals to the program, number of registrations, number of placements into employment, and number of clients achieving 13 weeks of continuous employment at 20 hours per week or more. Training outcomes are recorded, but not reported, and significant social outcomes of a less tangible nature are not recorded or reported formally. Likewise, what might be termed ‘micro-gains’ (small, incremental gains in work readiness, personal development, social development, or healthy lifestyle) are not reported.

However, there is acknowledgment of comprehensive and intensive support needs that affect employability, but go well outside the employment domain. One proof of this is that the program uses a case management approach, and that employment service providers are expected to integrate provision of employment services with housing, education and training, and health and personal support services provided by other service agencies. Additionally, it is expected that a range of other, non-employment outcomes will be achieved for non-‘work ready’ clients including: part-time or full-time training or education; work experience placements; and placement and support in life-skills or other basic independent living courses. It is also expected that prisoner clients, upon release, will receive intensive post-release assistance in relation to housing needs, re-establishment of family links, adjustment to independent living and addressing drug, alcohol, or medical issues. Twelve month eligibility is a reflection of the recognition that progress is likely to be slow in many cases.

Several operating principles have been enunciated by Corrections Victoria as well, functioning as guidelines for practice (service delivery). These operating principles include:

- employment interventions must contribute to reduced re-offending among participants and contribute to achieving the Government’s diversion targets;
- assistance to clients must be multi-faceted, individualised and integrated;
- the provider(s) should form part of a multi-agency strategic alliance of employment, education and training, housing, transitional support and health agencies, and must have the necessary partnerships in place to address broader client needs such as substance abuse and homelessness;
- recognition of the need for long-term and intensive support;
- the principle of progression as a series of intermediate stages beginning in custody and underpinned by an expectation of setbacks and detours; and
- services provided should focus on the quality and suitability of employment.

Finally, the program targets particular groups considered to have moderate to high risk of re-offending, and to be at risk of long-term unemployment. An additional selection criterion points to selection of those who are motivated to find and maintain work, but who are not be able to achieve it and remain offence-free without targeted assistance. The identification of target groups and individuals motivated to change relates directly to the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy* and the program logic intentions to reduce re-offending rates among participants and throughout the Victorian criminal justice system.

Coherence of the Program Model

The logic and design of the program cohere extremely well. If we consider the assumptions underlying the program and its main design features, they make very good sense in relation to the relevant literature and in relation to the immediate corrections operating context, with its focus on reintegration. The international and Australian literature on employment assistance for ex-prisoners and offenders, particularly the literature on specialist employment services, as well as the literature on support needs that suggests comprehensive and intensive support is necessary, are all consistent with the program logic and design. The program logic and design are consistent with the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*. Also, for the most part, there is a good match between the assumptions and design features. There are however, in our view, three questionable elements of the program logic and design.

Employer Involvement

Although employer involvement in the employment process is very important, one of the problems with the program's logic and design relates to the level of employer involvement that was envisioned for the program. Neither the level nor the kinds of employer involvement intended has been achieved. We consider this to be, in part, a logic and design fault rather than an implementation fault. There is no evidence in the literature of significant employer involvement on a continuing basis. It is generally limited to hiring individuals and possibly participating in job fairs. In cases where the client's criminal record has been disclosed, direct contact with an employer can occur post-placement. Our own experience with employers in the context of employment of people from disadvantaged groups also suggests minimal extra involvement. Understandably, an employer's first commitment is to their business. Beyond a small number of individual employers, it is not considered realistic to expect much active employer involvement as advocates or trainers. Despite this, promoting the client group and the program through job fairs and service development projects is a strong feature of the program.

Non-Employment Outcomes

Another problem with the program's logic and design relates to the absence of reporting on non-employment outcomes. Although the program is clearly designed as an employment assistance program, there are also expectations for other outcomes (such as training and work experience outcomes) and other forms of support (referral to other providers and direct support in activities not directly employment-related). Not providing reporting mechanisms and not rewarding outcomes achieved leads to a lack of information on the extent to which those expectations are being met. The need for attention to the comprehensive needs of clients in order to achieve employment outcomes is recognised in the program logic and in the literature. There is also evidence that lack of acknowledgement is frustrating to providers and a cause of some friction as it is seen as devaluing what they consider to be critical work in achieving the ultimate employment outcomes.

Definition of the Target Group

We do not question the basis for targeting ‘high risk’ groups and restricting client selection to these groups. The ‘high risk – high need’ commitment of the Department is laudable. Given the *CLTMS* objective of reducing beds by 600, it may be more effective to take all medium to high risk applicants into such reintegration / offence reduction programs rather than target specific groups as in the pilot (by age, length of sentence, etc). It may also be advisable to identify target groups on a location-specific basis, given the demographic variability across locations. Although previous history of offending has been shown to be a good predictor of re-offending, it is less effective for young or ‘new’ offenders whose offending may be escalating.

The Program Model in Summary

With these considerations in mind, we believe that the program model is fundamentally sound, but that some revisions to the program model are in order.

- The nature and extent of employer involvement in the program should be re-examined and redefined in relation to the observations made. In redefining employer involvement, the issue of disclosure should be addressed and clarified in the program model itself.
- The definition of “outcomes” should be expanded to include one or more alternatives to a 13-week continuous employment outcome as a measure of sustained employment. Sustained placement (13 weeks) into volunteer and work experience positions should be acknowledged as an outcome as well; this is not an employment outcome, but an outcome that undoubtedly contributes to reduced recidivism. Also, education and training course outcomes of a substantial nature (say 6 months duration) should be considered as non-employment outcomes of the program.
- The definition of the target group should be expanded to include all prisoners and offenders who are at medium to high risk of re-offending and who have high support needs (unlikely to succeed without assistance) rather than targeting specific groups as in the pilot (by age, length of sentence, etc). It may also be advisable to identify target groups on a location-specific basis, given the demographic variability across locations.
- The case management approach should be expanded to include development of an Individual Program Plan for each client. Currently, the consortium does have a pro forma for individual program plans and consultants do complete plans for many clients. This should be made a standard element of the program. Individual Program Plans should include strategies and objectives for employment outcomes, education and training outcomes, and non-employment outcomes including changes to lifestyle (such as alcohol and drug treatment, personal counselling, mental health service, medical treatment) and material conditions (such housing and finance management). The Individual Program Plan should also emphasise mutual responsibility for achieving outcomes.

In any case, the short-comings that we perceive are quite specific and not fundamental to the program model or program operation. Overall, we consider the program logic and design quite strong in terms of it cohering. However, it is also important to consider the congruity between the model (program logic and design) and program implementation.

3.4.2 Program Implementation

Program implementation has been investigated in terms of the development of the CSEPP over time and in terms of current conditions, structures, and practices. A timeline and chronology of events is provided as background to more detailed analysis of program implementation. Service models of the two providers are described and discussed. Differences across locations are apparent, and location delivery models are described and discussed. An in-depth analysis of specific program issues is also presented. One purpose of this analysis is to clarify the relative congruity between the program model and program implementation. The other is to identify variations in delivery across providers and locations, elements of ‘best practice’, innovations in service delivery, any on-the-ground facilitators or inhibitors of program delivery, and to assist in making sense of how and why the program has evolved to its present state.

A Chronology of Events and Conditions

Following an establishment period of approximately four months, there was an eight month period of stability for the program, followed by twelve months of disruption due to several conditions. The events and conditions that contributed to significant disruption over the middle one-half of the original two-year pilot are described below. Finally, there has been a four month period of stability from the beginning of the third year of the program. The chronology of CSEPP is further elaborated in Figure 2. The text that follows these figures provides a more detailed account.

CSEPP Implementation — Timeline of Critical Events

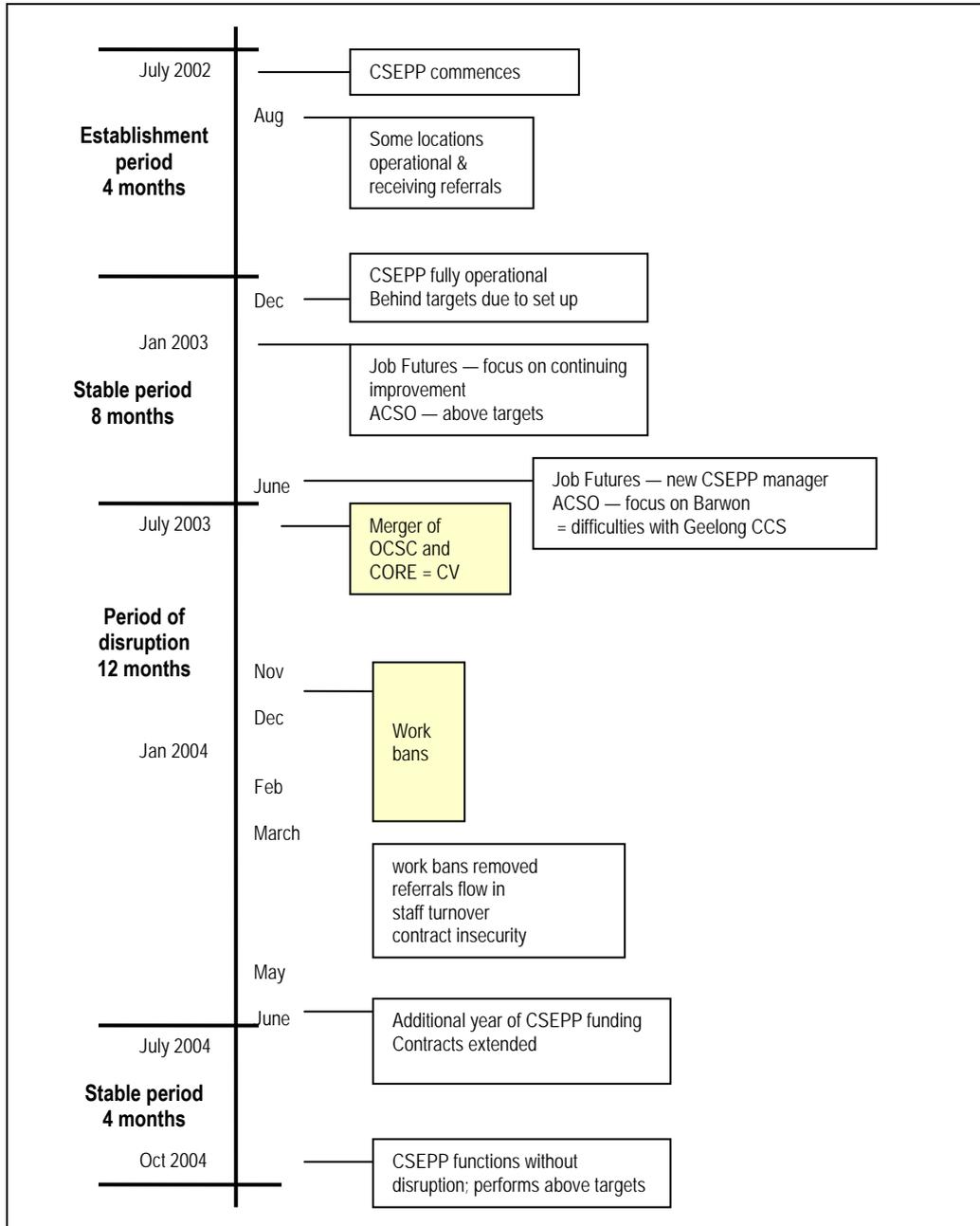


Figure 2: A chronology of significant events in the history of CSEPP.

- CSEPP began in July, 2002. Establishment involved appointing staff, purchasing equipment, and setting up offices occupied a good deal of time in the first few months.
- Some locations were operational and receiving referrals by August of 2002.
- By December of 2002, six months into the program, CSEPP was fully operational, if somewhat behind the targets for referrals and number of 13 week placements.
- The early part of 2003 was rather uneventful, with CSEPP building momentum as employment consultants continued to develop their knowledge of their clients and of effective employment assistance practices for the particular client group. For Job Futures, the consortium began to mature as management structures were bedded down. ACSO worked closely with the Geelong CCS and was achieving outcomes above target.
- In June of 2003, there was a change in the CSEPP manager for the Job Futures consortium, after which morale and performance improved. The management of ACSO was unchanged, but ACSO began to experience a certain difficulty of its own in managing its relations with the CCS location once it shifted attention to Barwon Prison.
- On July 1, 2003, the restructure of Corrections and formation of Corrections Victoria became official. Although no immediate effect was apparent, it contributed to disruptions later in the program due to turnover of two senior managers and the project manager responsible for the program.
- From November of 2003 through part of February of 2004, the whole program was affected by work bans that were imposed as part of a prolonged industrial action. As part of the work bans, CSEPP consultants did not (in most cases) receive referrals.
- In an additional development, two days before Christmas, one of the consortium members announced that it was going out of business, which affected two CCS locations. The consortium stepped in to ensure staff and program continuity.
- Between March and end of May of 2004, referrals recommenced, once work bans were removed. However, staff turnover and rising anxiety among providers became serious issues as the end of the two-year pilot approached with no word of contract extensions.
- By early June of 2004, nearing the conclusion of the two-year contract, providers received an assurance of another year of funding. Contract extensions followed.
- Between July and end of October of 2004, CSEPP has been able to function without any disruptions and has been performing well above target rates. This is indicative of a program reaching maturity and more confident of on-going support.

CSEPP Development: July – December, 2002

Officially, CSEPP began in July of 2002. In reality, providers were informed of their contract at the end of June, with funds coming later. The commencement of the program was formally announced with visits by managers from head office within the Department of Justice to all (then) CORE locations to be serviced by the program. Those visits included explanations of the program and introductions of the providers who were to be working with location staff. Appointing staff, purchasing equipment, and setting up offices occupied a good deal of time in the first few months. Some locations were operational and receiving referrals by August of 2002, while others were not operational until almost November of that year.

In addition to appointment of staff, setting up offices, and accepting referrals, the major tasks for CSEPP providers during the first six months of operation included: becoming familiar with prison and Community Corrections Service (CCS) staff, procedures and culture; figuring out how the program would work; and learning to work together as a team of providers from several different organisations. Also during the first few months, staff from the prison and CCS locations had to become aware of the program, to become familiar with program objectives and eligibility criteria, and to get to know and trust the employment consultant who would support their location. Indeed, in several of the CCS locations, this occurred more than once following changes of consultants due to high turnover of community corrections officers (CCOs).

Because the program is a pilot, with no precedent in Victoria, there was no ready-made induction training program and no existing pool of specifically trained staff from which to draw. Individual employment consultants came with different backgrounds. Some had a background in employment. Some had a background of involvement with prisoners, offenders, and/or corrections. Some had a background in general social welfare programs. Few came with the specific blend of corrections and employment support experience. Therefore, most of the employment consultants were on a steep learning curve in the first few months.

For Job Futures consortium members, the added task of working out consortium relations and how to manage the consortium as a whole had begun prior to the award of the contract, with members meeting regularly to work on the tender application. Nevertheless, formation of the consortium involved the bringing together of two very different cultures, one represented by the social welfare and offender support members who placed a high value on relationship-building and provision of a great deal of ancillary support, and another represented by the employment services, especially Job Network, members who placed a high value on getting outcomes as efficiently as possible. This is a powerful combination, but according to all of the employment consultants and managers interviewed, it did take some time for the merging and melding of cultures to occur.

By December of 2002, six months into the program, CSEPP was fully operational, if somewhat behind the targets for referrals and number of 13 week placements. That is understandable, given the delay in delivery of initial funds and the set up requirements described. Prison-located employment consultants (referred to as PECs within the consortium) began working with prisoners preparing for release and assisting them in the preparation of résumés and plans for pursuing employment upon release. Upon a client's release, they are referred to the CSEPP community-located employment consultant (CEC) working in the community to which they relocate. By this time, CECs had also begun getting referrals of offenders serving community-based orders from community corrections officers (CCOs) and referrals from parole officers working in community corrections services.

From the beginning, basic assistance has included assessment of individual support needs and employment prospects and aspirations, preparation of résumés, interview skills training, assistance with job search, provision of material support for interviews and for attendance at work (e.g., boots, work clothing, mobile phone, train or bus fare). In some cases, the employment consultant actively markets the client to an employer and may advocate on the client's behalf. However, in most cases, employment consultants do not interact with a prospective employer, rather leaving the direct contact to the client (also leaving the issue of disclosure with the client). In some cases, the employment consultant attempts to link the client to other relevant support, although CCOs are also often involved in that activity.

CSEPP Development: January – June, 2003

The early part of 2003 was rather uneventful, with CSEPP building momentum as employment consultants continued to develop their knowledge of their clients and of effective employment assistance practices for the particular client group. As the year progressed, some friction began developing within the Job Futures consortium in relation to consortium management. By all descriptions, morale began to be affected. In June of 2003, there was a change in the CSEPP manager for the Job Futures consortium. The management of ACSO was unchanged, but ACSO began to experience difficulty of its own in managing its relations with the CCS location (see discussion below under Location Specific Conditions). The change of CSEPP manager for the consortium was (according to all consortium members interviewed) very well received by the various provider organisations and employment consultants. A definite resurgence of morale has been reported.

CSEPP Development: July – December 2003

On July 1, 2003, the restructure/formation of Corrections Victoria from the former Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner (OCSC) and the Public Correctional Enterprise (CORE) was implemented. The restructure has had an effect on the internal management of Corrections Victoria, as well as on the nature and processes of business within prisons and CCSs, and therefore, an effect on the business of CSEPP as well. Changes and turnover of CV managers responsible for the CSEPP have had an impact as relationship-building has been repeatedly required. The restructure and the continuing redevelopment of corrections services in Victoria will continue to impact on CSEPP, as system changes continue to be implemented. However, the program has demonstrated its robustness by continuing to perform well through the period of most substantial change and disruption. However, the robustness of the program has been demonstrated by its performance (the continuity and consistency as well as the outcomes achieved) throughout an unstable period.

From November of 2003 through part of February of 2004, the whole program was affected by work bans that were imposed as part of a prolonged industrial action. As part of the work bans, CSEPP consultants did not (in most cases) receive referrals from prison staff or from CCOs in community corrections services. CSEPP consultants focused attention on existing clients, but the bans had a significant impact on new registrations. During the same period, in fact two days before Christmas, one of the consortium members announced that it was going out of business. In a matter of hours, other members agreed to take on the staff and to cover the locations of that provider, ensuring continuing support for clients and continuing complete coverage of the program.

CSEPP Development: January – June, 2004

Through January and February, the work bans were still in place and continued to severely affect referrals. Between March and end of May 2004, referrals began to come again, slowly at first, once the work bans were removed. However, several CV locations personnel and almost all provider managers and employment consultants interviewed reported rising anxiety among providers during this period, as the end of the two-year pilot approached with no word of whether the contract would be extended or renewed. One reported source of the anxiety was in relation to promising 12 months of support to newly registered clients with no real confidence that the program would be in existence for another year. Anxiety was also reported to be high in relation to insecurity over possible loss of jobs and loss of a program to which individuals had a strong commitment. By early June of 2004, nearing the conclusion of the two-year contract, providers reported an

assurance of another year of funding and reduced uncertainty, although they reported having not at that stage received formal, written notification.

During the second year of the pilot, there were significant disruptions, mainly due to circumstances outside providers' control. The turnover rate had been fairly high over the second year as well; perhaps not surprisingly. Turnover does not appear however, to have adversely affected overall performance to any real extent. This is likely due to some mechanisms that are in place for induction and support of new employment consultants within the Job Futures consortium and to effective recruitment of replacement staff (discussed more fully below). Program development, introduction and continuous improvement of processes, and the achievement of outcomes have all been realised within a context of profound change and periodic uncertainty and are indicative of service providers committed to achieving positive outcomes for this socially marginalised group of job seekers. Again, such performance is indicative of a robust program.

Current Conditions, Structures and Practices: July – October 31, 2004

The four months since July, with a one year contract extension have been relatively crisis free and provided an opportunity for CSEPP providers to perform to full potential. Turnover of employment consultants has dropped dramatically since the contract extension, with only Bendigo and Shepparton CCSs still experiencing some instability. Analysis of employment outcomes (Section 4) shows that performance has been well above the target rate during this period. A full-time consortium manager has been in place during this period as well, strengthening that aspect of the program. There has been more stable program management on the part of Corrections Victoria as well, with project management staff engaging and becoming increasingly familiar with the program after a period of profound turnover of management staff. Remaining issues that need to be resolved include target group suitability at certain locations, turnover of CCOs at CCS locations affecting program performance, and contract renewal, given that the extended contract will end in June 2005, and uncertainty will again begin to affect performance if the future of the program is not clear to all providers by early 2005.

3.4.3 Service Models

The two contracted CSEPP providers have very different operating or service models while both being consistent with the program model, its logic and its design. In this section, we describe core business, innovations, and service developments. Then we discuss service models on two levels: the overall service models of each provider; and the delivery models operating at each location. There has been considerable variation in models. We also discuss elements of best practice in terms of a need to respect the need for variation to accommodate conditions in local operating contexts, while identifying and promoting elements of practice that are preferred.

Core Business, Innovations and Service Developments

Throughout the course of the pilot program, CSEPP providers, both the Job Futures consortium members and the ACSO providers, have continued to focus on the core business of preparing clients for employment, then placing and supporting them in employment. There is evidence that in doing so, they have focused on continuous improvement of processes. Attention to continuous improvement has led to a number of innovations and service developments.

Core business activities relate to work preparation and placement into employment, but also include the more general life skills and reintegration supports described as part of the program. Those core activities include, but not exhaustively: getting referrals from prison and community corrections personnel; assisting clients with life skills development (primarily by linking them into existing relevant services); assisting clients with work-related skills development (either through direct provision or by linking them into existing services); assisting with résumé preparation and job-seeking; organising and possibly funding enrolment in short training or certification/licensing courses (driver’s licence, forklift driver’s licence, OHS course, TAFE short courses, etc.); for some clients, ensuring that the transition from prison to community is successful and that the transition from the prison-located CSEPP to community-located CSEPP is achieved; organising and providing material resources related to going for interviews or starting a job (phone, clothing or equipment, fares, short-term living expenses, etc.); and provision of post-placement support. Involvement in these activities varies of course between employment consultants and across locations (see the discussion of location specific differences in Appendix 2).

A number of innovations and service developments have been observed and reported by stakeholders, Corrections Victoria interviewees, in particular:

- contribution to training programs within prisons;
- attendance at staff meetings within the CCSs and prisons;
- serving on community and prison-based committees such as safety committees, drug and alcohol committees, and community development committees;
- visits to prisons by community employment consultants;
- developing the role of a transitions employment consultant;
- developing a peer support network for employment consultants (Job Futures consortium);
- conduct of an annual ‘jobs fair’ at Loddon, as well as a jobs fair at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, with plans to expand this innovation to other locations (Job Futures consortium);
- involvement in several service development projects such as: prison-located flora and fauna propagation and breeding programs; participation of a large local employer in prison industry re-development and provision of employment preparation and work experience; Lives in Transition at Barwon, which has employers and volunteers from industry give mock interviews, public speaking classes, and other skills training; and a housing initiative aimed at provision of post-release accommodation for prisoner clients (ACSO).

There is much variability in the amount and types of innovation and development activity undertaken by CSEPP managers and consultants. (This too is discussed in the section on location specific differences in Appendix 2).

Congruity Between the Program Model and Program Implementation

The major focus of attention within the program, as it is being implemented, is on achieving employment outcomes, both in terms of day-to-day activities and in terms of program targets. Therefore, in general, there is clear congruity between program model and program implementation. Despite the absence of reporting and lack of specific rewards (contract-based remuneration) associated with non-employment activities, such as training courses and assistance with other support needs, there is evidence of a strong focus on such activities throughout the program. There is also evidence of involvement in service development activities, not just

employment placement and support. Involvement in such activities in the absence of reporting obligations suggests a recognition on the part of providers of the importance of those activities and outcomes, and real congruity between the program model and how it has been implemented. This will be discussed more fully in relation to the specific program issues that follow and in the recommendations that follow presentation of results.

Provider Service Models

The Consortium Model

The Job Futures model is one of multiple providers operating and being managed within a consortium that includes The Brosnan Centre, The Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, Djerriwarrh Employment, The Education Centre, Employment Focus, Melbourne Citymission, VACRO, and Youth Projects. An additional member went out of business during the pilot. Their locations have been covered by the consortium. As pointed out earlier, most of the member organisations are not simply employment service providers, but more comprehensive social welfare organisations that provide a range of services relevant to the client group and have wide service networks.

The CSEPP program is project managed for the consortium by a Job Futures manager, assisted by a small executive group and a steering group of all member managers. A peer support group of employment consultants meets regularly for training, information exchange and mutual support. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) further consolidate the consortium. Job Futures covers fifteen of the seventeen locations in the pilot, so a considerable amount of coordination of activity is required. Delivery of the program at locations is structured in terms of two types of employment consultant. Prison employment consultants work within prison locations to register clients pre-release and assist them in preparing for release and employment following release. They also work with community employment consultants in the transfer of prison clients to the community locations of CSEPP.

There is a strong emphasis within the consortium on assisting prison clients (more than half of their client population has been prison clients throughout the pilot). Community employment consultants provide employment-related assistance to released prisoners and community located offenders. In addition to direct employment assistance, the consortium has staged job fairs as a means of engaging and educating employers about the program. The consortium has also moved staff and resources between locations to cover emergent needs from time to time. The Job Futures consortium model is a 'momentum-building' model. Time was taken early on to develop and bed down relationships, structures, and processes before pursuit of target outcomes commenced in earnest. As such, this model has a strong medium to longer term focus.

The Single Provider Model

The ACSO model is based on there being one provider in one geographical area (Geelong area). As such, there is no need for a complex administrative structure. However, ACSO, like most of the other provider organisations is not simply an employment service provider, but a comprehensive social welfare organisation that provides a range of services relevant to the client group. There is a manager who has a direct service role, plus two staff. One staff person, together with the manager, covers the two locations (Geelong CCS and Barwon Prison), while the other staff person provides community located client support, pre and post placement. That staff member, together with the manager, markets the program with employers. ACSO does not use the PEC-CEC model; rather one consultant works with a client throughout the process. The work in relation to the CCS location and prison location is more or less independent of each other.

The ACSO model has been more of a ‘rocket launching’ model than a momentum-building one. There are two complementary elements to the model. One has involved attention to achieving employment placements and 13 week outcomes with a minimum of lead time (strong short term focus). The other has involved a range of community-building and partnership-building activities often with long lead time to fruition, but intended to result in projects that contribute to employment and non-employment outcomes for clients on a larger scale (strong long term focus). Community and partnership building activities have included manager involvement in G 21, an initiative for development of greater Geelong, serving on the Geelong community safety committee, significant time on a housing initiative aimed at post-release accommodation for prisoner clients, and a prison industry re-development project which would include post-release employment with a large local employer. The community and partnership building activities are intended to provide a ‘platform’ from which future employment and reintegration outcomes initiatives can be launched.

Early activity included strenuous pursuit of outcomes within the CCS location which produced excellent results. That activity was accompanied by efforts to develop and bed down relationships, structures, and processes both at the CCS and prison locations. In the past 18 months, attention to achieving employment outcomes through preparatory work with prisoners has expanded. Also during the past 18 months, ACSO has undertaken considerable development activity within the prison context, aimed at building partnerships with the prison and with employer organisations on prison-related projects in addition to the broader community involvements. Even with these commitments, ACSO has sustained performance above their target throughout the duration of the pilot. This shows the effectiveness of their model both in the short term and on an ongoing basis.

Figure 3 describes features of the two service models. Figures 4 and 5 describe strengths and limitations of each model. The text that follows discusses those strengths and limitations, as well as implications for ‘best practice’ in relation to both service models.

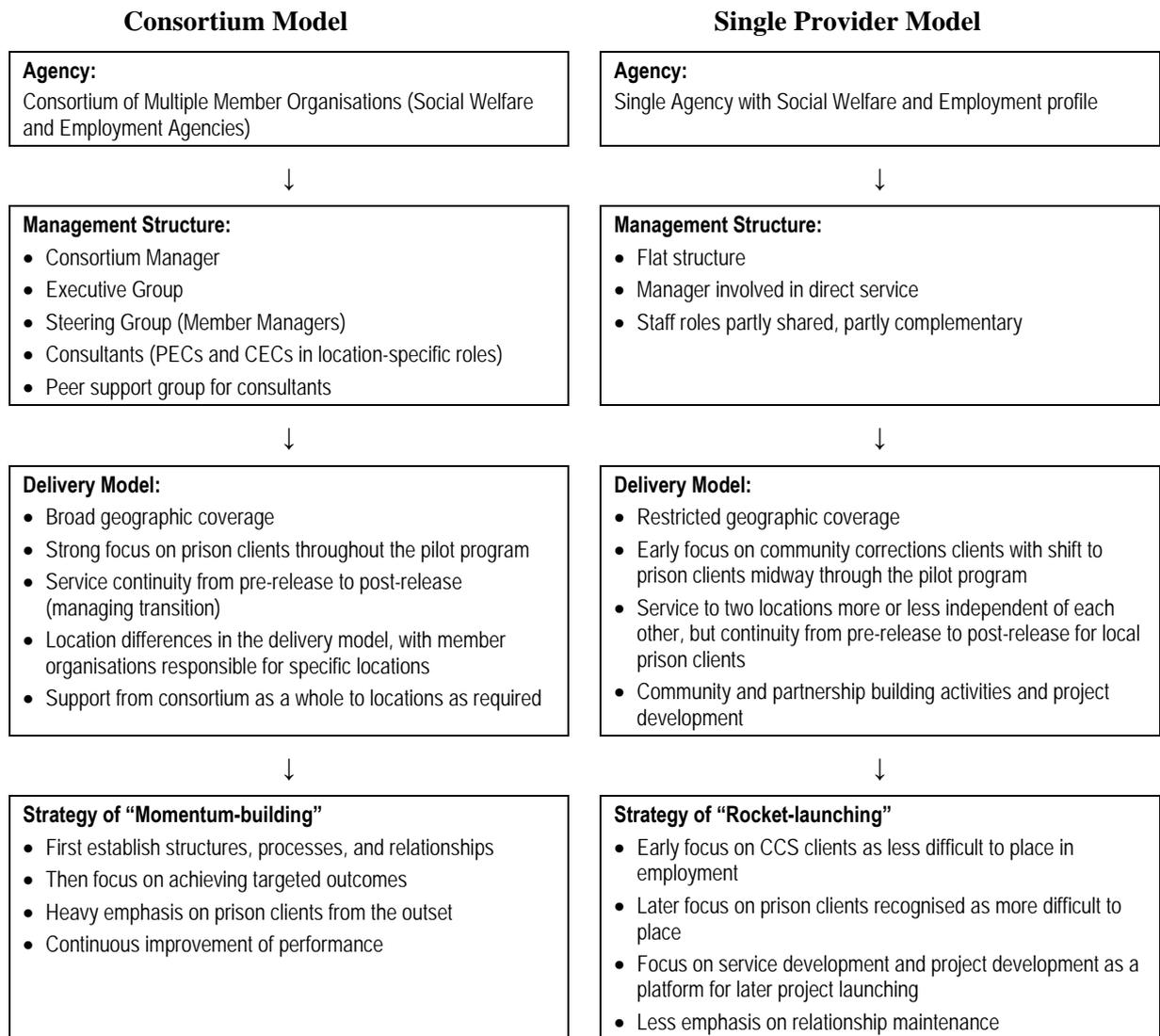


Figure 3: Features of the consortium and single provider service models.

Consortium: Momentum-building Model

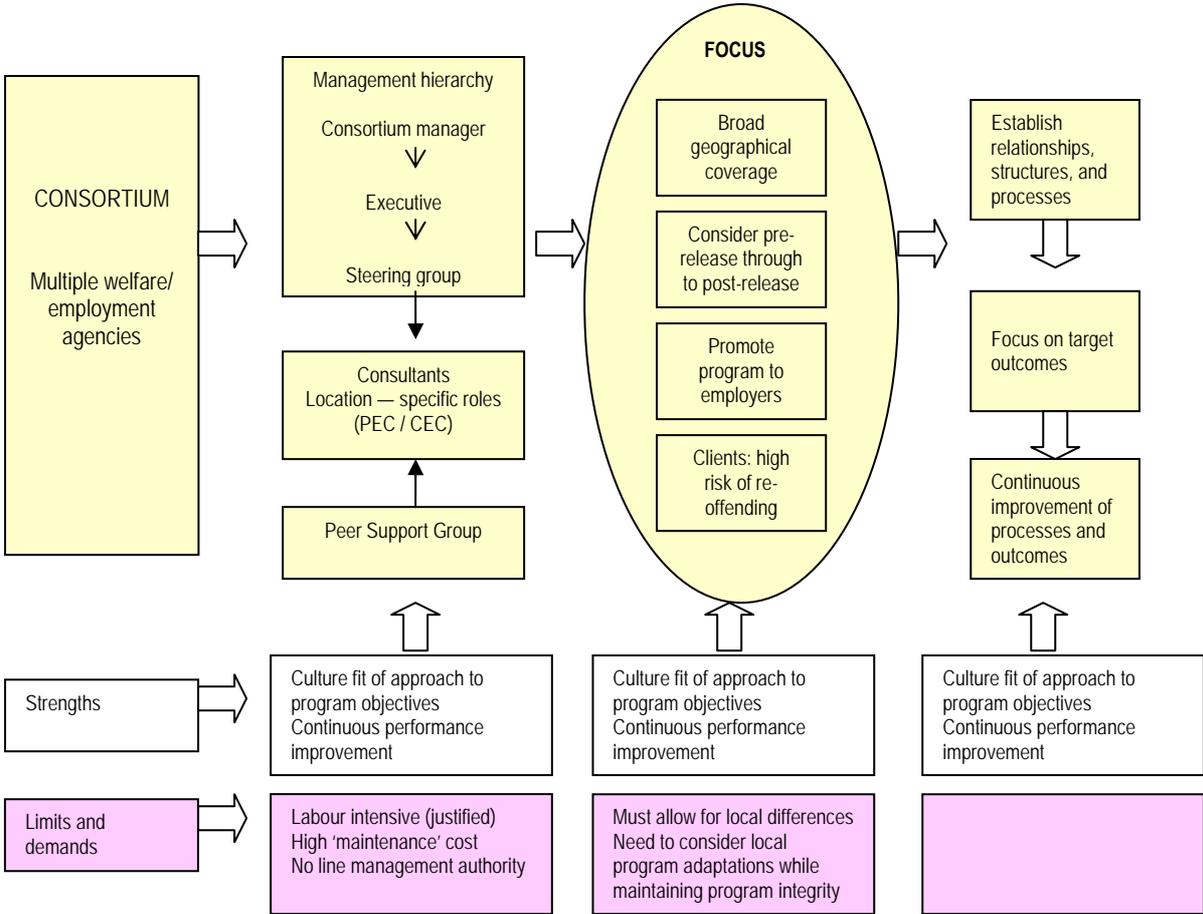


Figure 4: Consortium: Momentum-building model.

Independent Operator: Rocket Launching Model

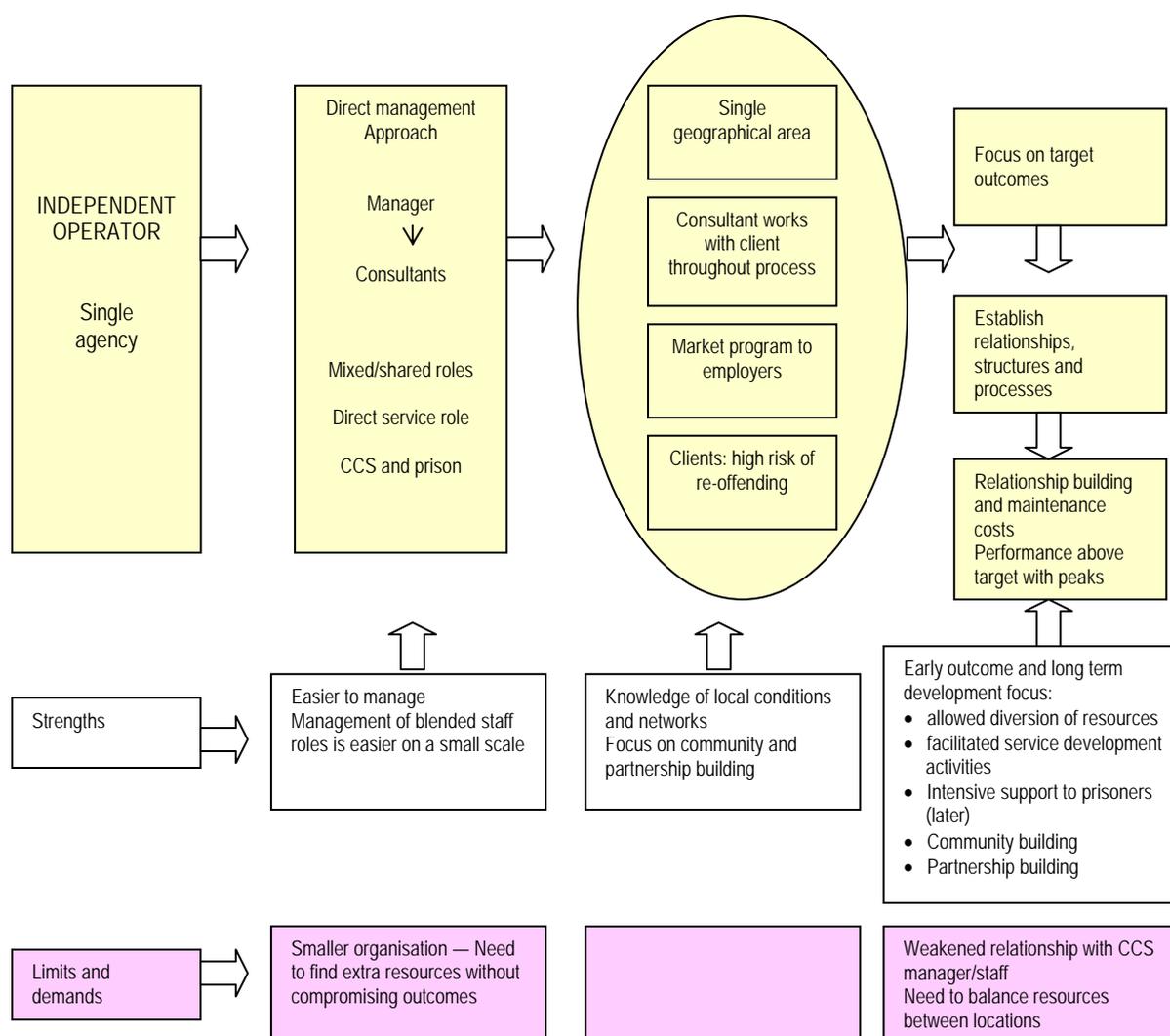


Figure 5: Independent Operator: Rocket-launching model.

The Consortium Model

The Job Futures consortium model has several strengths. It has very well-developed management structures and processes. Growing that aspect of the consortium was obviously labour intensive, but in our view worth the investment. It is consistent with the ‘momentum-building’ approach that is part of the model, and that too is a strength. Indeed, this approach is highly consistent with current and emergent views of best practice in managing and growing successful organisations (e.g., Collins, 2001). Getting the relationships, the structures, and processes right before focusing on achievement of outcomes has led to a constant improvement in performance (see Section 4 results) and relatively smooth management of the consortium and each location, despite some very disruptive conditions in the operating environment, which have been described.

The consortium model allows flexibility in resource use as well, allowing diversion of resources where and when needed. Perhaps the greatest strength of this model is the identification of prison clients as the primary target group and development of a process for moving that group through to employment that covers pre-release, transition, and post-release support. By aiming at prisoners, the model attempts to achieve its outcomes with the group arguably most at risk of re-offending. This model has achieved very good outcomes while resisting ‘short cuts’ and apparent ‘quick fixes’, and instead focusing on a comprehensive and sustained approach to working with high risk clients. An additional strength is that this model is readily replicable.

There are two potential limitations to this model. One is that there can be a fairly high ‘maintenance’ cost associated with a consortium. However, in this case, by our observation, the maintenance cost is justifiable given the maturity that has been achieved in the consortium. By having a central management structure, the cost may actually be lower than if several providers were contracted, each with a project manager. The peer support meetings probably enhance total quality and productivity beyond their cost. Another potential limitation to the model is that the project manager for the consortium does not have any direct line management authority; rather she/he must manage by a combination of persuasion, a functioning executive group, a steering committee, and Memoranda Of Understanding (MOUs) between members. This type of arrangement depends on having a manager with well-developed interpersonal skills. Thus far, due to a rigorous selection process, at least three of the four people who have occupied the CSEPP manager role have had those skills. In other words, it is a potential limitation to the model as a model, but in this case, performance has not suffered because individual managers have had the necessary skills.

In addition to these two potential limitations to the model, there is one extra consideration with this model. There is an inherent tension between consortium structures and processes and the operations of member organisations. This must be managed. Existence of shared values does make it easier. Likewise, there is a tension between the need to adapt and fit the service model to local conditions while preserving program integrity. In our view, the consortium has managed these tensions effectively in a way that has strengthened internal relations and also contributed to corporate learning and improved program delivery.

The Single Provider Model

The ACSO single provider model has strengths as well. A small scale location-specific model allows ease of adapting to local conditions. Blending of individual staff roles is more easily managed on a small scale. The focus on partnership-building in relation to project development is another strong feature of the model. Partnerships, particularly around projects that result in employment opportunities and/or housing opportunities for clients produce sustainable outcomes and improved conditions for ex-prisoners and offenders. The ‘rocket launching’ approach which meant trying to achieve outcomes as soon as possible allowed diversion of resources into service development activities and more intensive support to prison clients later in the pilot. However, one cost of that has been a weakened relationship with the location manager and staff at the CCS. That problem has proven difficult to resolve once it emerged.

Toward a “Best Practice” Service Model

In short, either model can work. The consortium model, with several providers and multiple locations per provider, must allow for location differences and promote local adaptations of the model while maintaining the model’s integrity. The single provider/single location model is easier to manage, but it is inherently more difficult to find extra resources for service development

without compromising the number and quality of outcomes. One other consideration should be made in relation to the overall ‘roadworthiness’ of the two existing models. The Job Futures consortium has developed a culture that fits program objectives very well and a way of managing and working that is effective. Expanding involvement of the existing consortium rather than introducing another consortium or another large provider would make sense. The ACSO model that focuses on essentially one geographical area has also worked quite well. It ensures coverage in a particular location, and is built and maintained on local networks and knowledge. Inability to shift resources across locations (as the consortium has done from time to time to support locations in need) is one limitation of the independent operator model, which we have highlighted. Since such providers are likely to be quite small, it also depends more heavily on stability of individual personnel. Nevertheless, the ACSO model has proven very effective in the pilot, achieving outcomes early and building for future successes (see Section 4 for outcomes results).

Although there may not be one ideal service model, there are a few superordinate conditions that must be built into all service models for them to reflect what we consider to be best practice.

- Connectedness among providers – It is important to have a system of communication and collaboration among providers, like the management structure and peer support structure apparent in the current consortium.
- Multiple locations covered by each provider – It is important that each provider has responsibility for more than one location in order to achieve the critical mass that allows flexibility of resource utilisation.
- A holistic approach – Trying to deal with employment-related needs of this client group in the absence of recognition and treatment of other needs is fruitless; it is important to focus on getting clients connected to other relevant services such as housing, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health services, other health services, and education and training programs to be truly successful with reintegration broadly or employment and reduced re-offending specifically.
- A prisoner/offender friendly culture with equal measures of employment and social welfare values among providers – It is important that providers be committed to the client group, experienced with the client group, and committed to investing “whatever it takes” to assist clients into employment and a changed lifestyle.
- Management structures and processes that support clients and employment consultants – The case management model is a strong feature of the current program; provision of resources flexibly, on an ‘as needed’ basis is also important; managing across locations as well as within locations is another important feature.
- Momentum-building as an underlying strategy – It is important to get the program established, to build necessary relationships, to get structures and processes in place, and to remain focused on continuous improvement; being patient and confident that outcomes will follow from sound structures and processes.
- Rocket launching as an underlying strategy – It is also important to focus on the short-term and continuing objectives of preparing and placing clients into employment and building platforms through project development for future ‘launches’/escalation of the program.

Location Delivery Models

Variations Across Locations

Acknowledging that a good deal of uniformity in procedures has been developed, it must also be acknowledged that conditions vary considerably across the 17 CSEPP locations. Variability is in relation to the nature of the CSEPP provider organisation, how the program has developed and been delivered, composition of the client group at the location, conditions within the location environment (prison or CCS), and conditions within the local operating environment. A variety of delivery models has resulted. Descriptions of location specific conditions are provided in Appendix 2, and specific location delivery models are apparent in those descriptions. Tables 2–4 below provide a brief description of conditions and service delivery approaches associated with each location. The text that follows provides more detail, as well as discussing strengths and limitations of the various approaches and identifying issues of ‘best practice’.

Table 2: Job Futures prison location delivery models.

Location	Provider	Description
Loddon Dhurringile	VACRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Originally, one consultant servicing both locations from Castlemaine. For past 18 months, two consultants at Loddon. Loddon – two local consultants, one with office on site providing individual client employment preparation, the other providing training at location, excellent relations Dhurringile – individual client employment preparation, poor fit between prison population and eligibility criteria (mainly short sentence drink driving convictions), poor job prospects in the area, most relocate all over the state, issues raised about getting a local consultant (local consultant employed for several months at time of writing, workload warrants 1 day per week at location), very good relations
Fulham Won Wron	Brosnan Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One consultant for each location, earlier mix and match from a distance didn't work Fulham – local consultant 3 days per week at location, individual client employment preparation, plus delivery of training private prison with full range of prisoners, large population by Victorian standards, large number of releases per year, excellent relations Won Wron – non-local consultant (due to closure end of year) 1 day per week at prison, individual client employment preparation, minimum security prison with low number of releases per year, very good relations
Tarrengower DPFC	MCM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One consultant for each location, plus one transition consultant Tarrengower – local consultant 1 day per week at location, individual client employment preparation, many prisoners come just prior to release and have ‘gate fever’ (only focused on release, not employment) while others are moved from Tarrengower just before release and lost to the program, excellent relations DPFC – one local consultant 3 days per week at location, individual client employment preparation, training, and follow up of released clients within the community, excellent relations

Table 3: Job Futures CCS location delivery models.

Location	Provider	Description
Hume Reservoir	Youth Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two locations are serviced by a team of three consultants with part shared/overlapping roles/part specialised roles, individual client employment preparation, a 'slow growth' approach is used in both locations, a good deal of time spent marketing the program in community Hume – 1 day per week at location, client group is variable in terms of education and work skills (not all low skilled) and less drug dependent, local community job prospects are good, local community atmosphere is 'positive and upwardly mobile', CCS staff very involved, excellent relations Reservoir – 1 day per week at location, client group is quite diverse with high drug dependence, jobs available require self-transport, CCS staff very active in program, good relations (described as intermittent by CCS staff due to regular turnover of consultant prior to team approach)
Dandenong Frankston	Brotherhood St. Laurence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two locations are serviced by a team of two consultants with part shared/overlapping roles (working together at each location and offering training in prison and contact prior to release) part time located at locations Dandenong – consultants well-integrated into CCS, high caseload at this office, community very diverse, high drug dependence among clients, very high local job availability in suitable jobs, very good relations with CCS Frankston – consultants well-integrated into CCS, manager and staff very active in CSEPP, local relations and CCS relations very good, low job availability locally, poor public transport
Bendigo Shepparton	VACRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One consultant for each location (previously, when Options was the provider, one consultant covering both from Bendigo) Bendigo – 1 to 2 days per week at location (after long period of disrupted service due to provider leaving the project and temporary replacement provider), earlier low integration into the CCS office, but very good since July, 2004, unemployment fairly high with mainly skilled jobs available, excellent public transport around Bendigo, but not further out jobs employment preparation Shepparton – 1 day per week at location (after a long period of disrupted service as at Bendigo), Shepparton serviced from Bendigo until local consultant appointed very recently, need for local networks is necessary here, jobs available, but not advertised, public transport good in Shepparton almost non-existent outside, housing in chronic very short supply Local resident now working across all four VACRO locations as part of total workload, as a reverse marketer
Morwell	Education Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One consultant servicing the location (recently an assistant added), also contributing to training at Fulham prison in transition program Morwell – very high unemployment in the region for a long time, need to find alternatives such as shuttles to Dandenong, very high focus on employment by CCS staff and excellent support for the program, high percentage of ineligible clients at this CCS make referrals difficult
Ringwood	Employment Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One consultant plus an administrative assistant servicing the location Ringwood – consultant and assistant at location full time with workstations allocated, very high caseload, excellent relations with CCS and very low turnover of CCS staff, strong culture of rehabilitation at this CCS, low unemployment in the area, transport variable (depending on suburb), large area to cover
Sunshine	Djerriwarrah Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One consultant servicing the location after earlier consultant 'lost direction' Sunshine – approximately 2 days per week at location with desk space supplied, very good relations with CCS, local employment prospects good for industrial work, public transport poor, no housing available

Table 4: ACSO prison and CCS location delivery models.

Location	Provider	Description
Barwon	ACSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have part shared and overlapping roles/part specialised roles • Barwon – individual client employment preparation, service development, excellent working relations, two days presence at location per week, large number of releases per year
Geelong		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geelong – early good relations and high outcomes, later relationship difficulties with CCS (continuing) and low referrals; Geelong has low unemployment rate, but low job availability, poor housing availability

Local Ecology-driven and Adaptive Delivery Models

Delivery models are, of necessity, influenced by conditions within the operating environment. Within the original project brief, there was an acknowledgement by the Department of Justice that a “Whatever It Takes”(Willer & Corrigan, 1994) approach would need to be applied. Such a ‘model’ is based on a principle of situation and client responsiveness. It suggests that conditions ought to drive what becomes an adaptive model rather than ideology determining and driving a set delivery model. The “whatever it takes” approach has been applied to other intensive support needs clients across different service domains (employment, housing, psychosocial rehabilitation, as examples). It is accepted as a preferred approach when working with clients with fluctuating conditions or circumstances and those with complex support needs. As a result of the inherent recognition of a need for CSEPP program delivery to be adaptive in relation to immediate conditions, there has been a great deal of variation in location delivery models. That variation should be considered not only appropriate, but expected and preferred.

In recognising the importance of being responsive to conditions in the operating environment, it is useful to treat the operating environment as a kind of ecology (Graffam & Naccarella, 1997; Graffam et al., 2000; Keegan, 2001; Kuipers, 1998). Typical considerations of what constitutes the domains of a service ecology include: the client group; corrections location; geographical location; provider characteristics; characteristics and conditions of the funding body and contract; broad social context; and other relevant stakeholders.

An ecological framework specific to CSEPP includes:

- The client group – age distribution; ethnic distribution; proportion with drug and/or alcohol issues; socio-economic distribution; average/typical physical and mental health; average/typical level of education; average/typical employment history; average/typical family and social network (isolates or family intact; nature of social relationships).
- The corrections location – prison or community corrections location; population of the location (prospective client group); structures and processes that dictate activities and movements; culture of the location; stability of staff; relationships and key personnel; location infrastructure to support the program.
- Geographical location –metropolitan, regional or rural; extent of local community services (health services, accommodation services; drug and alcohol treatment services, other relevant services); extent of local public transport; extent of affordable housing; local ethnic and cultural distribution; local amenities; local employment prospects (unemployment rate, availability of appropriate jobs); local crime rate; local drug availability and level of drug problem; local ‘politics’ related to the program and acceptance of ex-prisoners and offenders into the community.

- Provider characteristics – single provider or member of consortium; single or multiple locations; employment only or part of larger social welfare organisation; management structures and processes that drive activities; staff with corrections and/or employment backgrounds; local staff with local knowledge and networks or ‘commuter’/‘imported’ staff; stability of staff; culture of provider organisation.
- Conditions of the funding body and contract – Department management structures and processes relevant to the program; degree of active involvement by Department manager(s); stability of key personnel; relationships with key personnel; mechanisms and procedures for communication; clarity of contract obligations; mechanisms and procedures for reporting.
- Broad social context – economic conditions within society as a whole relevant to the program; general attitudes toward prisoners and offenders; general attitudes toward provision of assistance to prisoners and offenders in obtaining employment and reintegrating into the community; media treatment of crime, ‘punishment’, rehabilitation, and related issues; relevant state and federal legislation (criminality, social justice, privacy, and other legislation).
- Other relevant stakeholders – employers (individual employers, local employer groups, peak bodies); community health service providers; mental health providers; training providers (short course, CAE, TAFE, university), etc.

An ecological analysis identifies important and unique features of a local context. It also assumes that the ‘domains’ and the specific elements of the local ecology interact with each other. As examples:

- Low local job availability suggests a need for more intensive work preparation to make a client more competitive, a need for good public transport to allow wider geographical searching for jobs, and a need to actively engage local employers. Without such an adaptive strategy and infrastructure conditions in the local environment, the program will have difficulty in achieving its objectives, and/or providers will be forced to perform beyond contracted roles.
- High proportion of socially isolated clients suggests a need for housing assistance, a need for good local amenities (to promote social activity), and possibly a need for accessible local mental health services. Without such conditions in the local environment, the program will also have difficulty in achieving its objectives, and/or providers will be forced to perform beyond contracted roles.

These two examples illustrate the interactivity of local ecology variables. It is not possible to construct a matrix or other depiction of the true multiplicity of potential interactions. Suffice to say that the number of inter-relationships between ecological variables is potentially almost limitless. Identifying the important relationships, those having a critical effect on local program performance, is essential.

An ecological analysis assists in understanding the strengths and limitations associated with operating in a specific location, challenges / impediments to success, and resources that can be utilised to promote success. Ecological analysis can be applied as a diagnostic tool when a program is in operation or as a scoping and planning tool when establishing a program. Throughout the CSEPP locations, providers have demonstrated very good knowledge of their local

client group, local community conditions, CV location conditions, local services and networks, contractual conditions, and broader social issues. Existent delivery models match well client characteristics and environment conditions in local operating environments. This does not mean that there are set location delivery models though; variations at individual client level are consistent with the “whatever it takes” approach. The general characteristics of delivery models are more usefully described in the context of best practice (see below).

One distinction that can be made about existent delivery models is in terms of the use of employment consultants across locations as opposed to use of location-specific employment consultants.

- Use of employment consultants across locations – This approach has been applied by ACSO and by some of the consortium members that are responsible for more than one location. In most cases, it entails a team of consultants sharing responsibilities across locations. This allows more flexible use of resources, better overall coverage as load ebbs and flows, more collaboration and, therefore, more learning among consultants. In the few cases where a single consultant has split their time between locations, that has not worked well, and that is not a recommended procedure (although it may be necessary due to low workload at a location).
- Use of location-specific employment consultants – This approach has been applied by consortium members responsible for only one location. This approach can work quite well, particularly if the consultant is fully integrated into the CCS location and not operating in relative isolation and has well-developed local knowledge and networks. However, it affords less flexibility in resource use and restricts the breadth of learning for consultants who do work in relative isolation. If a provider is responsible for only one location, steps should be taken to ensure that the consultant is not left to operate in isolation, but gets exposure to other locations and other consultants by some means (interaction must go beyond the peer support meetings).

Location-specific Delivery Problems

Of the seventeen locations included in the pilot, thirteen were running smoothly by the end of the first two years of the pilot, and most of those described relatively smooth running throughout the pilot period, apart from disruptions already described that impacted on the program as a whole. Exceptions include conditions that created problems for program delivery in relation to Geelong CCS, Shepparton CCS, Morwell CCS, and Dhurringile Prison locations.

- Shepparton CCS was originally serviced by the Job Futures consortium member that went out of business in December, 2003. It had been serviced from an office in Bendigo by a consultant new to Victoria with no knowledge or network in Shepparton. Service to the location was handed first to Youth Projects, then to VACRO. Until approximately August, 2004, the consultants were each non-locals, and the location continued to be serviced from Bendigo. From the CV location personnel perspective, it was necessary to have local service from the beginning.

- The program at Morwell experienced loss of an employment consultant and significant administration difficulties at approximately the beginning of the work bans. The replacement consultant has addressed those issues effectively, and the location is actually operating well, within the constraints of extreme and long-term high unemployment and low job availability throughout the region. One additional problem is the high proportion of CCS clients who are ineligible for the program.
- Dhurringile Prison has also experienced two ongoing issues. One is logistical; one is related to client load. It has been serviced by VACRO from an office in Bendigo. The consultant also services Loddon Prison in Castlemaine and commutes to Dhurringile. Another problem is the high proportion of prisoners at the location who are ineligible for the program due to their sentence length. The low number of eligible prisoners means fewer registered clients, making it difficult to justify a full-time consultant for the location.
- The relationship between the location staff and ACSO staff in Geelong suffered when attention shifted to Barwon Prison around mid-point in the first two years. That relationship was still in need of repair at October 31, 2004. Consequently, only a small number of referrals have come from location personnel for some time.

Best Practice in Delivery Models

Conditions in the local operating environment, and the effects of those conditions on program delivery, make discussion of “best practice” somewhat complex. It may not be possible to implement what is thought to be “best” practice within certain contexts and conditions. It is also likely that, to some extent, what works “best” varies across locations and is related to specific conditions.

With respect to prison locations, the procedures and the activities of employment consultants do not vary tremendously. However, it is possible to identify characteristics that have contributed to both smooth operations and good outcomes.

- The consultant should be a local resident rather than a long distance commuter. It is not only a matter of driving time; a local person shares some sense of community and culture with prison personnel and is aware of local issues. They are also aware of local employment conditions for clients who are going to settle locally upon release.
- The consultant should have a designated location within the prison, preferably in the programs unit which is associated with support. A designated place promotes client contact.
- The consultant should also maintain a high profile within the prison for the same reason. In addition to spending significant time at the prison, involvement in prison programs and offering training are other preferred approaches to service that contribute to maintaining a profile.
- The transition employment consultant role created by Melbourne Citymission has been very successful. Transition from prison to community is recognised as a time of heightened client vulnerability. The transition consultant role provides an excellent bridge between the two service contexts. We consider development of that role to be a preferred practice. Expanding that role with other consultants throughout the program would be beneficial.

There is a good deal of variability in program delivery models across CCS locations.

- With respect to CCS locations, sustained high performance (smooth operations and solid outcomes) is associated with being integrated into the CCS location. The Ringwood model, which has the consultant and assistant fully integrated and full time at the location is the best example of that (and results speak for themselves, see Section 4). Other locations that have integrated consultants into the CCS, though less fully, have also been successful in the program.
- Another condition associated with sustained success is having a local consultant rather than delivering service from a distance. The ‘delivery at a distance’ approach was tried and rejected at Fulham, Won Wron (though closure has led to continuing the former method), and recently (finally) at Dhurringile prisons and at Shepparton CCS (also until recently). Local people have local knowledge and local networks. They have familiarity with local issues. These provide a huge advantage.
- Team approach to delivery with employment consultants working in collaboration across locations as opposed to the lone consultant is a definite advantage, if it can be managed.
- It is important to ensure that consultants have well-developed knowledge and skills in relation to the client group, the corrections environment, and provision of employment assistance. Best practice includes ensuring that consultants do have that full set of skills.
- It is clear from our interview data that it has been much easier for staff with a corrections background to develop employment assistance skills and knowledge than for employment services staff to develop corrections knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is an advantage to have staff with a corrections background. It is also important to provide ‘cross-fertilisation’ through such opportunities as the peer support meetings that are held.

3.4.4 Specific Program-wide Issues

Several specific program-wide issues emerged from the interviews with CSEPP providers, CSEPP managers, and Corrections Victoria locations personnel (the location managers and other key staff). Results relevant to those issues are presented below. Similarities and differences in the responses of provider interviewees and Corrections Victoria interviewees are indicated within the text. Frequencies and percentages of interviewees making reference to specific issues are listed in the tables that accompany the text. Taken as a whole, there was a great deal of agreement among interviewees, with few and minor group differences, except with respect to a small number of very specific issues that are identified and discussed. Location-specific differences are discussed in that sub-section of the report (no frequencies are reported for location-specific comments due to the small number of location interviewees). The specific issues that emerged from the interviews have been sorted into the following categories: employment consultant and client group characteristics; central management issues and conditions (management issues for Corrections Victoria, for the Job Futures consortium, for ACSO); ‘best’ features of the program; current limitations and possible improvements; and congruity between the program model and program implementation revisited.

Employment Consultant and Client Group Characteristics

Employment consultants and CSEPP clients are the two most important stakeholder groups. Employment consultants are the primary contacts between the program and its clients and other

constituents. Employment consultants have to be able to relate to Corrections staff, a range of other professional groups, employers, and clients. Those interactions form the basic fabric of the program. Employment consultants also need technical skills to assist clients into employment. Of course, without clients, there would be no program. As we have said, this client group is arguably the most disadvantaged of disadvantaged groups, with high frequencies of co-morbidity in relation to drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, low level of education, and poor work history as examples.

Interviewees were asked to identify the characteristics that they thought were essential to an effective employment consultant. The most frequently identified characteristics are listed in Table 5, together with the number and percent of interviewees identifying that characteristic. Responses by CV location personnel, providers, and total responses are listed.

Table 5: Number and percent of characteristics reported as essential to an effective employment consultant.

Effective Employment Consultant Characteristics	CV		Provider		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
knowledge of prisoners/offenders as a client group	18	52.9	18	64.3	36	58.1
ability to build rapport and trust	19	55.9	14	50.0	33	53.2
ability to motivate clients	19	55.9	9	32.1	28	45.2
specialist employment skills	11	32.4	16	57.1	27	43.5
ability to engage with staff	19	55.9	8	28.6	27	43.5
knowledge of the corrections system	16	47.1	8	28.6	24	38.7
ability to engage employers on a professional level	10	29.4	7	25.0	17	27.4
honest (not promising what can't be delivered)	9	26.5	7	25.0	16	25.8
being supportive/not gullible or easily manipulated	10	29.4	5	17.9	15	24.2
patience and persistence	7	20.6	4	14.3	11	17.7
strong boundary maintenance	5	14.7	2	7.1	7	11.3

Clearly, what is required to be effective is a comprehensive skill set. Getting and keeping effective staff was an early, and is a continuing, priority. Consideration of broader context issues as well leads to a suggestion that having local knowledge and a local network is a definite advantage as well, if not a necessity. More than half of Corrections Victoria personnel and almost two-thirds of providers identified knowledge of the client group as important to being an effective employment consultant. Ability to build rapport and trust was identified by more than half of Corrections Victoria personnel and half of providers. Approximately one-quarter of both groups identified being honest and not making unrealistic promises as important. The two groups exhibited fairly similar views on the importance of ability to engage employers, being supportive but not gullible, patience and persistence, and strong boundary maintenance.

Differences between Corrections personnel and providers were also evident. More than half of Corrections Victoria personnel identified ability to motivate clients and ability to engage staff as important, while less than one-third of providers identified those as important. Almost half of Corrections Victoria personnel identified knowledge of the corrections system as important, while less than one-third of providers identified that as important. Conversely, more than half of providers identified specialist employment skills as important, while less than one-third of Corrections personnel identified those specialist skills as important.

It is well-established in the literature, and it has been unanimously reported by employment consultants, provider managers, and Corrections Victoria location personnel interviewed as part of this evaluation, that prisoners and offenders on the whole have comprehensive and intensive support needs. Every interviewee commented that in addition to the condition of having a criminal record making this group the most discriminated against and most difficult to place into employment, there are several other characteristics that make obtaining and maintaining employment difficult. The most frequently identified specific client characteristics are listed in Table 6, together with the number and percent of interviewees identifying that characteristic. Responses by CV location personnel, providers, and total responses are listed.

Table 6: Number and percent of client characteristics/support needs identified .

Client Characteristics/Support Needs	CV		Provider		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
history of drug and/or alcohol abuse/ dependence	27	79.4	9	32.1	36	58.1
instability of accommodation/housing	23	67.6	13	46.4	36	58.1
history of socio-economic disadvantage	15	44.1	13	46.4	28	45.2
low level of education	18	52.9	9	32.1	27	43.5
little or no work history	20	58.8	6	21.4	26	41.9
lack of transport	15	44.1	7	25.0	22	35.5
medical conditions/mental illness	14	41.2	6	21.4	20	32.3
gaps in personal history	12	35.3	4	14.3	16	25.8
inappropriate social networks	12	35.3	4	14.3	16	25.8
non-English speaking background	11	32.4	0	0.0	11	17.7

The most frequently identified client support needs were in relation to a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse, instability of housing/accommodation, history of socio-economic disadvantage, low level of education, and little or no work history. Preparedness to assist with these very diverse and comprehensive issues through working with CCOs and/or linking clients into relevant existing services is an essential element of program delivery. That preparedness is, clearly, a combination of dedication and a comprehensive skill set. The complementarity of the two lists of characteristics (those needed to be an effective employment consultant and those describing the client group in general) is obvious. The support needs of the client group must not be under-estimated. The need for dedicated, skilled, and effective support workers cannot be over-stated.

There were several striking differences in the client characteristics and support needs identified by Corrections Victoria personnel and providers, with Corrections personnel much more frequently identifying problematic features of the client group. Twice or more than twice as many Corrections personnel identified each of the client characteristics listed than did providers, except in relation to instability of accommodation/housing and history of socio-economic disadvantage. Still, more than two-thirds of Corrections personnel and less than half of providers identified instability of accommodation/housing as common to the client group. Slightly less than half of both groups identified history of socio-economic disadvantage.

Central Management Issues and Conditions

There are several current issues and conditions at program management level that warrant discussion. Some of those are general issues and conditions, some are specific to the Job Futures consortium, some are specific to ACSO, and some are specific to the Department of Justice. The most frequently identified management issues are listed in the table below, together with the

number and percent of interviewees identifying that characteristic. Responses by CV location personnel, providers, and total responses are also listed in Table 7. ACSO numbers are small because only four CV personnel and three ACSO personnel were interviewed.

Table 7: Number and percent of management tasks identified.

Management tasks and issues	CV		Provider		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
General Management						
improving data management / reporting	18	52.9	16	57.1	34	54.8
staffing issues: CSEPP providers and CV	15	44.1	18	64.3	33	53.2
interface between CSEPP and CV	21	61.8	8	28.6	29	46.8
Consortium Management						
staffing and resources across locations	17	50.0	12	42.3	29	46.8
‘growing’ the consortium to maturity	1	2.9	4	14.3	5	8.1
consortium management by persuasion	0	0.0	4	14.3	4	6.5
Management of ACSO locations						
developing links within the community	1	2.9	3	10.7	4	6.5
project development at Barwon prison and working relationship with location	2	5.9	1	3.6	3	4.8
repairing of relations with Geelong CCS	1	2.9	1	3.6	2	3.2
Management by Department of Justice						
more direct involvement by DOJ staff	14	41.2	4	14.3	18	29.0
information about changes within CV	11	32.4	6	21.4	17	27.4
more feedback on DOJ perceptions of CSEPP	14	41.2	1	3.6	15	24.2
feedback to providers	4	11.8	4	14.3	8	12.9

More specifically, **General Management** issues and conditions that were raised by Corrections Victoria interviewees and provider interviewees included:

- **data management and reporting** – PIMS is described as ‘not user friendly’ allowing providers only limited access, outdated as a technology, and that its information is not very reliable, in that most recent offence gives poor indication of criminal history and recorded release dates are unreliable; reporting does not allow for recording of qualitative outcomes and so-called micro-gains; more than half of both Corrections personnel and providers identified this as an issue needing attention.
- **staffing issues within both CSEPP provider organisations and CV** – turnover has been fairly high within CSEPP and is moderate to very high, among CCOs in Corrections Victoria; related to turnover, there is a constant need to educate new locations personnel about the program and regular need to induct new consultants; there is disparity in pay and working conditions between CSEPP providers and CCOs; several CSEPP providers reported contract and job insecurity for several months as the term of the contract approached; ‘job enlargement’ for the consultants has also been cited as a reason for consultant turnover; less than half of Corrections personnel and approximately two-thirds of providers identified this as an issue.

- **issues related to the interface between CSEPP and Corrections Victoria** – there are cases of sharing or providing resources with a need to clarify responsibility for bearing costs of shared resources (location computers, work space, equipment, telephones, etc); a need for constant communication between providers and location personnel and questions about reporting requirements in terms of involvement with CV clients who are also CSEPP clients; there have been instances of some conflict over values differences (mainly in relation to maintaining confidentiality, reporting of income, disclosure to employers and others); almost two-thirds of Corrections personnel and slightly more than one-quarter of providers identified this as an issue.

There were more specific issues and conditions related to the **Management of the Job Futures Consortium**, which were identified by interviewees. Because several of these issues were internal to the consortium, fewer CV location managers and personnel provided comments on all but the first issue. These issues were identified by locations personnel, the consortium manager, provider manager, and employment consultant interviewees:

- **allocation of staffing and other resources across locations** – it has, at various times, been advisable either to remove a staff person from a location for some reason or add a staff person who is employed by another provider within the consortium (for reasons of expertise and/or workload distribution); cross-fertilisation (peer training) has been necessary as employment consultants needed to acquire a broad range of diverse skills and knowledge and the turnover of consultants has been fairly high; these issues also appear to have been well-managed within the consortium; half of Corrections personnel and almost half of providers identified this as an issue.
- **development of the consortium from an affiliation of several organisations into a dynamic (if de facto) organisation in its own right** – it was characterised by different service models and client bases of the social welfare members, significantly different values and cultures between social welfare and employment members, and somewhat different motives for involvement; ‘growing’ the consortium to maturity has been accomplished to an impressive degree within the two year period (and the process is still underway); only one Corrections person and four providers identified this as an issue, and it should be considered a minor issue from their point of view.
- **the consortium CSEPP project manager must manage by persuasion** – establishment of a consortium steering committee, executive group, formal MOUs, and peer support meetings have assisted in the day-to-day management of the consortium; not reported by any Corrections personnel and only four providers identified this as an issue. This should be considered a minor issue from their point of view.

There were specific issues and conditions relating to the **Management of the ACSO Component**.

- **developing and expanding links within the community** – as a stand alone provider, operating in one geographical area, it has been important to develop and then expand a local network of relevant partners; this has been vigorously pursued by the manager with involvement in several community initiatives and participation on community committees as well; activities of this type are important to sustainability of the program, but arguably are not specifically in the brief and may take resources away from core activities in the short-term; one Corrections person and all three ACSO staff identified this as an important issue, and although it is not much recognised by Corrections personnel, it is clearly important to ACSO.
- **project development at Barwon prison** – in order to involve the community in the prison and to develop a good working relationship with location personnel; this activity too contributes to program sustainability, partly because it involves development of longer term employment prospects for CSEPP clients and future clients; this was identified by both Barwon Prison staff and one ACSO staff respondent.
- **the other major management issue that ACSO has had to address is the repairing of relations with the Geelong CCS** – as described in the Appendix, after a very good start, several conditions together led to a poor working relationship between this provider and the location manager and staff; it became necessary to invest in repairing that relationship and getting the program back on track in terms of referrals; for several months, few referrals came from the CCS; in an initial meeting, several CCS staff identified this, and in the interviews, it was identified by the CCS manager and the ACSO manager.

Most of the issues and conditions relating to the management of the ACSO component were identified by the ACSO manager and staff. However, the locations manager from the CCS identified several of the issues relating to developing links within the community, investment in initiatives and projects, and the need to repair relations with the CCS. The location manager and the program manager from Barwon each provided a description of the program consistent with provider descriptions and described provider performance in very positive terms.

The following identifies some of the specific issues and conditions relating to **Management of the Program by the Department of Justice** that were identified by Corrections Victoria interviewees.

- **Department staff could be more directly involved in the program** – more regular direct contact through visits, greater knowledge of CSEPP by Department managers demonstrated in interactions, and more hands-on administration of contract and conditions; almost half of Corrections personnel and less than one-sixth of providers identified this as an issue. This may obviate the expressed feeling that the Department did not understand or appreciate the complexity of delivering a specialist labour market program. This observation relates to how the Department manages contracts. A traditional purchaser-provider approach that keeps the Department at arm's length is not suited to this program and, indeed, of questionable value in any case. A collaborative partnership approach is well-advised.

- **better (more) information could and should be provided about changes to the structures and management of Corrections Victoria** – especially on changes affecting operations of locations and the CSEPP; almost one-third of Corrections personnel and almost one-quarter of providers identified this as an issue. The above comments on the collaborative partnership approach to contract management are relevant to this issue as well.
- **much more content and regularity of feedback** – feedback should be provided on Department perceptions of CSEPP performance and relative acceptance of the program within the Department; almost half of Corrections personnel, but only one provider identified this as an issue.
- **regular outcomes feedback** – reports from the Department should be provided to the providers, with location specific outcomes being provided; only four of each group identified this as an issue, suggesting that it is a minor issue from their point of view.

3.4.5 Best Features and Possible Improvements

Best Features

Several ‘best features’ of CSEPP were identified by interviewees. Overall, there was a high degree of agreement among interviewees in terms of the nature of best features. The most frequently identified characteristics are listed in Table 8, together with the number and percent of interviewees identifying that characteristic. Responses by CV location personnel, providers, and total responses are listed. Those listed are the ones that constitute the predominant responses of interviewees. Other best features were named, but by only one or a few interviewees.

Table 8: Number and percent of characteristics identified as ‘best features’ of CSEPP.

‘Best Features’ of CSEPP	CV		Provider		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Case management approach for prisoners, post-release continuity	20	58.8	14	50.0	34	54.8
accessibility of the program	16	47.1	13	46.4	29	46.8
ability to link clients into other programs	20	58.8	8	28.6	28	45.2
level and type of resourcing	14	41.2	14	50.0	28	45.2
committed staff	18	52.9	8	28.6	26	41.9
specialist nature of the program	18	52.9	6	21.4	24	38.7
non-prejudicial nature of the program	13	38.2	10	35.7	23	37.1
voluntary nature of the program	11	32.4	11	39.3	22	35.5
incremental approach taken	14	41.2	7	25.0	21	33.9
	11	32.4	7	25.0	18	29.0

Within each of these categories, several more specific comments were made. The most frequently cited specific ‘best features’ of CSEPP are listed below, in order from most to least frequently identified.

- **case management approach** – specific statements included references to the value of a case management model generally, the need to case manage with this client group, the consistency of models (case management) across CSEPP and CCSs, the individualised nature of the program (focus on a job for one client, literacy/numeracy for another, life skills/résumé/work experience for yet another); more than half of Corrections personnel and half of providers identified this as a best feature of the program.
- **for prisoners, post-release continuity of contact** – specific statements included references to the tendency for prisoners to get ‘lost’ upon release without an outside program contact, that transition to life out of prison is very difficult, that a high proportion of re-offending occurs in the first 3 months post-release, that continuing outside the preparation and support that started inside increases the likelihood of a client following through to employment and a reduction in re-offending; almost half of both groups identified this as a best feature.
- **accessibility of the program** – specific statements included references to the consultant being regularly present at the prison or CCS, the ease (and lack of paperwork) with which referrals are made, the possibility of electronic referrals and reporting (as yet not implemented), the informal and non-threatening approach of consultants; views held by the groups differed somewhat; more than half of Corrections personnel and more than one-quarter of providers identified this as a best feature of the program.
- **ability to network and link clients into other programs** – specific statements included references to CSEPP provider organisations having other services to which clients can be referred, having broader social welfare networks that allow referrals to other providers for support needs, being willing to take on an advocacy role in assisting clients to get needed support (this was also recognised as a sensitive area in some cases, as it can be considered the role of a CCO, and a client may be attempting and getting assistance from both parties); almost half of Corrections personnel and half of providers identified this as a best feature.
- **level and type of resourcing** – specific statements included references to being able to provide 12 months of assistance (an asset particularly appreciated by CCS personnel who noted average length of orders), being able to provide material assistance (in terms of work clothing and equipment, transportation costs, mobile phones, funding of training and licence fees, even emergency assistance with money for food) (also particularly noted by CCS personnel who noted their own inability to provide such support directly, only to refer); some difference between the groups is evident; more than half of Corrections personnel and more than one-quarter of providers identified this as a best feature of the program.

- **committed staff** – specific statements included references to how hard staff are willing to work, their perseverance with ‘relapses’ and slow progress, their dedication to individual clients, the way they focus on getting someone the ‘right job’, and willingness to look at different alternatives as a way of making progress with a client; views of the groups differed somewhat; more than half of Corrections personnel and less than one-quarter of providers identified this as a best feature (suggesting some self-effacement on the part of providers).
- **specialist nature of the program** – specific statements included references to the program’s focus on employment, its outcomes orientation, and its focus on the particular client group (including prisoners, parolees, and offenders serving Intensive Corrections Orders, Community Based Orders and Combined Custody and Treatment Orders who are a moderate to high risk of re-offending, long-term unemployment); more than one-third of both groups identified this as a best feature.
- **non-prejudicial nature of the program** – specific statements included references to the ‘acceptance of clients for who they are’, clients not having to cover up their background, treating criminal history as disadvantage rather than as deficit or damage; more than one-third of Corrections personnel and almost one-third of providers identified this as a best feature of the program.
- **voluntary nature of the program** – specific statements included references to clients being able to choose if (and to some extent when) they will participate; it puts the program outside of the realm of ‘orders’; almost half of Corrections personnel and one-quarter of providers identified this as a best feature.
- **incremental approach taken** – specific statements included references to the program allowing small and slow steps, allowing ‘failure’ without rejection from the program, the focus on social outcomes as well as employment outcomes, the focus on training and work readiness as well as employment; less than one-third of Corrections personnel and one-quarter of providers identified this as a best feature of the program.

It should be noted that all interviewees from CSEPP provider organisations and Corrections Victoria personnel have been extremely positive about the program. In addition to the nominated best features described, a large proportion of interviewees simply stated that the very existence of the program was a best feature. Those interviewees elaborated that CSEPP is a distinctive program that meets a very definite need and fills a very definite gap in the existing range of support services available to prisoners and offenders.

Possible Improvements

It is a standard procedure in process evaluation to ask participants in a program to suggest improvements to the program. One very healthy sign for a program is to have respondents suggest an improvement of ‘more, more, more.’ Another healthy sign is to have respondents name and elaborate upon a large number of possible improvements. This too indicates support for the program, in that programs that are not held in high regard generally do not produce much response to an improvement question. Instead, short and very negative responses are received. In this case, however, signs of a healthy program are evident in the responses to the question of possible improvements to the program.

Several ‘suggested improvements’ of CSEPP were identified by interviewees. As with identified best features, there was agreement among interviewees in relation to the nature of suggested improvements. The most frequently identified characteristics are listed in Table 9, together with the number and percent of interviewees identifying that characteristic. Responses by CV location personnel, providers, and total responses are listed. Those listed are the ones that constitute the predominant responses of interviewees.

Table 9: Number and percent of expansion, management, and practice-related suggested improvements.

Suggested improvements	CV		Provider		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Expansion						
expand coverage of the program	15	44.1	17	60.7	32	51.6
broaden eligibility criteria	12	35.3	17	60.7	29	46.8
make the program permanent	12	35.3	5	17.9	17	27.4
Management						
include measurement of ‘micro-gains’	18	52.9	11	39.3	29	46.8
broaden measurement of major outcomes	11	32.4	14	50.0	25	40.3
improve feedback on performance	14	41.1	7	25.0	21	33.9
acknowledge potential values conflict between CSEPP and CV	10	29.4	7	25.0	17	27.4
make target more reasonable	5	14.7	8	28.6	13	21.0
allow outcomes-based funding to be flexibly used	2	5.9	4	14.3	6	9.7
increase accountability	5	14.7	0	0.0	5	8.1
Practice						
more provider involvement with CV at locations	26	76.5	15	53.6	41	66.1
improve promotion of the program	16	49.1	11	39.3	27	43.5
improve prison to community transition	11	32.4	4	14.3	15	24.2
increase flexibility of 12 month support	2	5.9	5	17.9	7	11.3
offer subsidies to employers	3	8.8	3	10.7	6	9.7

Within the categories of expansion, management, and practice, several more specific comments were made. The most frequently cited specific ‘suggested improvements’ of CSEPP included the following (but not exhaustively) in order, from most to least frequently identified.

Expansion

- **expanding coverage of the program** – specific statements included references to: expanding the program to cover all of Victoria, all metropolitan locations and all regional centres at least (Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Mildura, and Warrnambool have been mentioned); adding satellites to the locations already serviced; trying a ‘travelling consultant’ approach to reach locations not covered; this has been suggested in terms of introducing more providers and in terms of expanding the scope of the existing consortium members; almost half of Corrections personnel and more than a half of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.

- **broadening eligibility criteria** – specific statements made were in reference to: a general equity issue of making the program available to all who want to take it up; examples of having to exclude obviously authentically motivated prospects in favour of an eligible prisoner who may not be so authentically motivated (several statements of this type also included suggestions that if reduced recidivism is the overall objective, then ‘any win is a good win’); eligibility criteria within prisons that do not match well with the particular prison population and result in low numbers of eligible inmates; negative impact on program credibility resulting from perceived arbitrariness of criteria (prisoner perceptions); these statements were almost all made in terms of possible improvements, with explicit suggestions to either broaden or drop eligibility criteria; more than one-third of Corrections personnel and more than half of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.
- **make the program permanent** – this suggestion was made by 27.4 % of interviewees, but most were Corrections Victoria locations personnel; more than one-third of Corrections personnel and only more than one-sixth of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.

Management

- **including measurement of ‘micro-gains’** – this issue has been raised more by employment consultants than managers or Corrections Victoria personnel (however, the issue was raised by a few CV personnel), and specific statements made have been in reference to: original Department of Justice (DOJ) emphasis on non-employment outcomes as well as employment outcomes, a focus that seems to have been lost (the suggestions have been that formally recording and reporting such gains will legitimise that element of the program); the need to stay focused on small incremental steps toward success in employment and in reintegration as a whole; a view that apparently small gains can have significant results (examples given include learning to read to one’s children, which might motivate someone to desist from crime, completing a résumé might change someone’s self opinion); more than half of Corrections personnel and more than one-third of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.
- **broadening measurement of major outcomes** – this issue was raised more by employment consultants than managers or Corrections Victoria personnel, and specific statements made were in reference to including within the outcomes reporting framework: education and training outcomes; work experience and volunteer positions (as employment preparation); completions of various short courses (such as life skills courses, drink driving courses, interviewing skills courses, toastmasters courses, etc.); and major social outcomes (such as family reunification, sustained participation in a social club or community organisation, procuring stable accommodation, etc.); shifting the focus from jobs to career development was also suggested by interviewees; less than one-third of Corrections personnel and half of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.

- **improving feedback on performance** – specific statements were made in reference to: DOJ providing regular performance feedback to providers and to corrections locations based on monthly reports submitted; CSEPP consortium management providing performance feedback to members on a more regular basis; individual provider organisations providing performance feedback to corrections locations (and specifically to CCOs) in terms of number of referrals achieved, job placements, etc; almost all comments about improving feedback referred to three good reasons for doing so, making comparisons, tracking, and motivating; almost half of Corrections personnel and one-quarter of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.
- **acknowledgement of potential values differences and need to manage relations between CSEPP and CV personnel and programs** – this issue, like the one above, was raised by a minority of interviewees, both employment consultants and CV personnel from community locations (CCSs) only, and specific statements were made in reference to: high priority on disclosure of criminal record to prospective employers by DOJ centrally and CCOs locally, while CSEPP providers were reluctant to advise clients to disclose; high priority on reporting of all income earned ('cash in hand') by CCOs as part of a priority of developing honesty among their clients, while CSEPP providers were reluctant to advise clients to disclose such earnings and were reluctant to report clients (due to loss of trust, breach of confidentiality); more than one-quarter of Corrections personnel and one-quarter of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.

Practice

- **need for CSEPP providers to maintain more regular involvement with CV personnel at locations** – this issue was raised by a minority of interviewees, both employment consultants and CV personnel from several of the community locations (CCSs) only, specific statements made were in reference to: high turnover of staff among CCOs and the regular need to familiarise new people with the program; the high workload and large variety of possible referrals available to CCOs; fairly high volume and 'turnover' of offenders coming through CCSs; the need for employment consultants to become 'part of the fabric' within a prison or CCS environment; the need to consult in relation to client assistance being provided to avoid duplications and ensure all needs are covered to the extent that is possible; and in some cases the need to consult in relation to client behaviour (this view was expressed only by CCS personnel, it relates to an issue of possible values conflict between CSEPP and CV personnel discussed below); there was strong support for this suggestion; more than three-quarters of Corrections personnel and more than half of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.
- **improving promotion of the program** – specific statements were made in reference to: renaming the program with a name that is recognisable rather than using 'CSEPP' as a name (examples of catchy names used by other programs cited by interviewees included 'Second Chance' and 'Bridging the Gap'); production of posters and brochures for placement within prison, CCS, Centrelink, and other relevant locations to attract potential clients; using feedback on performance data as a promotional tool that announces good news stories and rates of success; and adding employer incentives to the program; almost half of Corrections personnel and more than one-third of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.

- **improving procedures for client transition from prison to community** – specific statements were made in reference to: prisoner clients not contacting the community employment consultant (CEC) upon release; prisoner clients getting ‘lost’ when moved to a non-CSEPP prison just prior to release; clients being ‘exited’ from the program by the PIMS system upon release; prisoner clients not residing at the location named pre-release and being hard to track; there being a period of two to three weeks post-release when a client is heavily occupied with re-settling and a risk of disengagement from the program at that point; it is important to note that one prison employment consultant (PEC) has been designated to follow up on post-release prisoner clients and ensure contact with the CEC, and that in relation to this, a few employment consultants and a few corrections personnel commented in their interviews that the process has worked quite well; almost one-sixth of Corrections personnel, while less than one-third of providers identified this as an improvement to the program.
- **increasing flexibility of 12 month limit of support** – specific statements made were reference to: not including as time on program the time spent completing an education or training course; clients being allowed to ‘push a pause button’ to put program participation on hold for justifiable personal reasons; extending eligibility time for those making slow progress; being able to make other exceptions based on extenuating circumstances; only two Corrections personnel and five providers identified this as an improvement to the program, suggesting that lack of flexibility in the existing program is a relatively minor issue.

In summarising this rather extensive set of suggested improvements, it is apparent that there are three types of suggestions.

- **Expansion** – One type of suggestion refers to expansion and increase in the services already being provided to include more than the 17 pilot locations. Clearly, the program is considered valuable by those involved, both providers and CV personnel.
- **Non-employment Outcomes** – Another type of suggestion refers to renewing or enhancing recognition of non-employment outcomes including education and training outcomes, social outcomes, and micro-gains. The implication here is that the program is providing much more than the employment outcomes, and that this should be formally recognised.
- **“Sensitivities”** – The third type of suggestion refers to possible systemic program ‘sensitivities’, issues for constant attention really, that ought to be addressed to ensure healthy relations between the key stakeholders (management of the transition of clients from prison to community and management of relations between CSEPP and CV personnel and programs).

Congruity Between Program Model and Implementation Revisited

The analysis of specific program issues, to a large extent, supports the earlier general finding of congruity between program model and program implementation.

- **Employment Outcomes** – The major focus of attention within the program is on achieving employment outcomes, both in terms of day-to-day activities reported by interviewees and in terms of the focus on program targets.
- **Focus on Non-employment Activities** – Despite the absence of reporting and no specific rewards (contract-based remuneration) associated with non-employment activities, such as training courses and assistance with other support needs, there is evidence of a strong focus on such activities throughout the program.
- **Service Development** – There is also evidence of involvement in service development activities, not just employment placement and support. Involvement in such activities in the absence of reporting obligations suggests recognition on the part of providers of the importance of those activities and outcomes, and congruity between the program model and how it has been implemented.

3.5 Client Perspectives

3.5.1 Introduction

Client perspectives on the program are also very important. Although clients are not in a position to comment on broader issues related to the program (and this is often the case with social program evaluations), they are in a position to comment on point-of-contact aspects of the program. In this element of the process evaluation, we asked CSEPP clients what forms of assistance they had received and how helpful they considered that assistance to be. In doing so, we did not restrict participation to clients who had a set period of involvement in the program. Rather, we attempted to get a mix of clients who were ‘new’, 3 months, 6 months, and 9 months or more in the program. This was done to determine whether there were differences related to time in the program. We did restrict participation to clients currently located in the community because several of the questions referred to assistance in gaining and keeping employment as well as community reintegration assistance. Such questions would be irrelevant, inappropriate, and premature for pre-release prisoner clients.

3.5.2 Methodology

Participants

In addition to the interviews with CSEPP providers and managers and Corrections Victoria personnel, brief interviews/questionnaires were conducted with CSEPP clients as well. For this element of the evaluation, the sample comprised 66 clients, 29 of whom were registered as prisoners (43.9%) and 37 of whom were registered as community based offenders (56.1%). Overall, 28.8% were new offender clients, 24.2% had been registered with the CSEPP employment program for 3 months, 21.2% had been registered with the CSEPP employment program for 6 months, and 25.8% had been registered with the CSEPP employment program for 9 months or more. There was a wide variation in the clients’ CSEPP location, with clients from Ringwood

(25.8%), Morwell (18.2%), Geelong (18.2%), Hume (16.7%), Bendigo (7.6%), Sunshine (6%), Reservoir (1.5%), and Frankston (6.1%) participating in this element of the evaluation.

Structure and Content of the Client Interviews

The client interview/questionnaire comprised 19 questions. The initial four questions related to the CSEPP location, how long the client had been registered with CSEPP, whether they were first registered as a prisoner or as a community-based offender, and the CSEPP worker with whom they had been involved. There were nine questions regarding whether the client had received a particular type of assistance from their CSEPP worker including: general life or work skills training; résumé writing; job seeking; formal training (courses); interview preparation; material support (e.g., money for phone, transport, clothing); other financial assistance (e.g., money for food, emergency housing); assistance in linking to other services (e.g., housing, drug and alcohol counselling); and post-employment support.

In addition, clients were asked four questions in which they rated how helpful CSEPP had been for them in terms of: making changes to their lifestyle; preparing for employment; getting a job or keeping a job; and getting other forms of support that they needed. These four questions were rated on a 10 point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('not at all helpful') to 10 ('extremely helpful'). The final two questions were short answer questions in which clients were asked to identify the best things about CSEPP and what could be better about CSEPP. Interviews/questionnaires were completed by interview with researchers, by interview with CCOs, and by individuals completing the form unassisted as a questionnaire.

Analysis

Percent distributions were produced for the initial three background variables (excluding CSEPP worker with whom they had been involved) and the nine questions relating to the type of help received from the CSEPP worker. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the four questions in which the client was asked to rate how helpful (from 1 to 10) CSEPP had been in making changes to their lifestyle, preparing for employment, getting a job or keeping a job, and getting other forms of support that they needed.

3.5.3 Results of the Client Interviews

Clients were asked whether they had received assistance with general life or work skills training, résumé writing, job seeking, formal training (courses), interview preparation, material support, other financial assistance, assistance in linking to other services, and post-employment support. Table 10 shows the percent distribution of clients who received help in the nine areas for those clients registered as a prisoner and those registered as a community based offender. Clients were also asked to rate how helpful (from 1 to 10) CSEPP had been in making changes to their lifestyle, preparing for employment, getting a job or keeping a job, and getting other forms of support that they needed. Table 11 shows the mean and standard deviation of ratings for how helpful CSEPP had been in these four areas for those clients registered as a prisoner and those registered as a community based offender.

Table 10: Percentages of clients who received help.

Types of help received	% of Prison Clients	% of CCS Clients	Total
Résumé writing	79.3	78.4	78.8
Job seeking	69.0	78.4	74.2
General life or work skills training	53.6	67.6	61.5
Interview preparation	41.4	52.8	47.7
Material support	44.8	48.6	47.0
Post-employment support	36.4	44.0	40.4
Assistance linking to other services	37.9	35.1	36.4
Formal training (courses)	27.6	22.2	24.6
Other financial assistance	17.2	13.5	15.2

For five of the nine areas, a higher proportion of community corrections (offender) clients reported receiving that particular form of assistance than did prisoner clients. However, the percentages of each group reporting receipt of each type of assistance were quite similar; differences were generally less than 10 % in magnitude. The highest proportion of responses for both groups related to receiving help in résumé writing, with 78.8 % of clients interviewed indicating that they had received help in that area. Almost three-quarters of clients interviewed reported assistance with job seeking, and almost two-thirds reported assistance with general life or work skills training. The difference between the two groups was notable; more than two-thirds of offender clients and more than half of prisoner clients reported receiving general life or work skills training. Almost half of clients interviewed reported assistance with interview preparation. A similar result was reported for receipt of material support. The two types of assistance reported less frequently by both of the groups were for formal training (courses) and also for receipt of other financial assistance. These figures suggest that the largest proportion of assistance to clients was in relation to receipt of direct employment-related support. Training and other forms of assistance were somewhat less common. This makes sense, given the nature of the program. Also, it cannot be taken to imply unmet demand, rather, that a minority of clients sought formal training or post-placement support.

Table 11: Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) of ratings for how helpful CSEPP had been to clients.

Types of help received	Prison Clients	CCS Clients	Total
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Making changes to your lifestyle	5.3 (2.4)	6.3 (2.6)	5.9 (2.6)
Preparing for employment	5.6 (2.5)	5.9 (2.7)	5.8 (2.6)
Getting a job or keeping a job	5.5 (3.0)	5.5 (2.9)	5.5 (3.0)
Getting other forms of support	5.0 (2.7)	5.1 (3.1)	5.1 (2.9)

Ratings of how helpful CSEPP had been to clients in making changes to their lifestyle and in preparing them for employment suggest that the program was considered moderately helpful (on a scale of 1 to 10) by both the prisoner and offender groups. Ratings for how helpful CSEPP had been to them in getting or keeping a job and getting other forms of needed support were slightly lower, but still indicated that both groups viewed the program as moderately helpful in those areas. Differences between the two groups of clients were minimal, except in relation to help in making a lifestyle change, with offender clients rating the program more helpful than did prisoner clients. These ratings probably reflect the placement and outcome rates of the program which were relatively low due to the characteristics of the client group. Low placement and outcome rates

together with heightened expectations and possible impatience with slow progress could explain the just moderately positive client ratings. In any case, as we have pointed out above, client perspectives are by their nature restricted to personal point-of-contact.

3.6 Practical Issues Emerging from the Process Evaluation

Several specific issues have emerged from the process evaluation component of the CSEPP program evaluation. These issues have been identified primarily by analysis of the stakeholder interviews, considered in reference to existing literature, together with our knowledge of specialist employment services and the corrections system. For the most part, the issues that have been identified constitute references to: a need for ‘fine tuning’ a particular element of the program; a need for constant monitoring of an element that is, in fact, seen to be working well; or future development or expansion of the program. For the most part, they do not indicate shortcomings of the program itself or its delivery. These issues relate to:

- coherence of CSEPP and CV values and practices;
- outcomes-related issues;
- employer involvement in the program;
- expanding coverage efficiently;
- staffing and staff development;
- transition from prison to community; and
- tracking long-term success.

Each of these issues warrants further discussion because each impacts on program processes and program delivery. Several recommendations emerge from that discussion. Table 12 provides a basic description of each issue in terms of current conditions, impact of that issue on the program, suggested improvements to current conditions, and expected effects of the suggested changes.

Table 12: Issues emerging from the process evaluation.

Issue	Current Conditions	Suggested Improvement	Expected Effect of Improvement
Coherence of values and practices	Strong coherence between CSEPP and DOJ. A few points of conflict.	1. Discuss conflict issues at management level.	Improved coherence. Improved communication.
Outcomes-related issues	Employment outcomes are reported, but not training or other work-related outcomes. Micro-gains not reported.	2. Extend timeframe for outcomes. 3. Include reporting of micro-gains. 4. Report training/other outcomes.	Flexibility in achieving sustained employment. Better understanding of program by CV. Better coherence with program model. Role clarity for ECs.
Employer involvement in the program	Apart from jobs fairs, minimal direct employer involvement in program.	5. Revise the program logic and design.	Better coherence with program model. More clarity of provider roles with employers.
Expanding coverage efficiently	Considered a good program with limited coverage across the state. Location constraints on registering prisoners. Limited options for transfer when relocating.	6. State-wide expansion of the program. 7. Expand the involvement of the Job Futures Consortium. 8. New provider screening and provider network. 9. Provide outlet coverage at regional centre locations. 10. Address the distance issue with satellites and use of 'rovers'.	Increased options for referrals. More opportunities to take on new clients. Equity in services across the state. Increased employment and other reintegration outcomes. Reduced re-offending state wide (current program is achieving this).
Staffing and staff development	Moderately high turnover among consultants (low job security with short term contract and lack of assurance of renewal). Moderately high turnover among CCOs as well. Providers also now have a better profile of the type of staff required.	11. Implement CSEPP induction training. 12. Provide peer support meetings. 13. Employ local residents as providers. 14. Implement three-year funding contracts.	More stable workforce. Better job satisfaction. Improved standard of service to clients. Improved performance in relation to targets. Improved relations between CSEPP and CV.
Transition from prison to community	Clients can get lost upon release from prison. Potential for duplication of support. Clients leaving program upon release.	15. Documentation of processes and procedures and standardising adherence to best practice in transition.	Improved program participation post-release. Increased outcomes for prisoner clients. Improved standard of service.
Tracking long-term success	Lack understanding of what makes success. Lack understanding of lasting program effects.	16. Further research on reintegration.	Improved policies. Improved program development. Improved program delivery.

3.6.1 Coherence of CSEPP and CV Values and Practices

Overall, the evaluation has identified that there is a great deal of coherence between the values and practices of CSEPP providers and Corrections Victoria personnel. Generally speaking, beliefs in rehabilitation and reintegration are strong among both groups. Focus on client development, proactive planning and individualised interventions is integral to CSEPP and to programs offered within Corrections Victoria as well. In most cases, interviewees from both stakeholder groups reported relations between the groups to be very positive. Indeed, the interviews have only identified one area of potential values conflict.

The high priority placed by Corrections Victoria on developing honesty among clients can contribute to potential conflict between CSEPP providers and CV personnel. As described by interviewees, there is a formally stated high priority on disclosure of criminal record to prospective employers by DOJ centrally and CCOs locally, while CSEPP providers are reluctant to advise clients to disclose criminal history to employers. In fact, one element of the program logic and design presupposes disclosure; that is the active participation of employers in CSEPP activities. Several CSEPP providers have expressed the view that employer and community attitudes are so negative generally, that disclosure will invariably result in failure to get the job.

It is a complex issue. Clients have a right to not disclose. If advocating with an employer on behalf of a client, an employment consultant has an obligation to the client to maintain any confidences requested by the client as part of a right to privacy, but also has a duty of care to inform the employer of any risks. One solution that has been reported widely is for providers to refrain from direct advocacy on behalf of clients, leaving the issue in the hands of the clients. Such an approach may resolve a dilemma for employment consultants in relation to obligations to employers and job seekers, but it does not really resolve the issue of values differences. However, that approach avoids the issue of trying to change employers' attitudes through direct interaction, which is one of the main program objectives expressed in the operating principles.

A related issue pertains to disclosures of breaches such as claiming all earnings in the case of a client registered with Centrelink. There is a reported high priority within Corrections Victoria on having clients report all income earned as part of developing honesty among their clients. On the other hand, CSEPP providers may be reluctant to advise clients to disclose such earnings and may be reluctant to report clients who do not report all earnings (due to loss of trust, breach of confidentiality, and possible severe financial repercussions for the client if short-term earnings result in long-term loss of benefits).

Suggested Improvement

1 – Discuss Issues of Values Differences and Potential Conflict Issues at Management Level

In situations where there is potential for values differences and friction between providers and CV/DOJ personnel, the issue should be discussed fully at management level to the point of formal and agreed resolution. Such discussion have taken place, With respect to the issue of disclosure to employers, open discussion should be conducted and possibly third-party advice sought in clarifying a program policy on the issue. With respect to reporting of disclosure of breaches, a similar process should be adopted. With respect to reporting cash-in-hand and all other earnings, negotiating some kind of 'special conditions' with Centrelink that allow cash-in-hand income for a set period may be a possibility. In any case, a formal position on issues such as these agreed by Corrections Victoria and CSEPP providers should be a program management objective.

3.6.2 Outcomes-related Issues

There has been a good deal of discussion by interviewees in relation to outcomes-related issues. Although employment consultants and provider managers have been more vocal about focus on outcomes, Corrections Victoria locations personnel have also discussed the same issues. The outcome focus of the program is considered to be a very strong feature, in that there is virtually complete agreement. The issues for discussion are of a more specific nature. The casualisation of the workforce generally, and of unskilled labour specifically, has led to low availability of continuing positions for low skill and unskilled labourers. Short-term jobs can lead to résumé building and to ongoing work, if an employer is impressed. With respect to CSEPP outcomes, it is worth considering outcomes that are equivalent to continuous employment over 13 weeks (perhaps 18 or 20 weeks total employment over a 26 week period as one possibility) as an additional long-term employment outcome.

There have also been suggestions by interviewees for greater recognition within the program of education and training outcomes, work experience and volunteer work, completion of short courses, and achievement of social outcomes. It is important to note that such outcomes are part of the program model (logic and design), and are enunciated through the original tender brief for CSEPP, in other CSEPP documents, and in the evaluation brief. In that sense, there is a strong emphasis by the Department on non-employment outcomes as well as employment outcomes. Those documents also emphasise the need to stay focused on small incremental steps toward success in employment and in reintegration as a whole. Interviewees have suggested formally recording and reporting non-employment outcomes and micro-gains. Such a step would help legitimise that element of the program and keep providers and Corrections Victoria personnel (including management) focused on the broader goals of the program, reduced recidivism and enhanced community reintegration.

Suggested Improvements

2 – Extend the Timeframe for Achieving Outcomes

The time frame for achieving and reporting employment outcomes should be extended. Two options for achieving validations should be offered. In addition to the existing 13 weeks of continuous employment, the suggestion of 20 weeks over a 26 week period should be adopted. This would provide greater flexibility and acknowledge the tendency to begin an employment history with shorter-term jobs. We consider 20 of 26 weeks to be a definite indicator of sustained employment because 20 weeks constitutes more than 75% of the time frame and the employment would be sustained over a time frame twice that of 13 weeks.

3 – Include Reporting of Micro-gains in Employment

Micro-gains in employment should be included in the reporting schedule, including completion of résumé, number of applications completed, and number of interviews attended. Such apparently small steps are, nevertheless, important to client development and progress, as well as being generally labour intensive for consultants.

4 – Report Non-employment Outcomes

Non-employment outcomes should be included in the reporting schedule, including courses completed, licences gained, and work-related skills training completed. Such outcomes contribute to an individual's employability, and the investment by the employment consultant in assisting a client through to course completion can be significant.

3.6.3 Employer Involvement in the Program

In the program model (its logic and design), in the original tender brief, and in the evaluation brief describing the program, a strong emphasis was placed on engaging employers in the process of ex-prisoner and offender employment. Employer involvement was intended to include promotion of CSEPP among individual employers and employer groups, working toward attitude change among employers, provision of direct support to employers who employ CSEPP clients (relationship building through regular contact visits before and after placement), and, where possible, engaging employers in information sessions with clients to develop their job-seeking skills.

As the program has been implemented, it is apparent that very little direct employer involvement has occurred, apart from provision of direct support in cases where the employer has been informed of the employee's history, and the conduct of the annual job fairs by the consortium. This low level of employer involvement in the program is undoubtedly related, to some extent, to the perceived strong negative employer attitudes toward employing an ex-prisoner or offender and the reluctance to disclose criminal history that have already been discussed. It is probably also related to the workload of employment consultants. The need for regular direct contact with clients, travel time, and record-keeping and reporting requirements together create high workloads for employment consultants. Of course, it is also related to the workload and priorities of employers. Although perhaps willing to hire someone, very few are in a position to commit time outside of running their business (including HR managers of larger firms). If employer involvement has become a secondary priority, that is not surprising.

The job fairs that have been held provide examples of engaging employers in the process in a direct and productive way. As described, the job fairs have exposed employers to prisoners (and vice versa), engaged them in mock interviews that provided some training to prisoners, and provided an opportunity for employer education aimed toward developing more positive attitudes. Several interviewees identified intentions to conduct job fairs in other locations in the future. The Lives in Transition program and the preliminary work at Barwon prison in which ACSO has been involved and has driven are aimed at employer involvement and building partnership a between a large employer and the prison in terms of preparation of prisoners for employment. These are other examples of employer involvement in the program. Creating opportunities to involve employers through special events and projects is an excellent strategy, probably much more effective than trying to enlist individual employers to deliver an information session or restricting involvement to one-on-one activities only.

Suggested Improvement

5 – Revise the Program Logic and Design

The program logic and design should be revised in relation to employer involvement in the program. Employer education/attitude change should be seen as a longer-term objective and one best dealt with on a system level as well as on the individual level. Individual change will produce slow system change. The challenge of employer education and attitude change should be approached from the system level because that can produce more rapid pervasive change in attitudes. Employer participation in CSEPP should be a secondary objective with an expectation of incremental increases. Start with events like the Loddon job fair and Barwon prison projects, and any individual employers who may be in a position to contribute. CSEPP providers can provide ‘success stories of employer participation’ to Corrections Victoria for use in promotion, but it would be better for Corrections Victoria to make employer participation a government objective, by setting some moderate program targets for employer participation. Employer peak bodies such as ACCI, VECCI, and BCA as supporters and advocates should also be engaged.

3.6.4 Expanding Coverage Efficiently and Effectively

Several interviewees, both providers and CV personnel, suggested expansion of the program. As described above, different means have been suggested, and some interviewees have suggested more than one approach to expansion. The various suggestions include expanding the program to cover all of Victoria, expanding to all metropolitan locations and all regional centres, adding satellites to the locations already serviced, and utilising ‘nomads’ or ‘rovers’ (employment consultants who would cover a wide geographical area where population density is low and no location offices exist) to reach locations not covered. Where possible, prison-located CSEPP clients are already being encouraged to relocate to a location where the program is offered, an approach that may provide individual solutions, but does not address the issue of sporadic coverage of the state. Indeed, to date only a small proportion of prison and CCS locations are included in the program. Given the outcomes reported in this report (see Section 4 for evidence of solid employment outcomes and reduced re-offending rates) and the major recommendations in this report, we believe that continuation of the program is warranted. It would follow that expansion of the program was not only sound strategically, but advisable in terms of equity as well.

If the program were to be expanded, the questions then would become who should be contracted and how should the expansion be implemented. Suggestions from interviewees have included introducing more providers and expanding the scope of the existing providers. It is our view that the providers with a strong background and long history of social welfare, particularly working within the corrections area or with offenders, have performed quite well in the program thus far. Those organisations appear to have picked up the employment support knowledge quite easily and are able to refer clients more easily and effectively to other relevant services. At the same time, having local networks and local knowledge also appears to be associated with success in delivering the program, so expansion should include providers with those attributes.

Suggested Improvements

6 – State-wide Expansion of the Program

On the basis of the program's success in achieving employment outcomes and reduced rates of re-offending (see results in following section), it is suggested that the program be expanded across the entire state. A combination of service models is suggested for the expansion of the program. Consortium involvement in overseeing the expansion is suggested, with local service models reflecting local conditions.

7 – Expand the Involvement of Current Providers

In expanding the program, the current providers should be given the opportunity to expand their involvement. As a large provider, the Job Futures consortium has developed a culture that fits program objectives very well and a way of managing and working that is effective across provider members and several locations.

8 – Provide Quality Assurance in Terms of Providers

If introducing another consortium or independent multi-location provider, it should be determined that consortium/provider candidates are well-resourced and skilled to deliver in this highly specialised area. Expansion should be accompanied by formation of a provider network similar to the current consortium peer support network.

9 – Provide Outlet Coverage at Regional Centre Locations

Outlet coverage should be provided at locations within all regional centres. The model that focuses on essentially one geographical area for a provider can also work quite well. It better ensures coverage in a particular location, and is built and maintained on local networks and knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure truly local providers are contracted.

10 – Address Distance with Satellites and Use of 'Rovers'

Satellites should be added to the locations already serviced and any new ones of large enough size, in addition to utilising 'rovers' in attempting to reach locations not covered by outlets of their own.

3.6.5 Staffing and Staff Development

There are a few issues that are extremely critical to the success of the program, none more so than getting and keeping effective employment consultants. Interviewees identified a long list of skills and characteristics considered important to being an effective consultant. Staffing is an ongoing issue, in that turnover has been high over the two year pilot. From the beginning of the pilot program, there has been no standard induction training program. There also is no existing pool of specifically trained staff. Clearly, the ideal background is a mix of corrections and employment support experience; however, most staff have come with one or the other.

Within the consortium, the peer support meetings and the context of peer support have been used to support training and development of staff. Those with a strong corrections background provide that input into the peer development process, and those with employment support expertise provide that input. The intention is to develop a well-rounded worker. Even so, development of standard induction training would be useful, particularly if the program is to expand in the future to cover more locations. Within ACSO, the balance has been achieved, in that there is a strong employment background, but staff have experience in social welfare as well as corrections experience.

The other staff group important to the success of CSEPP is Corrections Victoria location personnel. There are some issues that impact on CSEPP. Turnover is high across the system for Community Corrections Officers (less so for prison location programs personnel). CCOs are critical to CSEPP, in that they provide the largest number of referrals of clients. With high turnover of CCOs, employment consultants need to regularly familiarise them with CSEPP and the referral process. New CCOs must meet, become familiar with, build rapport, and otherwise service their clients. They also need to learn the culture of the workplace. They also need to become knowledgeable about various programs and support services to which they will be referring clients and build networks of relations with those programs and services. Without regular contact and attention from the employment consultant, CSEPP may become just another program.

According to interviewees (both CSEPP providers and CV personnel), relatively low pay, high caseload, and low satisfaction are general characteristics of the CCO position. Nevertheless, interviewees have reported extremely different turnover rates across locations. One advantage to CSEPP has been that, at this point, at least five of the seventeen CSEPP employment consultants are former CCOs who have come to CSEPP over the course of the pilot. So, although it is fairly costly to maintain a healthy level of CCO knowledge of the program, the program has benefited from inclusion of CCOs who have a wealth of corrections and offender knowledge. Staffing within Corrections Victoria is a continuing issue for CSEPP however, because general ability to conduct the program, as well as receipt of referrals which is critical to program success, is dependent upon building and maintaining good relations with CV personnel.

Suggested Improvements

11 – Implement CSEPP Induction Training

For CSEPP staff, we suggest that CSEPP induction training be implemented aimed at developing the knowledge and skills described by interviewees as essential to effective employment assistance for this client group. All new staff, regardless of provider should complete induction training to reduce the productivity loss associated with appointing a new staff person. Currently, induction training is provided by the consortium to new staff, and ACSO has had no turnover. With an expanded future program, we believe that induction training should be mandated.

12 – Provide Peer Support Meetings

Peer support meetings should be provided to CSEPP staff across the whole program (across providers). This, to some degree, implies program expansion across the state, but is recommended even without expansion or with moderate expansion. In our view, peer support is an important element of the program's success.

13 – Employ Local Residents as Providers

Local residents should be employed whenever possible because local workers are more likely to stay. With strong local networks, they are more likely to be successful, and significant travel is often not attractive. Finally, more job security would result from more security to the CSEPP contract. At the point of writing, both providers have adopted this approach. Again, in an expanded future program, we believe that use of local residents should be considered an essential element.

14 – Implement Three-Year Funding Contracts

Three-year contracts should be offered to CSEPP providers, consistent with the Job Network system. The three year contract is really an industry standard for employment services and should be adopted because it would provide greater job security for consultants and reduce any threat of them being attracted to mainstream employment service providers.

3.6.6 Transition from Prison to Community

Several issues related to post-release transition to community life for prisoner clients have been identified by interviewees. There is a recognised tendency to ‘get lost’ by not contacting the community employment consultant (CEC) upon release and not residing at the predetermined location for any number of reasons. In particular, the two to three week period immediately post-release is considered a time of risk of disengagement from the program. It has already been noted that one prison employment consultant has been following up on post-release prisoner clients to ensure contact with the appropriate CEC, and that this is reported to be working quite well. Also, several CECs go to prison locations to meet clients who are being referred to them upon release, in order to begin the rapport and trust building part of the process, thereby making transition easier and contact more likely to occur. Of course it is standard practice that the PEC transfers records of progress to the appropriate CEC when a client is being released and referred to that CEC. This too facilitates successful transition.

It is reasonable to consider recently released prisoners to be the clients who are most vulnerable to re-offending, if only because we know that a large proportion of ex-prisoners who do re-offend do so in the first three months post-release, and that personal resources and community networks are least developed for that group of clients at that time. Therefore, not only to ensure a quality program and the best possible support for individual clients, but also to be more effective in reducing recidivism, it is important to focus on the critical period of transition and invest extra resources, if necessary, to ensure transition from prison to community is successful. An analysis of the rate of progression through the program associated with transition from prison to community CSEPP locations was conducted in the Outcomes Evaluation (Section 4 of this report) in terms of the rates of conversion/progression from registration to placement and registration to 13 week outcome. In that analysis, progression was found to be lower (attrition higher) for prisoner clients, indicating possible heightened vulnerability in transition for prisoner clients. However, transition has been an object of continuing attention by providers and has been addressed by a practice of continuous contact, establishment of PECs and CECs (prison employment consultants and community employment consultants), and establishment of the transition consultant in the case of the consortium. The lower employment placement and 13 week outcome rates for prisoner clients in the community, may also reflect a greater need for employment and other forms of assistance and signal a need for continuing extra support.

Suggested Improvement

15 – Documentation and Application of Transition Processes and Procedures

The processes and procedures that have been developed and used to date relating to transition from prison to community locations should be formally documented and steps taken to ensure that they are consistently applied across all locations. This appears to be well-managed now through continuity of contact and use of the specialist consultants (PECs, CECs, and transition consultant). The suggestion refers to maintenance of quality assurance and to future expansion of the program.

3.6.7 Reintegration: Tracking Long-term Success

Successful reintegration into the community for ex-prisoners and offenders is, of course, much more comprehensive than gaining or even sustaining employment. There is a clear overlap between employment and reintegration, but not a one-to-one correspondence. A logical, but by no means yet demonstrated relationship is that employment either leads to, or is associated with, desistance from crime. That is only true in some cases of course. For individuals who do succeed in reintegration, it is reasonable to expect that employment will be associated at least with desistance from crime. It is also logical to suggest that employment plus desistance from crime will lead to greater success in real reintegration into the community in terms of housing stability, health and healthy lifestyle, health of social networks and environments, and material and financial stability and well-being.

There are, and probably will continue to be, difficulties in conducting research into successful reintegration. Ex-prisoners and offenders who succeed in reintegrating into the community tend to disappear. This is not surprising. Having ‘survived’ a career (long or short) in the criminal justice system, one is not likely to want to step forward and be identified as such. Research into successful recovery from mental illness has proven difficult for the same reasons. Research volunteers do not often step forward. People with an intellectual disability who have moved into the community likewise prefer anonymity to any publicity, including involvement in research into how and how well they have succeeded. With respect to those who disappear, we do not know what proportion live socially marginalised lives in deprived material conditions and what proportion achieve the kind of authentic reintegration described above.

Those who ‘fail’ at reintegration tend to reappear in the criminal justice system. They re-offend, often sooner rather than later. However, hardly ever has any debriefing or research been reported that focuses on their experiences post-release leading up to their re-incarceration, or about their perceptions of why they failed. In order to understand the process of reintegration and to assist ex-prisoners and offenders in that process, we need to conduct research that attempts to follow those who are succeeding in the community in a longitudinal research design that covers probably several years of follow up. We also need to conduct research with those who have re-offended to determine the objective conditions and subjective perceptions associated with re-offending; not in a broad sense, but with specific reference to the reintegration process. Elements of this evaluation will provide some insights and suggestions, but comprehensive purpose-specific research is required. Finally, because the support needs of the client group are so comprehensive and the disadvantage so great, it is important to focus intervention on the level of reintegration as a whole and not only on employment as a solution to the problem of offence and re-offending.

Suggested Improvement

16 – Funding Further Research on Reintegration

The Department should fund a comprehensive study of determinants of success and ‘failure’ in reintegration. The Indirect Gains Evaluation described in Section 4 of this report begins the exercise and goes some way toward investigating the ‘big pieces’ of the reintegration puzzle: health; housing; employment and training; finances; social network; substance use; and further criminal justice involvement. A large-scale longitudinal study is needed to advance understanding to the point of identification of determinants and interventions, and the extent to which those interventions might promote success and prevent ‘failure’ (re-offending, escalation, chronicity, etc.).

3.7 Process Evaluation Summary and Conclusions

The process evaluation has focused on the program model, the operating context, provider service models, location delivery models, program-wide issues, best features, and possible improvements to the program. In terms of both the structures and processes associated with CSEPP, results have been very positive. In addition to the judgment that the program’s structures and processes are fundamentally sound, much can be learned about continuing improvement and future development of the program and its management. This section provides a summary of results and a brief concluding statement.

3.7.1 The Program Model

The program model is fundamentally sound, in that it is consistent with relevant literature on reintegration, reintegration programs, employment of ex-prisoners and offenders, and specialist employment services. The program model is also consistent with the ethos and emerging policy within Corrections Victoria. There is also a great deal of internal consistency between the logic and the design of the program.

- The international and Australian literature on employment assistance for ex-prisoners and offenders, particularly the literature on specialist employment services, as well as the literature on support needs that suggests comprehensive and intensive support is necessary, are all consistent with the program logic and design.
- The program logic and design are consistent with the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*.
- For the most part, there is a good match between the assumptions underlying the program (its logic) and design features as well.

The fundamental soundness of the program model notwithstanding, a few revisions to the program model are suggested.

- The nature and extent of employer involvement in the program should be re-examined and redefined in relation to the observations made. In redefining employer involvement, the issue of disclosure should be addressed and clarified in the program model itself.
- The definition of “outcomes” should be expanded to include one or more alternatives to a 13-week continuous employment outcome as a measure of sustained employment. Sustained placement (13 weeks) into volunteer and work experience positions should be acknowledged as an outcome as well; not an employment outcome, but an outcome that undoubtedly contributes to reduced recidivism. Also, education and training course outcomes of a substantial nature (say 6 months duration) should be considered as non-employment outcomes of the program.
- The definition of the target group should be expanded to include all prisoners and offenders in need and who volunteer for employment assistance through the program. Alternatively, target groups should be identified on a location-specific basis.
- The case management approach should be expanded to include development of an Individual Program Plan for each client. Individual Program Plans should include strategies and objectives for employment outcomes, education and training outcomes, and non-employment outcomes including changes to lifestyle (such as alcohol and drug treatment, personal counselling, mental health service, medical treatment, etc.) and material conditions (such housing and finance management).

In any case, the short-comings that we perceive are quite specific and not fundamental to the program model or program operation. Overall, we consider the program logic and design quite strong in terms of coherence.

3.7.2 Operating Context

The pilot program has been conducted within a context of profound change to Corrections Victoria, as well as the predictable uncertainties of any new program. Together, these conditions have contributed to a great deal of disruption that undoubtedly impacted negatively on the program’s performance. By the end of the first two years, stability has been achieved.

- CSEPP began in July, 2002. Establishment involved appointing staff, purchasing equipment, and setting up offices occupied a good deal of time in the first few months. By August, some locations were operational. By December of 2002, six months into the program, CSEPP was fully operational, if somewhat behind targets.
- The early part of 2003 was rather uneventful, with CSEPP building momentum as employment consultants continued to develop their knowledge of their clients and of effective employment assistance practices for the particular client group. For Job Futures, the consortium began to mature as management structures were bedded down. ACSO worked closely with the Geelong CCS and was achieving outcomes above target.
- On July 1, 2003, the restructure of Corrections and formation of Corrections Victoria became official. Over the succeeding months, two senior managers and the project manager responsible for the program resigned and were replaced, creating discontinuity of contact with providers which persisted for several months.

- From November of 2003 through part of February of 2004, the whole program was affected by work bans that were imposed as part of a prolonged industrial action. As part of the work bans, CSEPP consultants did not (in most cases) receive referrals.
- Between March and end of May of 2004, referrals recommenced, once work bans were removed. However, staff turnover and rising anxiety among providers became serious issues as the end of the two-year pilot approached with no word of contract extensions.
- By early June of 2004, nearing the conclusion of the two-year contract, providers received an assurance of another year of funding. Contract extensions followed.
- Between July and end of October of 2004, CSEPP has been able to function without any disruptions and has been performing well above target rates.

3.7.3 Service Models

The two providers have developed different service models. There are also variations in delivery models across locations. Some variations are to be expected in relation to context variations. Based on outcomes achieved, it is clear that both models are ‘roadworthy’.

The Consortium Model

The Job Futures model is one of multiple providers operating and being managed within a consortium that includes The Brosnan Centre, The Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, Djerriwarrh Employment, The Education Centre, Employment Focus, Melbourne Citymission, VACRO, and Youth Projects. An additional member went out of business during the pilot. Their locations have been covered by the consortium. Most of the member organisations are not simply employment service providers, but more comprehensive social welfare organisations that provide a range of services relevant to the client group and have wide service networks.

- The CSEPP program is project managed for the consortium by a Job Futures manager, assisted by a small executive group and a steering group of all member managers. A peer support group of employment consultants meets regularly for training, information exchange and mutual support. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) further consolidate the consortium.
- Delivery of the program at locations is structured in terms of two types of employment consultant. Prison employment consultants work within prison locations to register clients pre-release and assist them in preparing for release and employment following release. They also work with community employment consultants in the transfer of prison clients to the community locations of CSEPP. Community employment consultants provide employment-related assistance to released prisoners and community located offenders.
- There is a strong emphasis within the consortium on assisting prison clients (more than half of their client population has been prison clients throughout the pilot).
- In addition to direct employment assistance, the consortium has staged job fairs as a means of engaging and educating employers with the program.
- The consortium has also moved staff and resources between locations to cover emergent needs from time to time.

- The consortium model is a ‘momentum-building’ model. There was an early investment in developing relationships, structures, and processes before pursuit of target outcomes commenced in earnest. As such, this model has a strong medium to longer term focus.

The Single Provider Model

The ACSO model is based on there being one provider in one geographical area (Geelong area). As such, there is no need for a complex administrative structure. However, ACSO, like most of the other provider organisations is not simply an employment service provider, but a comprehensive social welfare organisation that provides a range of services relevant to the client group.

- There is a manager who has a direct service role, plus two staff. One staff person, together with the manager, covers the two locations (Geelong CCS and Barwon Prison), while the other staff person provides community located client support, pre and post placement. That staff member, together with the manager, markets the program with employers.
- ACSO does not use the PEC-CEC model; rather one consultant works with a client throughout the process, and the work is more or less location-specific.
- The ACSO model is more a ‘rocket launching’ model than a momentum-building one with two complementary elements. One has a short-term focus of achieving employment placements and 13 week outcomes with a minimum of lead time. The other has a longer term focus of community-building and partnership-building activities, intended to contribute to employment and non-employment outcomes for clients on a larger scale over time. The community and partnership building activities are the ‘platform’ from which future employment and reintegration outcomes initiatives can be launched.
- Early activity included strenuous pursuit of outcomes within the CCS location which produced excellent results. That activity was accompanied by efforts to develop and bed down relationships, structures, and processes both at the CCS and prison locations.
- In the past 18 months, attention to achieving employment outcomes through preparatory work with prisoners has expanded. ACSO has also undertaken considerable development activity within the prison context, aimed at building partnerships with the prison and with employer organisations on prison-related projects in addition to the broader community involvements.
- Even with these commitments, ACSO has sustained performance above their target throughout the duration of the pilot. This shows the effectiveness of their model both in the short term and on an ongoing basis.

Although there may not be one “ideal” service model, there are a few superordinate conditions that must be built into all service models for them to reflect what we consider to be best practice.

- Connectedness among providers.
- Multiple locations covered by each provider.
- Holistic approach.
- A prisoner/offender friendly culture with equal measures of employment and social welfare values among.
- Management structures and processes that support clients and employment.
- Momentum-building as the underlying strategy.

3.7.4 Location Delivery Models

Location delivery models also differ across locations. However, it is possible to identify characteristics that have contributed to both smooth operations and solid outcomes. Within the prison locations, there are some “best” or preferred practices.

- The consultant should be a local resident rather than a long distance commuter. It is not only a matter of driving time; a local person shares some sense of community and culture with prison personnel and is aware of local issues. They are also aware of local employment conditions for clients who are going to settle locally upon release.
- The consultant should have a designated location within the prison, preferably in the programs unit which is associated with support. A designated place promotes client contact.
- The consultant should also maintain a high profile within the prison for the same reason. Involvement in prison programs and offering training are other preferred approaches to service.
- Finally, the transition employment consultant role created by Melbourne Citymission has been very successful. We consider that to be an example of preferred practice as well. Expanding that role with other consultants throughout the program would be good.

Within the CCS locations, there are a number of identified “best” or preferred practices.

- Being integrated into the CCS location whenever possible. Locations where this has been implemented have been very successful in the pilot program.
- Having a local consultant rather than delivering service from a distance. Local people have local knowledge and local networks. They have familiarity with local issues. These provide a huge advantage.
- Applying a team approach to delivery as opposed to the lone consultant is a definite advantage, if it can be managed.

- It is important to ensure that consultants have well-developed knowledge and skills in relation to the client group, the corrections environment, and provision of employment assistance.
- It is much easier for staff with a corrections background to develop employment assistance skills and knowledge than for employment services staff to develop corrections knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is an advantage to have staff with a corrections background. (There are notable exceptions to this however.) It is also important to provide ‘cross-fertilisation’ through such opportunities as the peer support meetings that are held.

3.7.5 Program-wide Issues

Consultants and Clients

Employment consultants are the direct providers. Getting and keeping effective staff was an early, and is a continuing, priority. A comprehensive set of diverse skills is required to be effective. Consideration of broader context issues as well leads to a suggestion that having local knowledge and a local network is a definite advantage, if not a necessity.

- More than half of Corrections Victoria personnel and almost two-thirds of providers identified knowledge of the client group as important to being an effective employment consultant.
- Ability to build rapport and trust was identified by more than half of Corrections Victoria personnel and half of providers.
- Approximately one-quarter of both groups identified being honest and not making unrealistic promises as important.
- The two groups exhibited fairly similar views on the importance of ability to engage employers, being supportive but not gullible, patience and persistence, and strong boundary maintenance.

Consistent with what has been well-established in the literature, employment consultants, provider managers, and Corrections Victoria location personnel interviewed described the client group as typically having comprehensive and intensive support needs. Every interviewee commented that in addition to the condition of having a criminal record making this group the most discriminated against and most difficult to place into employment, there are several other characteristics that make obtaining and maintaining employment difficult. The most frequently identified client support needs were in relation to:

- History of drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Instability of housing/accommodation
- History of socio-economic disadvantage
- Low level of education
- Little or no work history.

There were several striking differences in the client characteristics and support needs identified by Corrections Victoria personnel and providers. Corrections personnel much more frequently identified problematic features of the client group. Twice or more than twice as many Corrections personnel identified each of the client characteristics listed than did providers, except in relation to instability of accommodation/housing and history of socio-economic disadvantage. Still, more than two-thirds of Corrections personnel and less than half of providers identified instability of accommodation/housing as common to the client group. Slightly less than half of both groups identified history of socio-economic disadvantage.

Central Management Issues and Conditions

There are also several issues and conditions at program management level. More specifically, there were general management issues and conditions raised by Corrections Victoria interviewees and provider interviewees.

- **Limitations to data management and reporting** – PIMS is described as ‘not user friendly’, outdated as a technology, and providing unreliable information. Reporting does not allow for recording of qualitative outcomes and so-called micro-gains.
- **Staffing issues within both CSEPP provider organisations and CV** – Turnover has been high within CSEPP and is moderate to very high, among CCOs in Corrections Victoria. There is a constant need to educate new locations personnel about the program and regular need to induct new consultants. There is disparity in pay and working conditions between CSEPP providers and CCOs. CSEPP providers reported contract and job insecurity for several months as the term of the contract approached.
- **Issues related to the interface between CSEPP and Corrections Victoria** – There is a need for constant communication between providers and location personnel and questions about reporting requirements in terms of involvement with CV clients who are also CSEPP clients. There have been instances of some conflict over differences in values (mainly in relation to maintaining confidentiality, reporting of income, disclosure to employers and others).

Issues and conditions related to management of the program by the Department of Justice were also identified.

- **Department staff could be more directly involved in the program.** More regular direct contact should occur through visits, greater knowledge of CSEPP by Department managers demonstrated in interactions, and more hands-on administration of contract and conditions.
- **Better (more) information could and should be provided about changes to the structures and management of Corrections Victoria.** Improved communication is advised, especially on changes affecting operations of locations and the CSEPP.
- **Much more content and regularity of feedback to providers.** Feedback should be provided on Department perceptions of CSEPP performance and relative acceptance of the program within the Department.
- **More regular feedback on outcomes should be provided.** Reports from the Department should be provided to the providers, with location specific outcomes being provided on a regular (monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly basis).

- **Impact of CV staff turnover on CSEPP delivery.** In relation to several CCSs, turnover of CCOs has been reported as high, though highly variable across locations. This is recognised as an ongoing issue for the Department. Although CV staff turnover is not the focus of this evaluation, stability in the CCO workforce does have an impact on the delivery of programs at locations with high turnover due to the need to regularly engage in educating new CCS staff about the program and to regularly develop new working relationships.

Best Features of the Program

Several ‘best features’ of the program have been suggested. Those most frequently cited are included.

- Case management approach.
- For prisoners, post-release continuity of contact.
- Accessibility of the program.
- Ability to network and link clients into other programs.
- Level and type of resourcing.
- Committed staff.
- Specialist nature of the program.
- Non-prejudicial nature of the program.
- Voluntary nature of the program.
- Incremental approach taken.

Suggested Improvements

There was an extensive set of suggested improvements to the program. However, the most frequent suggestions were for “more” of the program, reflected in the suggestions about expansion. In all there are three types of suggestions that have been made.

- **Expansion** – expansion and increase in the services already being provided to include more than the 17 pilot locations, longer duration, broader target group. Clearly, the program is considered valuable by those involved, both providers and CV personnel.
- **Non-employment Outcomes** – enhancing recognition of non-employment outcomes including education and training outcomes, social outcomes, and micro-gains.
- **“Sensitivities”** – communication issues really, that ought to be addressed to ensure healthy relations between the key stakeholders (management of relations between CSEPP and CV personnel and programs).

3.7.6 Concluding Statement on Program Structures and Processes

This process evaluation has investigated the CSEPP program model, program management by Corrections Victoria, and program management and delivery by contracted providers. After more than two years of the pilot program, the structures and processes are well-established and the program is generally well-tuned and running smoothly. Our analysis of the program model has found that it is fundamentally sound and, in our view, would benefit from only a few minor revisions at this point. The pilot period has been characterised by a great deal of disruption to operating conditions, but the program has essentially remained on track. The providers have focused on continually improving the structures, processes, and procedures to improve the integrity of the program and program performance. They have also initiated several service developments as the program has evolved.

Program management by the Department of Justice has been less than ideal, largely due to the restructure of Corrections Victoria at mid-point in the pilot program. This was followed by turnover of several key management personnel. Department—provider relations are being re-established. The need for active working relations with providers is recognised by current key management personnel involved with the program and was raised by several locations personnel and provider interviewees. This is important because there is a definite need for close collaboration between the Department and providers in programs such as CSEPP. Active involvement in program management should be further developed and built into the culture and operational plans of the Department in relation to its contract management.

At this point in time, the program is operating very smoothly from a delivery perspective. Although the two providers have operated very different service models, both have been effective, managing the process of employment assistance to high risk clients with intensive support needs and achieving impressive outcomes (see Section 4). Management and delivery structures and processes are very effective. The active emphasis on continuous improvement suggests that they will become even more effective. The figure below presents a conceptual model of the recommended structures and processes of the program as it is developed further in the future. The upper section contains a conceptual model of program development, and the lower section contains a conceptual model of location development and delivery. It is apparent from the content that it is based on what is known from existing research, what is already part of the successful pilot program, and what is recognised as needed to further improve conditions within which the program operates.

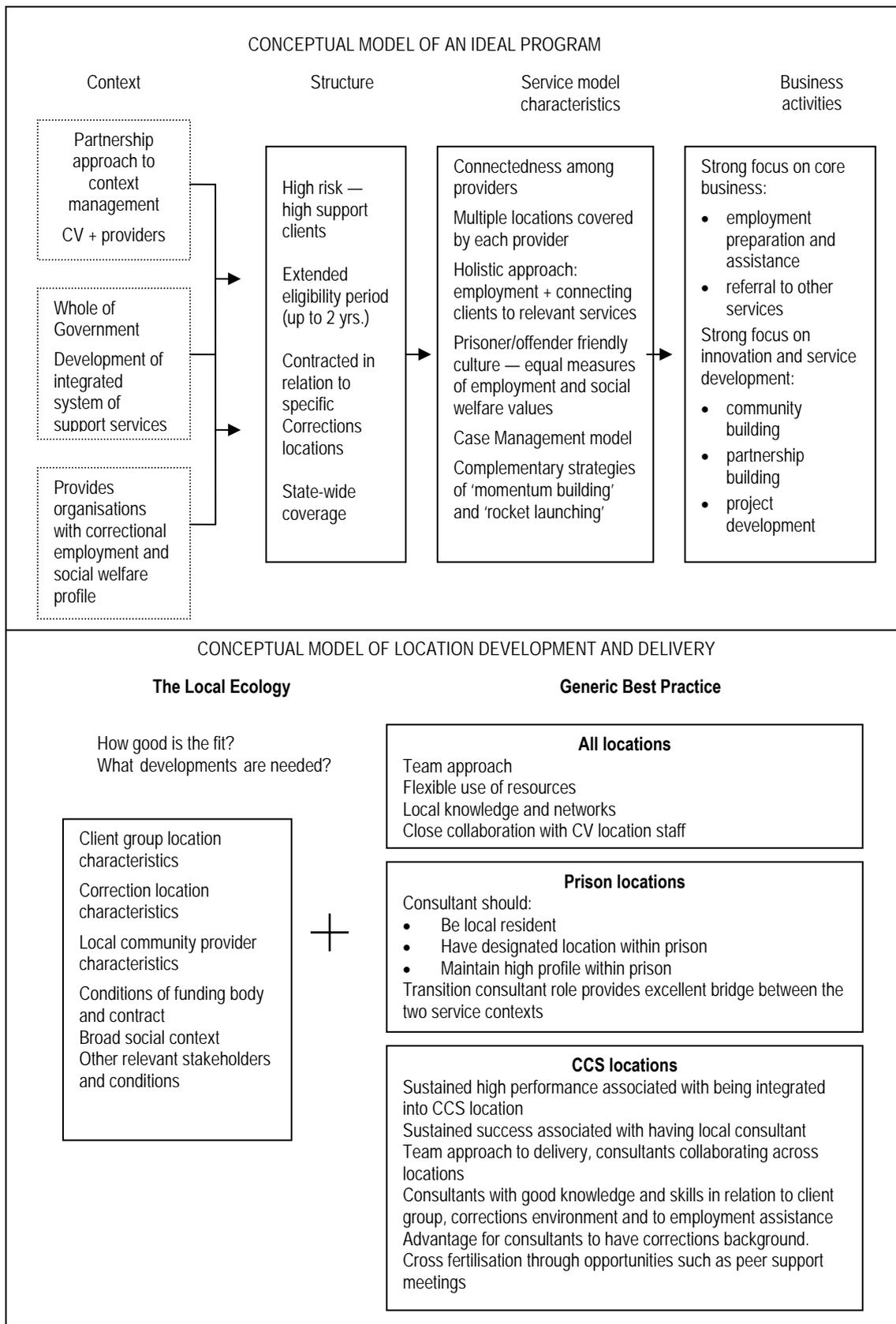


Figure 6: Conceptual Models of an Ideal Program and Location Development and delivery.

Considered solely in terms of program model integrity, program management, and program delivery, the pilot, in our view, has been very successful. It is highly regarded by stakeholders including Corrections Victoria locations personnel, employment consultants responsible for its delivery, and clients who have participated in the program. The program clearly meets an unmet need of this client group. The program has been tried, tested, tuned, and demonstrated to be effective in assisting clients into sustained employment and reducing re-offending (see Section 4 for outcomes results). The ‘learnings’ that have been documented and described in this evaluation should serve as a basis for future further development and expansion of the program.

Section 4: Program Outcomes Evaluation

4.1 Introduction

A second empirical component of the evaluation involved investigation of program outcomes. This component of the evaluation has focused on both employment outcomes and recidivism outcomes. As discussed earlier, CSEPP is primarily an employment assistance program, but there has been an explicit expectation from the outset that the program would result in reduced rates of re-offending for participants, and not just access to employment and sustained employment. Therefore, six measures of employment outcomes and four measures of recidivism have been included in this investigation of CSEPP effectiveness in achieving objectives of sustained employment and reduced recidivism.

An employment outcome is defined within CSEPP as placement into employment for a minimum of 20 hours per week continuously for a minimum of 13 weeks. A more basic outcome is simply placement into employment. In our evaluation, we have investigated both, with primary interest on 13 week outcomes. Recidivism has been defined in the literature as failure to desist from crime (Visher & Travis, 2003) and is typically operationalised by an individual's re-arrest, re-conviction (which may or may not result in a prison sentence), or their return to prison (e.g., Blumstein et al, 1986; Langan & Levin, 2002). Recidivism is a measure that is easy to conceptualise and measure, and subsequently, has been applied extensively in the correctional services field. In this evaluation recidivism is operationalised in terms of re-offending and rates of re-offending.

4.2 Summary of this Section

Key Findings: Employment Outcomes

- The program had an overall employment placement rate of 34% in the first two years and 40% in the first four months of the third year.
- The program had an overall 13 week outcomes rate of 16% in the first two years and 19% in the first four months of the third year. The contracted target was 18% (450 of 2500 registered clients).
- 80% + of registered clients have been male and just less than 20% female.
- Males and females have had nearly equal rates of registration, fewer females have been placed in employment, but a higher percentage of those who were placed achieved 13 week outcomes; females also had a lower rate of conversion of registrations to 13 week outcomes than did males.
- Prison clients comprised 55% of the total registered client population in the first two years and the first four months of the third year of the program. Although having a higher rate of registration than CCS clients, prison clients had a lower rate of placement in employment and a lower rate of converting registrations to 13 week outcomes.

- Across gender, client status, and provider groups, rates of converting registrations to placements were highly variable, while conversions of placements to outcomes showed very little variation (mostly near half of placements become 13 week outcomes), and conversions of registrations through to 13 week outcomes were also highly variable.
- Locations have differed in both percentage of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes and in average number of days between registration and 13 week outcome for clients who did achieve an outcome; prison locations had lower conversion rates and more days taken to achieve outcomes (both results that are not surprising, given pre-release time in the program as well as complexity of support needs and support needs associated with release).

Key Findings: Recidivism Outcomes

- The rate of re-offending by registered CSEPP clients was very low (7.46%), well below re-offending rates reported in the literature (perhaps 40% over a two year period).
- Re-offending was low for both clients placed in employment and those not placed, suggesting a positive program effect as well as an employment effect.
- Lower rates of re-offending for clients placed in employment showed a clear relationship between employment and reduced recidivism.
- There were differences between male and female clients in terms of rates of re-offending; females had an overall lower re-offending rate, and employment placement had a much greater effect on lower recidivism for females.
- Prisoners had slightly more than half the re-offending rate of offenders overall, irrespective of whether the prisoners were placed in employment or not.
- Male prisoners in particular had a low re-offending rate compared to male CCS clients.
- Comparison of CSEPP and non-CSEPP clients showed lower recidivism for CSEPP clients on all three recidivism measures.
- Comparison of pre and post CSEPP registration recidivism of CSEPP clients showed reduced recidivism after registration on all three recidivism measures.

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Participant Files

Primary analysis of employment outcomes was based on the total CSEPP client population. The total number of registered clients for 2002 – June 30, 2004 was 2,458 (according to provider reports). The number of registered clients included in the analysis of July 1 – October 31, 2004 was 576 (again based on provider reports). The total CSEPP population of registered clients comprised 2,031 males (82.6%) and 427 females (17.4%) in the first two years, and 494 males (85.8%) and 82 females (14.2%) in the first four months of the third year. These proportions closely match proportions in the Victorian criminal justice system. Of the total registered clients, in the first two years, 55.0% were prisoner clients and 45.0% were offender (community

corrections) clients. In the first four months of the third year, 55.7% were prisoner clients and 44.3% were offender (community corrections) clients (virtually the same as in the two year period). These proportions differ somewhat from the proportions in the criminal justice system, favouring prisoners in the program, with approximately 35% prisoners and 65% offenders in the corrections system. Primary analysis of the recidivism outcomes was also based on the CSEPP client population (including the entire program duration July, 2002 – November 16, 2004).

Data for the additional analyses of employment outcomes and recidivism outcomes comprise two sets of randomly selected participant files. Those two data sets included the files on 600 CSEPP clients ($M=30.23$ years; $SD=8.52$) and 600 non-CSEPP clients ($M=35.38$ years; $SD=10.89$), that were provided courtesy of Department of Justice IT personnel. CSEPP participant histories were sourced from location records, together with the information relevant to those participants contained in the Prisoner Information Management System (PIMS) database. Non-CSEPP participant files were sourced from the Prisoner Information Management System (PIMS) database. A substantial sample of 600 CSEPP client files was selected for analysis rather than referring to total CSEPP outcomes in order to investigate both employment and recidivism outcomes in the comparable samples. Attempting to compare the total CSEPP client population with an equal number of non-CSEPP participant files would make already very complex analyses unworkable and provide no statistical or analytical advantage. That is the basis for random sampling of two groups of 600 participant files. However, the two samples could differ significantly in terms of time since release, given that the CSEPP population from which that sample was drawn comprises only pre-release and relatively recently released clients, while the non-CSEPP population has a much greater range of time since release. This is important because time since release is known to be a reliable predictor of re-offending. Further analysis of the data already provided was not possible due to current rollout of CJEP (the new data management system). For this reason, we can only treat the results of the additional analyses as suggestive and not conclusive. Further research is necessary to make valid comparisons.

4.3.2 Procedure

In order to investigate performance in terms of achievement of employment outcomes, CSEPP program records were analysed. CSEPP records of referrals, registrations, placements, 13 week outcomes, and validations (confirmation of the outcome) formed the basis of the analysis. CSEPP records were obtained from the PIMS system through the provider organisations and through the Department. The employment outcomes data were compiled from electronic reports. Because two separate analyses were conducted, one for the first two years of operation (ending June 30, 2004) and one for July – October 31st of 2004, two separate data sets were created. For conducting the primary analyses of recidivism, which were based on the CSEPP client population as a whole, the same procedure was used, and all existing records were included in one data set.

The procedure for conducting the additional recidivism analyses included working with IT staff within Corrections Victoria to create two random samples of 600 clients each: one a set of CSEPP client files and one a set of non-CSEPP client files. Recidivism data were provided electronically from PIMS records. The two partially independent sources of records (600 CSEPP employment outcomes and their criminal histories together with 600 non-CSEPP criminal histories) were then integrated into one electronic database, which was specially created to store the electronic copies of selected records. This database is password encrypted and was made unavailable to anyone except researchers and has since been removed from the hard disk drive. The database is stored on CD-ROM in a locked safe. There is one issue related to electronic preparation of recidivism data.

Because PIMS recorded non criminal activity, such as prison transfers, it was necessary to preselect only that subset of records that were appropriate for the ensuing analyses. Consequently a category was assigned to records, which discriminated between relevant and irrelevant records. One final point: the Prisoner Information Management System (PIMS) records a person's activity through the prison system and is only a partial record of criminal activity. PIMS traffic obviously cannot measure criminal activity in the community that escapes detection. PIMS also does not capture information about those offences where there is a non-custodial sentence involved because of its very nature. PIMS thus provides a partial snapshot of recidivism.

4.3.3 Employment Outcomes Measured

Employment outcomes for the CSEPP as a whole have been investigated using several measures:

- number of referrals, registrations, placements, outcomes (13-weeks of employment), and validations, together with percentages associated with males, females, prison and community locations, and the two contracted providers – these measures allow analysis and discussion in relation to achievement of targets;
- proportion of referrals converted to registrations – this effectiveness measure gives an indication of ability to inform and engage clients in the program;
- proportion of registrations converted to employment placements – this measure gives an indication of effectiveness in employment preparation;
- proportion of employment placements converted to 13 week employment outcomes – this measure gives some indication of effectiveness of 'job match' (client-job suitability), as well as indicating 'stamina' of clients;
- proportion of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes – this measure gives an indication of overall efficiency of the placement and support process.

Two additional measures have been included that have been analysed on the basis of a random sample of 600 CSEPP client files. Those two measures focus on location differences. The locations measures are:

- proportion of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes by location;
- average number of days between registration and 13 week outcomes by location.

These measures give some indication of efficiency, but also reflect style and context effects. In essence, the second measure indicates the speed with which clients are moved through the program.

Results in relation to each of these outcomes are presented in this report. We have reported employment outcome results on the basis of the whole of the CSEPP client population. Results for the first two years are presented separately from results for July–October of 2004 (past 4 months). The reason for doing so is that it was not until approximately July, 2004 that conditions became stable (in terms of contract renewal, Corrections Victoria industrial and organisational conditions, etc.). In our view, performance measures over this period provide a much more accurate account of CSEPP performance. Following the presentation of results, a summary of the major findings is presented.

4.3.4 Recidivism Outcomes Measured

CSEPP client population analyses of recidivism have included simple frequency and percentage of re-offending among registered clients. Rates for registered clients, those clients placed in employment and clients registered but not placed in employment, have been calculated and analysed further to determine overall program recidivism rates, and whether there are differences related to gender, prisoner/offender client status, or provider.

More advanced analyses of recidivism have also been conducted, based on the sample of 600 CSEPP client files and 600 non-CSEPP client files. For this more complex analysis three measures of recidivism have been used:

- ‘rate of recidivism’ is the rate of re-offending per day and was calculated by tallying the number of PIMS offence entries for each client, divided by the number of days between first and most recent offence;
- ‘recidivism seriousness’ is a calculation of the relative seriousness of re-offending and was conducted by ranking recorded re-offences with a number
 - 5 = ‘very serious’/offence involving death or very serious harm to other people (e.g., manslaughter, murder, attempted murder);
 - 4 = ‘serious’/offence where harm to others had occurred or where federal crimes had been committed (e.g., assault or rape);
 - 3 = ‘moderately serious’/offences where no harm had come to other people, but weapons were involved or potential for harm existed (e.g., robberies, burglaries, crimes involving intention to cause harm);
 - 2 = ‘low seriousness’/offences that involved breaches of public trust or violations of others rights, but no involvement of weapons, (e.g., thefts, lesser drug-related crimes, forgeries);
 - 1 = ‘minimally serious’ crimes were those with no potential for harm to others or for less serious violations of trust (e.g., parking fines, minor road infringements or breaches of parole);
- ‘poly-recidivism’ is the number of different kinds of re-offences recorded.

4.4 Results

Results are organised into two sections. In the first section, employment outcomes are reported. Employment outcomes for the whole client population are reported in terms of: number of referrals, registrations, placements, 13 week outcomes, and validations; proportion of referrals that have become registrations; proportion of registrations that have become placements (placements/registrations); proportion of placements that have become outcomes (outcomes/placements); proportion of registrations that have become outcomes (outcomes/registrations); and proportion of outcomes that have been validated/confirmed (validations/outcomes). Location differences are presented in relation to proportion of registrations that have become outcomes (outcomes/registrations) and average number of days between registration and 13 week outcomes. Results for the program as a whole and for each location are presented. As described above, results for the first two years (ending June 30th, 2004) and results for July–October 31st are presented separately. Results are presented in terms of frequencies and proportions (percentages).

In the second section, recidivism outcomes are reported. Recidivism results are presented first for the whole CSEPP population. These are reported in terms of proportions/percentages. The additional analyses of recidivism outcomes, based on the random sample of 600 CSEPP client histories and the 600 non-CSEPP client histories, are reported in terms of the three recidivism measures described above: rate of re-offending (average number of offences per day); seriousness of re-offending (rated severity of offences); and poly-recidivism (sum of different kinds of offences committed). Re-offending in terms of these three recidivism measures were also analysed for the CSEPP sample pre and post registration in the program.

4.4.1 Employment Outcomes

Number of Referrals, Registrations, Placements, Outcomes, and Validations

The first and most basic employment outcome investigated was number of registrations, placements, outcomes (20 hours of work per week for 13 weeks), and validations. The contract for the first two years of the pilot included a target of 450 clients placed into employment for 20 hours per week or more. The definition of “outcome” for the program is at least 20 hours of work per week for 13 weeks, so that serves as the best indicator of success in achieving targets. However, participation in and progress through all phases of the program have been evaluated. Table 13 presents results for the whole of CSEPP, 2002–2004. Table 14 presents those results for July 1st – October 31st, 2004. Results are presented in relation to gender, registration as a prison or CCS located client, provider (Job Futures or ACSO), and total program outcomes.

Table 13: Number of referrals, registrations, placements, outcomes, and validations (July, 2002 – June, 2004).

	Referred	Registered	Placed	13 weeks	Valid
Males	3105	2031	729	348	282
Females	642	427	101	53	46
Prisoners	1429	1351	219	90	68
Offenders	2318	1107	611	311	260
Job Futures Total	3313	2044	602	290	224
ACSO Total	434	414	228	111	104
Grand Total	3747	2458	830	401	328

Program Performance

Results for the first two years are quite impressive, especially considering an initial delay in commencing, the necessary establishment phase, and the substantial volatility in the operating environment that the program experienced (reported thoroughly in Section 3). Through the first two years, the program:

- Averaged 156 referrals per month and 102 registrations per month.
- Averaged 34.6 job placements per month.
- Averaged 16.7 outcomes per month (clients achieving 13 weeks of continuous employment).
- Achieved a total of 401 outcomes over the two years, which was 89% of the target.

It is apparent from the table that patterns are very different for males and females and very different for prisoner and offender clients. Those differences are depicted in the graphs below.

Of the total registered clients, 82.6% were male and 17.4% female (the split is approximately 80% – 20% in the corrections system).

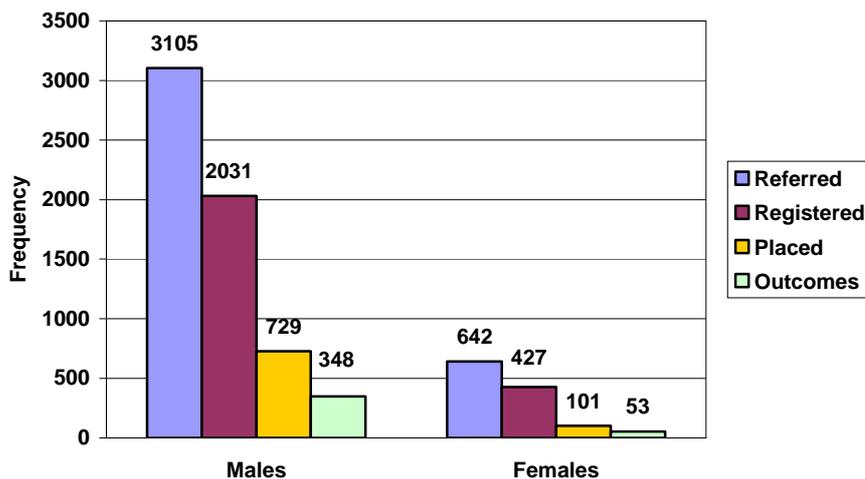


Figure 7: Number of male and female clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

The graph shows that males also comprised a large proportion of clients placed into employment and those who achieved outcomes as well. The numbers convert to 87.8% of clients placed being males and 12.2% females, and 86.8% of clients achieving 13 week outcomes being males and 13.2% females.

There were differences in the pattern of participation for prisoner and offender clients as well.

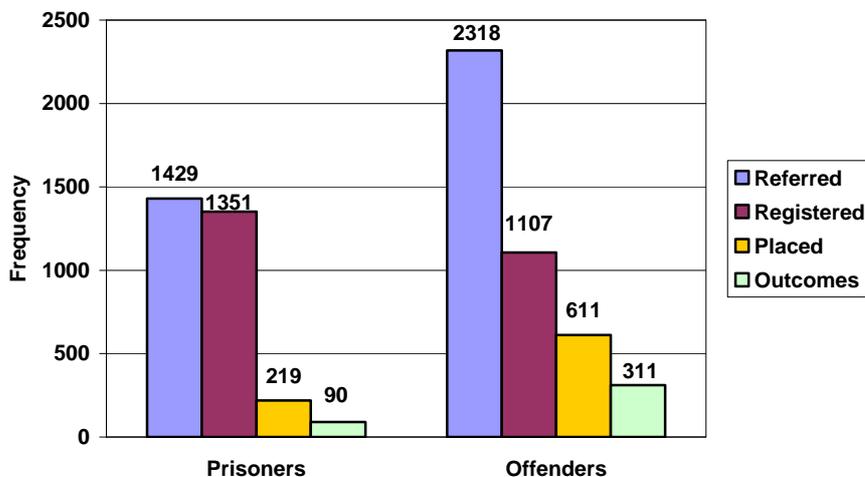


Figure 8: Number of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

Of the total registered clients, 55.0% were prisoner clients and 45.0% were offender clients (the split is approximately 35–65% in the corrections system). Prisoner clients comprised 26.4% of clients placed, offender clients 73.6% of clients placed. Prisoner clients comprised 22.4% of clients who achieved 13 week outcomes, offender clients 77.6% of clients who achieved 13 week outcomes. So, prisoner clients were over-represented compared with the corrections system. Despite being greater in number of registrations, they accounted for fewer placements and fewer 13 week outcomes. Clearly, providers did not shy away from working with more difficult-to-place clients; and it is clear from the results, as well as from the literature, that prisoner clients are more difficult to place in employment.

Provider Differences

There were differences in provider performance as well.

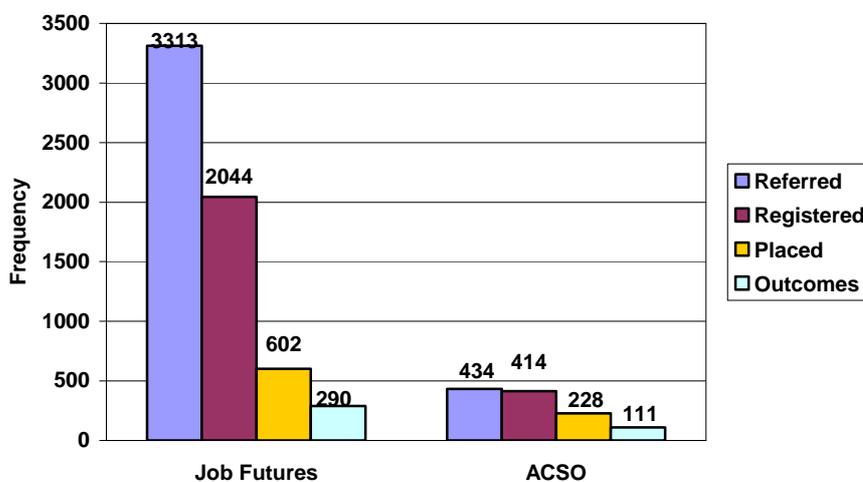


Figure 9: Number of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

The graph shows that the majority of clients were assisted by the Job Futures consortium, consistent with the contract. The Job Futures consortium was responsible for 90% of the contracted registrations and outcomes, ACSO 10%. In the first two years, the consortium accounted for 83.2% of the registrations, 72.5% of the placements, and 72.3% of the 13 week outcomes. ACSO accounted for 16.8% of the registrations, 27.5% of the placements, and 27.7% of the 13 week outcomes.

For Job Futures, the number of 13 week outcomes achieved by end of June, 2004 was 72.5% of their target, but a delay in starting really means that by two full years of actual operation, they had achieved approximately 90% of their target. For ACSO, the number of outcomes achieved by end of June, 2004 was 246% of their target. In fact, although ACSO held 10% of the contract, they achieved 11.5% of referrals, 16.8% of registrations, 27.5% of placements, and 27.7% of the 13 week outcomes. However, one big difference between the two contracted providers is in relation to the extent to which they accessed prisoner and offender clients. For Job Futures, 57.8% of registrations, 32.6% of placements, and 29.7% of their 13 week outcomes were with prisoner clients. For ACSO, 40.8% of registrations, 10.0% of placements, and 3.7% of their 13 week outcomes were with prisoner clients.

We believe that it is very important to acknowledge events and conditions that comprise the operating environment and the likely effect of those on performance. For Job Futures, early attention to program set up, growing the consortium, and attention to bedding down long term processes, together with emphasis on assistance to a greater proportion of prisoner clients, contributed to fewer outcomes early on. For ACSO, stable staff and an early focus on working with the Geelong CCS produced early outcomes and provided a rapid start to meeting and exceeding targets. After several months, attention was shifted to Barwon Prison, from which placements and outcomes had been slower (prisoner client placements and outcomes have been less frequent throughout the system). Shifting attention from the CCS then caused some relationship problems that had to be sorted out. In any case, ACSO performed well above target over the first two years.

First Four Months of the Third Year

Because the effects of various disruptions were experienced up to the end of the initial two-year pilot period, it was decided to include a separate analysis of results for the first four months of the third year.

Table 14: Number of referrals, registrations, placements, outcomes, and validations (July, 2004 – October, 2004).

	Referred	Registered	Placed	13 weeks	Valid
Males	585	494	215	101	65
Females	94	82	17	10	8
Prisoners	295	321	81	50	36
Offenders	384	255	151	61	47
Job Futures Total	649	542	199	94	69
ACSO Total	30	34	33	17	14
Grand Total	679	576	232	111	83

Program Performance

For the period July – October, 2004, performance has been even stronger.

- Although only a 4 month period rather than 2 years (16% of the two year period), the program has achieved 18.1% of the total two year referrals, 23.4% of the registrations, 28.0% of the placements, and 27.7% of the 13 week outcomes for the two year period.
- The number of clients receiving assistance and the number of outcomes achieved has definitely increased into the third year of funding.
- In the four month period, the program averaged 170 referrals per month (9% above the two year average) and 144 registrations (41% above the two year average).
- The program averaged 58 job placements per month (a 68% improvement).
- The program averaged 28 outcomes per month (also a 68% improvement).

Again, it is apparent from the table that patterns are very different for males and females and very different for prisoner and offender clients. Those differences are depicted in the graphs below.

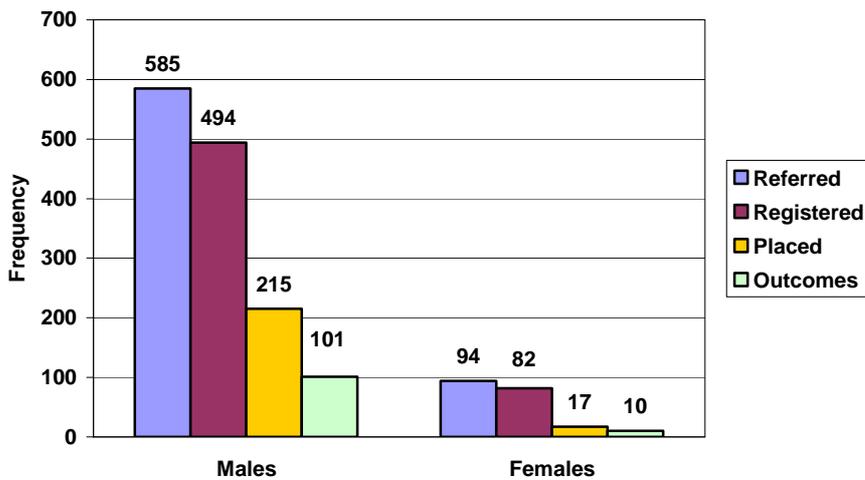


Figure 10: Number of male and female clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004.

In the four month period, 85.8% of clients registered were male and 14.2% were female (a slightly higher proportion of males than in the first two years). Males comprised 92.7% of clients placed, females 7.3% of clients placed. Males comprised 91.0% of clients who achieved outcomes, females 9.0% of clients who achieved 13 week outcomes. Again, relatively fewer females progressed from registration to placement, but relatively more of those who did achieved 13 week outcomes compared to males.

Of the total clients registered, 55.7% were prisoner clients and 44.3% were offender clients (virtually the same as in the two year period).

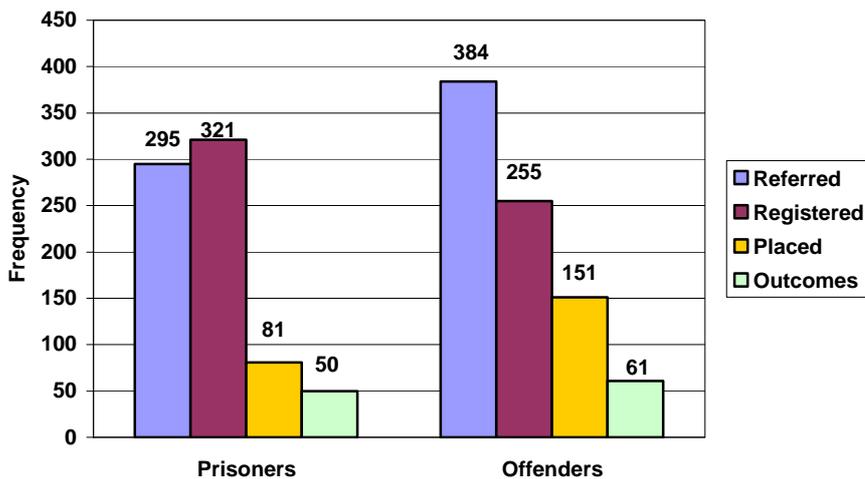


Figure 11: Number of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004.

As in the initial two year period, although there were far more prisoner clients than offender clients, they accounted for fewer placements and fewer 13 week outcomes. Prisoner clients comprised 34.9% of clients placed, offender clients 65.1% of clients placed. Prisoner clients

comprised 45.0% of clients who achieved 13 week outcomes, offender clients 55.0% of clients who achieved 13 week outcomes. The percentages of prisoner clients placed into employment and who achieved 13 week outcomes were much higher in this four month period than in the first two years of the program, indicating increased success in working with the prisoner client group.

Provider Differences

There were differences in provider performance as well. For Job Futures, performance in the four months was extremely good. For ACSO, performance slowed significantly, but remained above the target rate.

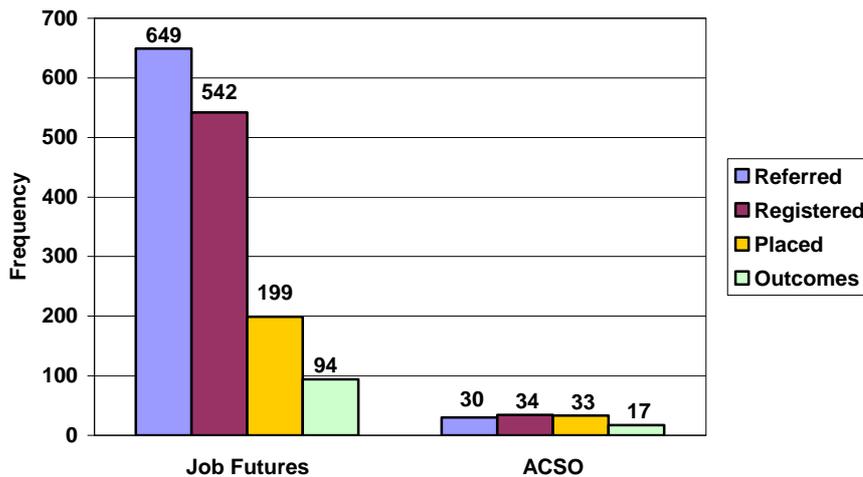


Figure 12: Number of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004.

The graph shows that, again consistent with the contract, the majority of clients were assisted by the Job Futures consortium. The Job Futures consortium was responsible for 90% of the contracted registrations and outcomes, ACSO 10%. In the four month period of the third year, the consortium accounted for 94.1% of the registrations, 85.7% of the placements, and 84.7% of the 13 week outcomes. ACSO accounted for 5.9% of the registrations, 14.3% of the placements, and 15.3% of the 13 week outcomes.

In 16% of the previous two year period, the Job Futures consortium achieved 19.5% of their total two year referrals, 26.5% of their registrations, 33.1% of their placements, and 32.4% of their 13 week outcomes. In 16% of the previous two year period, ACSO achieved 6.9% of their total two year referrals, 8.2% of their registrations, 14.5% of the placements, and 15.3% of their 13 week outcomes (keeping in mind that they had performed well beyond the contracted target). In the recent four month period, with 10% of the CSEPP contract, ACSO achieved 4.4% of referrals, 5.9% of registrations, 14.2% of placements, and 15.3% of the 13 week outcomes, still contributing 13 week outcomes above standard, despite their much slower performance.

As in the first two year period, there were differences between the two contracted providers in relation to the extent to which they accessed prisoner and offender clients. For Job Futures, 55.0% of registrations, 35.1% of placements, and 45.7% of their 13 week outcomes were with prisoner clients. For ACSO, 67.6% of registrations, 33.3% of placements, and 41.1% of their 13 week outcomes were prisoner clients. Clearly, by the beginning of the third year, ACSO had shifted its

focus more onto assisting prisoner clients and was achieving a higher proportion of its outcomes with them, while Job Futures continued its earlier strategy of investing more than half of its effort into prisoner client assistance.

Differences in the two patterns of performance are probably related to the Job Futures consortium investing more heavily early in the two year contract period in bedding down the structures and processes for longer term stability, while ACSO went out early to achieve targets and began to focus on partnership building and service development later in the two year period and into the recent past.

Program Effectiveness: Client Progression and Achievement of Outcomes

Beyond looking at the number of clients assisted and outcomes achieved, it is important to consider the effectiveness of the program in terms of its success in clients making progress as they move through the program. The measures of this effectiveness are in terms of the proportion of clients moving from referral to registration, registration to placement, and placement to a 13 week outcome. Table 15 presents those results for the whole of CSEPP, 2002-2004. Results are presented in relation to gender, registration as a prison or CCS located client, provider (Job Futures or ACSO), and total program outcomes.

Table 15: Progression: Referrals to registrations to placements to outcomes (July, 2002 – June, 2004).

	Reg/Refr	Place/Reg	13wk/Place	13wk/Reg	Valid/13wk
Males	65.4%	35.9%	47.7%	17.1%	81.0%
Females	66.5%	23.7%	52.5%	12.4%	86.8%
Prisoners	94.5%	16.2%	41.1%	6.7%	75.6%
Offenders	47.8%	55.2%	50.9%	28.1%	83.6%
Job Futures Total	61.7%	29.5%	48.2%	14.2%	77.2%
ACSO Total	95.4%	55.1%	48.7%	26.8%	93.7%
Grand Total	65.6%	33.8%	48.3%	16.3%	81.8%

Program Performance

The progression of clients in terms of conversion rates over the two year initial pilot period can be considered quite good in that they are similar to intensive support Job Network provider performance, and that the percentage of registrations converted to outcomes nearly achieves the original target of 18% (450 outcomes / 2500 registrations). The slow start and disruptions to the program already described can explain the slight shortfall.

- The program converted approximately two-thirds of referrals to registrations, indicating relatively good performance in engaging clients and ‘selling’ the program to them.
- Slightly more than one-third of registrations resulted in the client being placed in employment. Although the percentage might seem low, it reflects the comprehensiveness of support needs, the low ‘starting point’ of many clients, and the labour intensiveness of the work.
- Of those who were placed in employment, almost half achieved the 13 weeks of continuous employment outcome. Clearly, keeping clients employed proved almost as difficult as getting them employed.
- Taking all of this into account, the proportion of clients who registered and later achieved 13 week outcomes was approximately one-sixth.
- Measurement of validations is a quality assurance measure, really. Validations are outcomes verified by some means. Validation rates varied between 75% and 94%, with a total of 81.8%. Given the voluntary nature of the program, some clients undoubtedly break contact once employed, and it would be impossible to verify all outcomes.

Results in the table suggest that patterns are very different for males and females and very different for prisoner and offender clients. Those differences are depicted in the graphs below. The percentages are the rates of conversion or progression from one phase to the next in the program.

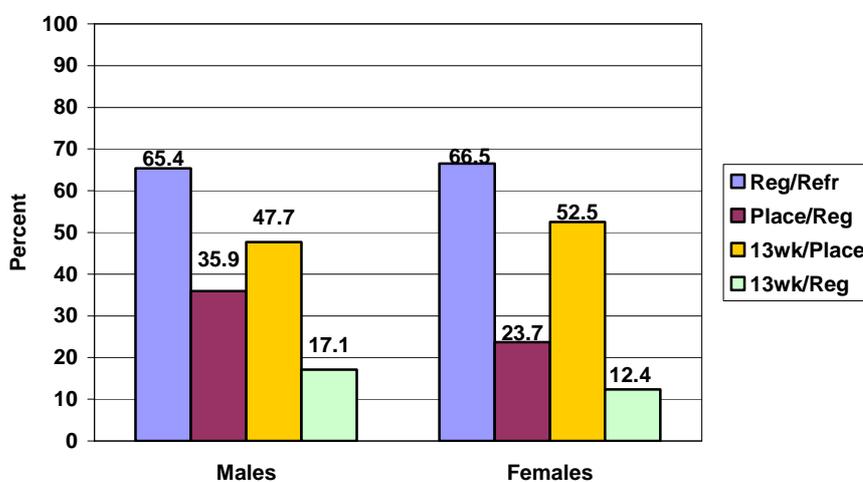


Figure 13: Progression of male and female clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

The graph shows virtually equal percentages of male and female clients progressing from referral to registration, but a relatively lower percentage of females being placed in employment. However, of those who were placed, a relatively higher percentage of females achieved 13 week outcomes compared to males. Overall, females had a lower conversion of registrations to outcomes as well; approximately one-eighth for females and one-sixth for males.

There were different patterns for prisoner clients and offender clients in terms of their movement through the program measured by conversion rates.

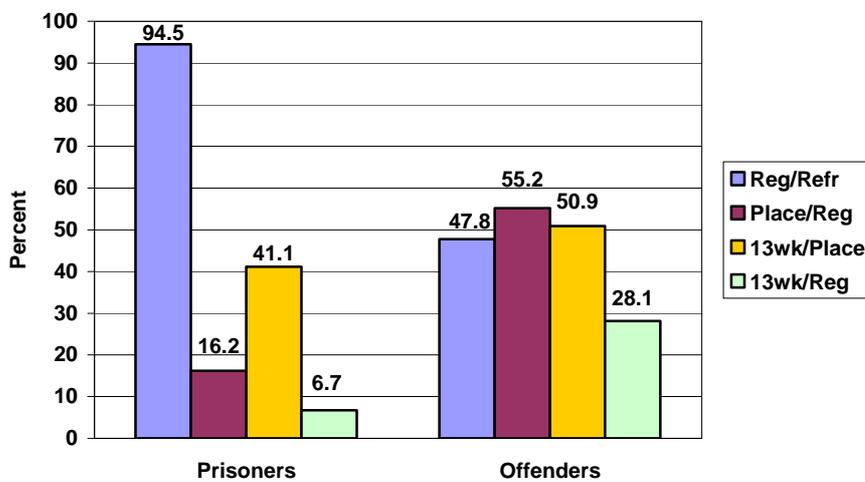


Figure 14: Progression of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

Prisoner clients had twice the registration rate of offender clients, with almost all prisoner referrals converting to registrations. Conversion of registrations to placements, however, was much lower for prisoners, with less than one-sixth of registered prisoner clients being placed in employment, compared to more than one-half for offender clients. Prisoner clients also had a lower conversion rate of placements to outcomes (41%) than offender clients (51%) and much lower conversion of registrations to outcomes (6.7%) compared to offender clients (28.1%).

Provider Differences

Provider comparisons indicate that Job Futures conversion rates were lower than ACSO conversion rates in all categories except conversion of placements to 13 week outcomes which was slightly below 50% for both providers.

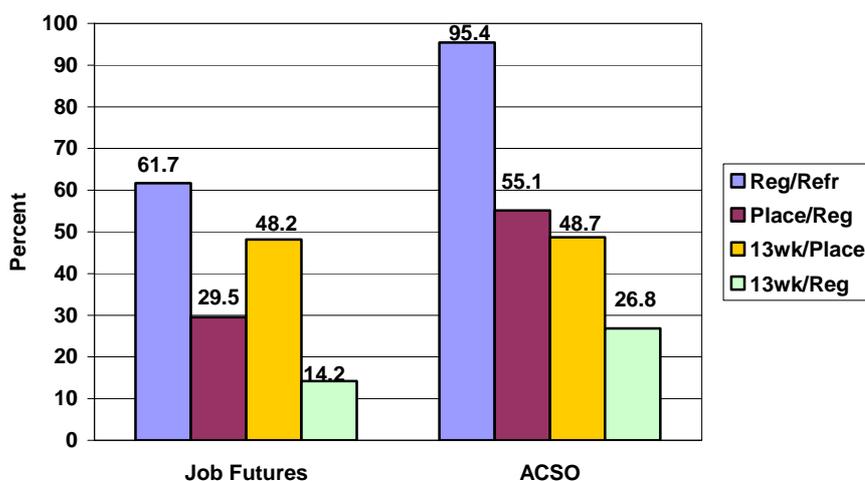


Figure 15: Progression of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

The graph shows that client progression from referral to registration and from registration to placement into employment was higher for ACSO than for the consortium. However, rates of conversion of placements into 13 week outcomes were virtual equal for the two providers. ACSO had a higher conversion of registrations to outcomes as well; slightly more than one-quarter, compared to one-seventh for the consortium. That difference is the result of a higher rate of placements, given that the outcomes rates are near equal. The difference in conversion rates between the two providers is most probably related to the much higher proportion of prisoner clients that the Job Futures consortium assisted throughout the two year period.

Proportions of Client Progressing through the Program

Another way of looking at client progression through the program is to consider the proportions of all registered clients who were: registered, but not placed into employment; placed into employment, but did not achieve 13 week outcomes; and placed into employment and did achieve 13 week outcomes. The graph below presents those results for the program as a whole, males and females, prisoners and offenders, and providers.

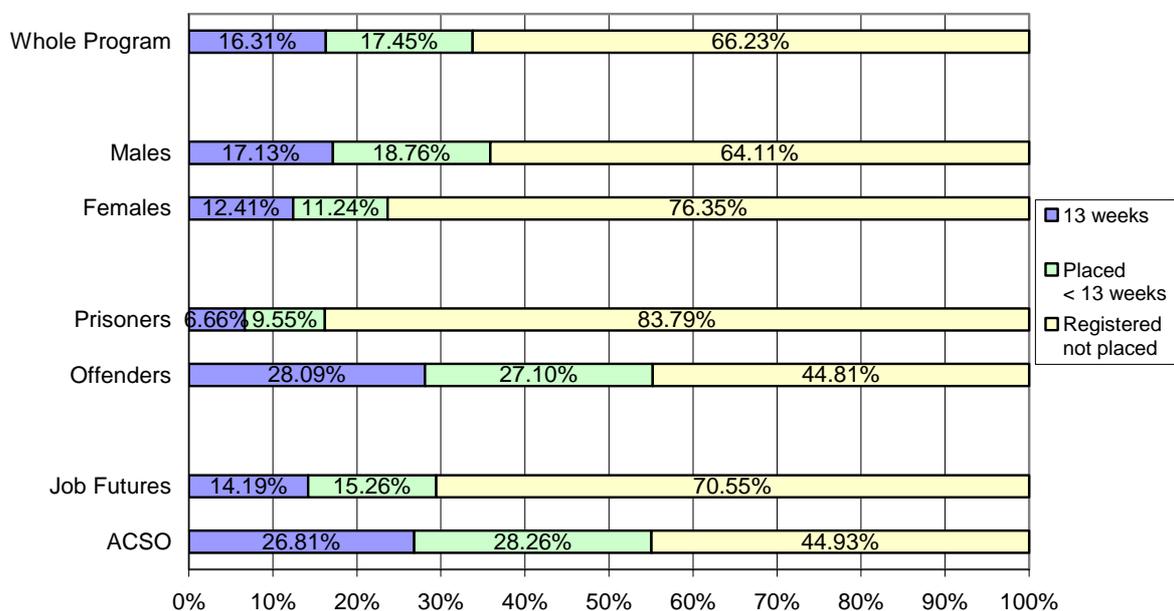


Figure 16: Percentages of clients progressing through program: July, 2002 – June, 2004.

Throughout the program as a whole, approximately one-sixth (16%) of registered clients achieved 13 week outcomes in the first two years, with a slightly higher percentage placed into employment without achieving the 13 week outcome. Almost two-thirds of clients were registered, but not placed into employment. There were differences in effectiveness for males and females. More than one-sixth of males achieved the 13 week outcome and another more than one-sixth were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Less than two-thirds were registered, but not placed. In comparison, approximately one-eighth of females achieved the 13 week outcome and an additional less than one-eighth were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. More than three-quarters were registered, but not placed.

Client status differences were also apparent. Approximately one-sixteenth of prisoners achieved the 13 week outcome and an additional almost 10% were placed without achieving the 13 week

outcome. More than five-sixths were registered, but not placed. In comparison, more than one-quarter of offenders achieved the 13 week outcome and another more than one-quarter were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Less than half were registered, but not placed. These results are indicative of the greater difficulty faced by prisoners and their typically higher support needs. There were provider differences as well. For the Job Futures consortium, approximately one-seventh of clients achieved the 13 week outcome and an additional less than one-sixth were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Slightly more than two-thirds were registered, but not placed. For ACSO, more than one-quarter of clients achieved the 13 week outcome and another more than one-quarter were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Less than half were registered, but not placed.

First Four Months of the Third Year

Progression through the program during the first four months of the third year has also been calculated in terms of the conversion of referrals to registrations, registrations to placements, placements to 13 week outcomes, and registrations to 13 week outcomes.

Table 16: Progression: Referrals to registrations to placements to outcomes (July, 2004 – October, 2004).

	Reg/Refr	Place/Reg	13wk/Place	13wk/Reg	Valid/13wk
Males	84.4%	43.5%	47.0%	20.4%	64.4%
Females	87.2%	20.7%	58.8%	12.2%	80.0%
Prisoners	108.8%	25.2%	61.7%	15.6%	72.0%
Offenders	66.4%	59.2%	40.4%	23.9%	77.0%
Job Futures Total	83.5%	36.7%	47.2%	17.3%	73.4%
ACSO Total	113.3%	97.1%	51.5%	50.0%	82.3%
Grand Total	84.8%	40.3%	47.8%	19.2%	74.8%

Program Performance

Flow through the program in the first four months of the third year has been very impressive.

- In the first four months of the third year, the program as a whole converted almost 85% of referrals to registrations, an increase of almost 20%.
- Prisoner client progression from referral to registration was over 100% due to substantial and increasing self-referrals. This result suggests that the program is accessible as well as attractive to prospective clients.
- Slightly more than 40% of registrations resulted in the client being placed in employment, an increase of 7%.
- Of those who were placed in employment, almost half achieved the 13 weeks of continuous employment outcome; this percentage is unchanged really from the two-year performance.
- The proportion of clients who registered and later achieved 13 week outcomes has gone from 16% to 19%, a 3% overall increase, but that 3% equates to a 18.75% improvement in program performance.
- Validation rates varied between 64% and 82%, with a total of 74.8%. The slightly lower rate from the first two years may be a result of having less time in the shorter period in which to validate outcomes.

Results in the table suggest that patterns are very different for males and females and very different for prisoner and offender clients. Those differences are depicted in the graphs below. The percentages are the rates of conversion or progression from one phase to the next in the program. Results indicate that improvements in the conversion ratios are consistent across clients by gender and prisoner-offender status with a few notable exceptions.

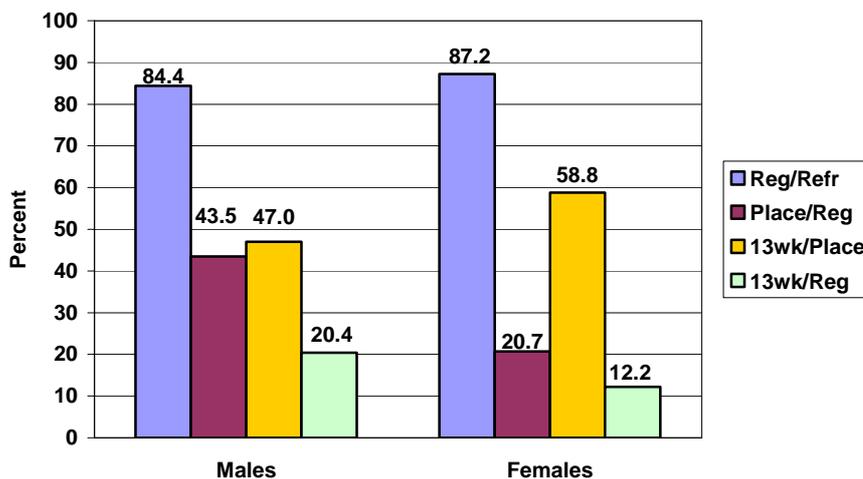


Figure 17: Progression of male and female clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004.

Male and female patterns remained the same during the first four months of the third year, compared with the first two years of the program. Although the pattern was the same, conversion rates of referrals to registrations and registrations to placements increased substantially. However, conversions from placement to 13 week outcome did not change substantially for either group, and

the conversion of registrations to outcomes did not change (remaining fairly low) for females. Overall, females again had a lower conversion of registrations to outcomes; approximately one-eighth for females and one-fifth for males.

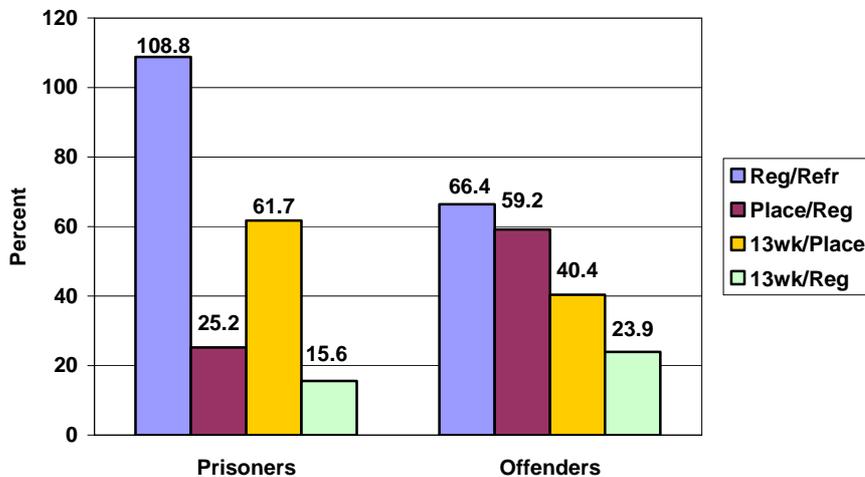


Figure 18: Progression of prisoner and offender clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004.

During the first four months of the third year, prisoner client progression from referral to registration was over 100% due to substantial and increasing self-referrals as the program has become well known and obviously attractive. This result suggests that the program is accessible as well as attractive to prospective clients. Conversion of offender client referrals to registrations also increased substantially. Prisoner clients also had large increases in conversion of registrations to placements (16.2% to 25.2%) and placements to outcomes (from 41.1% to 61.7%), as well as a large increase in conversion of registrations to outcomes (from 6.7% to 15.6%). Offender clients had a notable decline in conversion of placements to outcomes (down approximately 10%) and a decline in conversion of registrations to outcomes (down approximately 4%).

Provider Differences

Provider comparisons again indicate that Job Futures conversion rates were lower than ACSO conversion rates in all categories except conversion of placements to 13 week outcomes which was slightly below 50% for Job Futures and slightly above 50% for ACSO.

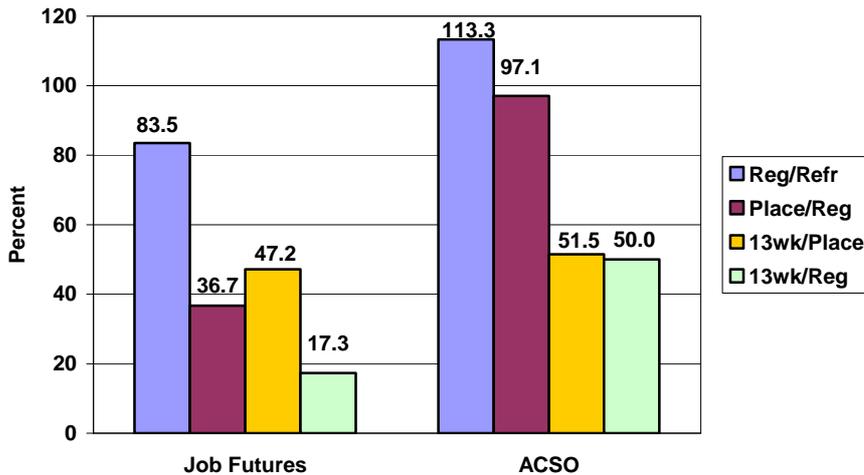


Figure 19: Progression of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004.

The graph shows that client progression from referral to registration and from registration to placement into employment was higher for ACSO than for the consortium, particularly in relation to registrations to placements. The 113% figure is the result of substantial self-referring clients who registered. However, rates of conversion of placements into 13 week outcomes were fairly similar for the two providers. ACSO had a substantially higher conversion of registrations to outcomes as well; fully half of registrations progressing to 13 week outcomes, compared to slightly more than one-sixth for the consortium. That difference is the result of a higher rate of placements, given that the outcomes rates are near equal.

As in the earlier period, the difference in conversion rates is most probably related to the much higher proportion of prisoner clients that Job Futures has assisted, even though ACSO did increase their proportion of prisoner clients during the four month period. It may well also be related to the relatively small number of clients assisted by ACSO in the four month period. Nevertheless, the rate of progression of registrations to outcomes is very impressive.

Proportions of Client Progressing through the Program

As with the results for the first two years of the pilot, we looked at client progression through the program during the first four months of the third year in terms of the proportions of all registered clients who were: registered, but not placed into employment; placed into employment, but did not achieve 13 week outcomes; and placed into employment and did achieve 13 week outcomes. The graph below presents those results for the program as a whole, males and females, prisoners and offenders, and providers.

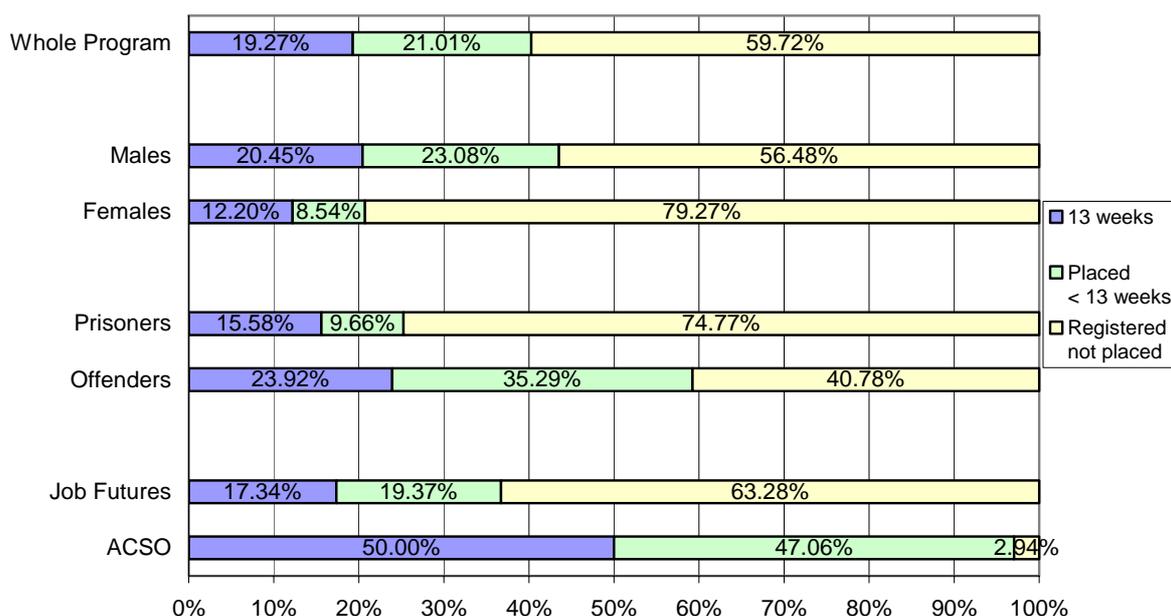


Figure 20: Percentages of clients progressing through program: July, 2004 – October 31, 2004

Throughout the program as a whole, approximately one-fifth of registered clients achieved 13 week outcomes in the first two years, with a slightly higher percentage placed into employment without achieving the 13 week outcome. Approximately three-fifths of clients were registered, but not placed into employment. These are improvements upon the first two years. There were differences in effectiveness for males and females. More than one-fifth of males achieved the 13 week outcome and another almost one-quarter were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Slightly more than half were registered, but not placed. These are also improvements. In comparison, approximately one-eighth of females achieved the 13 week outcome and an additional one-twelfth were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. More than three-quarters were registered, but not placed. These are not improvements upon the first two years.

Client status differences were also apparent. Almost one-sixth of prisoners achieved the 13 week outcome and an additional almost 10% were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Less than three-quarters were registered, but not placed. These are large improvements upon the first two years. In comparison, less than one-quarter of offenders achieved the 13 week outcome and another more than one-third were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Approximately two-fifths were registered, but not placed. There was an improvement in placements, but a slight decline in percentage of offenders achieving outcomes. For the Job Futures consortium, more than one-sixth of clients achieved the 13 week outcome and an additional almost one-fifth were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Less than two-thirds were registered, but not placed. These are improvements upon the first two years, and were accomplished with a relative increase in number of clients supported during the time period. For ACSO, half of clients achieved the 13 week outcome and another almost one-half were placed without achieving the 13 week outcome. Only less than 3% were registered, but not placed. These are very large improvements upon the first two years. They were accomplished with relatively fewer total number of clients supported during the time period.

Location Comparisons in Achieving 13 Week Outcomes

In addition to whole program results, it is important to consider location differences, primarily to understand local context effects. In doing so, it is important to keep in mind that location performance cannot be equated with provider performance because of the transfer of clients across locations, which for prisoners is a certainty, and for offenders an occasional reality. Two location comparisons have been conducted on the basis of the random sample of 600 CSEPP clients. The first of those was the proportion of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes. This is the most fundamental measure of program effectiveness. This measure gives some indication of the overall efficiency of the placement and support process. The 13 week outcome is the primary indicator of success in employment within the program. The conversion rate for the CSEPP program as a whole for 2002-2004 was 16.3%, and the rate for July – October of 2004 was 19.2%. Conversion rates for each location are presented in Figures 21 and 22. Figure 21 relates to CCS locations and Figure 22 relates to prison locations.

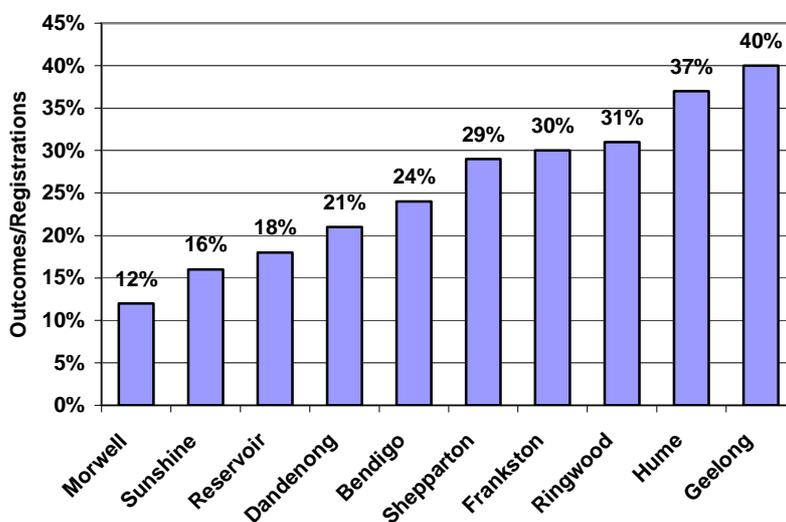


Figure 21: Progression (outcomes/registrations) for CCS locations: July, 2002 – October 31, 2004.

There have been large variations in the proportion of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes across CCS locations. The program operating in relation to Geelong CCS has had the highest rate of converting registrations to outcomes at 40%, followed by Hume CCS, Ringwood CCS, and Frankston CCS. Each is serviced by a different provider (Geelong by ACSO, the other three by different consortium members). All are locations with at least reasonably good job availability, although for Geelong many are commuter jobs. All are characterised by good working relations with the CV location staff (Geelong is an exception, however, relations were very good in the first year which produced a high volume of registrations and outcomes). On the other end of the spectrum, Morwell has had the lowest progression rate. Morwell is located in the Latrobe Valley. Although relations with the CV location staff have been excellent throughout the program, the chronically depressed economic conditions throughout the region have made it very difficult to achieve job placements.

There have been large variations in the proportion of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes across prison locations as well.

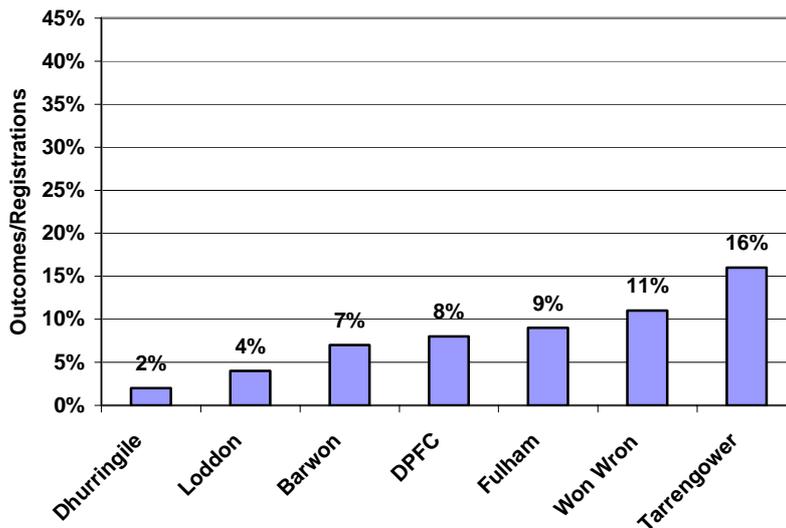


Figure 22: Progression (outcomes/registrations) for Prison locations: July, 2002 – October 31, 2004.

The program operating in relation to prison locations has had lower rates of client progression from registration to 13 week outcome. This is not surprising because prisoner clients have had a lower rate of converting registrations to outcomes as a whole. It is also important to note that not all prisoner clients have been registered with CSEPP prior to release, and were therefore registered at other locations throughout the program. To some degree, the lower rates associated with prison locations may be attributable to difficulties that prisoner clients tend to have in the transition to other program locations post-release, however, there are procedures in place to address those issues (see Section 3 for a fuller discussion of those procedures). In any case, the highest rate of converting registrations to outcomes for the program operating in relation to prison locations was Tarrengower at 16%, followed by Won Wron, Fulham, and Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. Two are women's prisons serviced by Melbourne Citymission, one (Won Wron) is/was a minimum security prison, and one is the only private enterprise prison (both of those serviced by the Brosnan Centre). On the other end of the spectrum, Dhurringile and Loddon have had the lowest rate of client progression from registration to outcome. Both are serviced by VACRO. The lower rate at Dhurringile may be related to a fairly long period of servicing the location with a non-local consultant, but there are other complicating conditions as well, such as poor match between the prison population and the program target group and long distance relocation of prisoners upon their release. The lower rate at Loddon may be related to the composition of the prison population (high proportion of very high risk clients). Because of the complexity of location conditions, conclusive explanations of differences are not possible without much more in-depth analysis of location-specific conditions and procedures.

The second location comparison was the average number of days from registration to 13 week outcome for those clients who do achieve 13 weeks of continuous employment. This measure gives some indication of both the context effects (availability of jobs, local client group profile, conditions within the location setting, etc) and style effects (individual and organisational style, preferred approaches to placement, rapid or slow progression by design, for example). Taken from the random sample of 600 CSEPP clients, the overall rate for the program was, on average, 88.5 days from registration to 13 week outcome, for those clients who did achieve outcomes. The

average number of days between registration and 13 week outcome for each location is presented in the figures below.

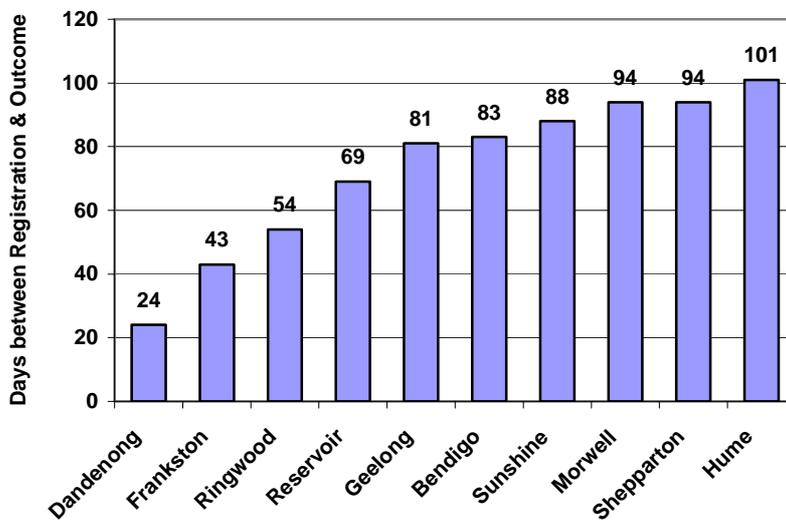


Figure 23: Average days between registration and outcome for CCS locations.

The lowest average number of days between registration and outcome for CCS locations was in relation to Dandenong (24 days), followed by Frankston, Ringwood, and Reservoir. Frankston and Dandenong are both serviced by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. The employment consultants from those two locations both have corrections backgrounds and work in tandem across the two locations. Ringwood is serviced by Employment Focus and operates directly from the CCS office. The employment consultant has an employment service background. On the other end of the spectrum, the program operating in relation to Hume, Shepparton, and Morwell had the three largest average number of days between registration and outcome. Morwell, as we have said, is marked by very low job availability throughout the region. Shepparton was serviced for a long time at a distance, by a series of non-local consultants. Hume is characterised by a very ethnically diverse client group and low availability of ‘continuing’ jobs. Jobs that do exist are removed from public transport. These are possible explanations to the differences in performance. In reality, local conditions are quite complex in each location, making any conclusive statements impossible without very in-depth analysis.

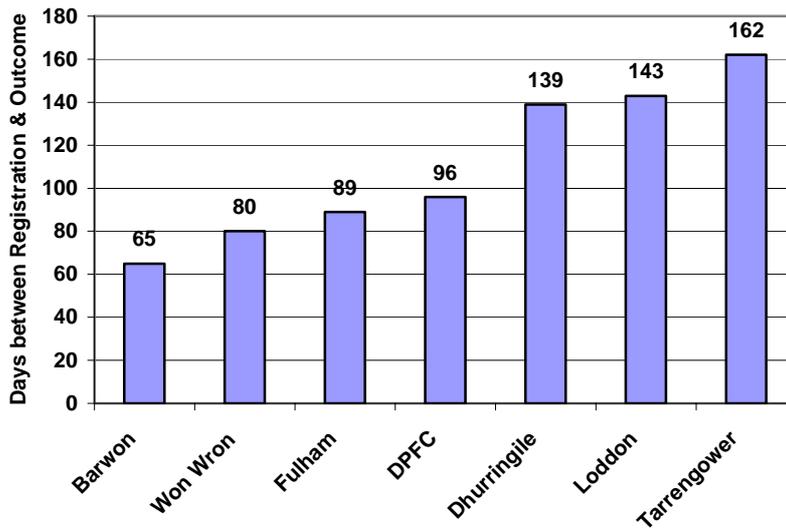


Figure 24: Average days between registration and outcome for Prison locations.

The large variations in the average number of days between registration and 13 week outcomes are apparent in relation to prison locations as well. The average number of days for Tarrengower Prison is approximately 2.5 times the average for Barwon Prison. Prison population differences may partially explain this, but Barwon is a maximum security prison with clients who are arguably more difficult to place and Tarrengower is a women’s prison. Differences in provider approach may also partially explain the differences with some placing more emphasis on employment preparation and transition to community and others placing more emphasis on gaining employment upon release. Again, the conditions within each location are very complex, and conclusive explanations of differences are not possible without much more in-depth analysis of location-specific conditions and procedures.

Overall, prison locations had a much higher average number of days, an average among the seven prison locations of 110.5 days, compared with 73.1 days for CCS locations. This difference is most probably due to prisoner registrations occurring prior to release and no opportunity for job seeking prior to release. The difference may also suggest higher and more complex support needs of released prisoners in terms of housing, finances, family and other issues that must be addressed upon release. In addition to a lower proportion of prisoner clients being placed in employment and achieving 13 week outcomes, as reported above, it appears to take longer for those who do achieve sustained employment to reach that landmark. Taking on such clients is a significant investment.

4.4.2 Summary of Employment Outcomes

There were several major findings associated with the employment outcomes analysis.

- The program had an overall employment placement rate of 34% in the first two years and 40% in the first four months of the third year.
- The program had an overall 13 week outcomes rate of 16% in the first two years and 19% in the first four months of the third year.
- 80% + of registered clients were male and just less than 20% female.
- Males and females have had nearly equal rates of registration, fewer females were then placed in employment, but a higher percentage of those who were placed achieved 13 week outcomes; females also had a lower rate of conversion of registrations to 13 week outcomes than did males.
- Prison clients have comprised 55% of the total registered client population in the first two years and the first four months of the third year of the program.
- Although having a higher rate of registration than CCS clients, prison clients had a lower rate of placement in employment and a lower rate of converting registrations to 13 week outcomes.
- Across gender, client status, and provider groups, rates of converting registrations to placements were highly variable, while conversions of placements to outcomes showed very little variation (mostly near half of placements become 13 week outcomes), and conversions of registrations through to 13 week outcomes were also highly variable.
- Locations differed in both percentage of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes and in average number of days between registration and 13 week outcome for clients who did achieve an outcome; prison locations had lower conversion rates and took more days to achieve outcomes (both results that are not surprising, given pre-release time in the program as well as the complexity of support needs associated with release).

4.4.3 Recidivism Outcomes

Number and Percentage of Clients Re-offending

The most basic measurement of recidivism is the rate of re-offending among the CSEPP client population as a whole. Re-offending has been investigated in relation to registered clients, clients placed into employment, and clients achieving 13 week employment outcomes. Table 17 presents those results for the whole of CSEPP, 2002–2004 and July – October, 2004. Results are presented in relation to gender, registration as a prison or CCS located client, provider (Job Futures or ACSO), and total program outcomes. It is important to note that the timeframe for program involvement (12 months) is shorter than the two-year timeframe used in many studies of re-offending. However, it is also clear from the research literature and must be recognised, that a high proportion of re-offending occurs within 3 – 6 months of a prison release.

Table 17: Re-offending rates of CSEPP clients.

	Overall	Placed	Unplaced	Prison	CCS
Males	8.38%	7.61%	8.66%	5.82%	11.5%
Females	5.97%	2.56%	6.65%	5.21%	7.69%
Prisoners	5.69%	4.59%	5.87%	X	X
Offenders	10.98%	8.22%	12.74%	X	X
Job Futures Total	7.95%	7.01%	8.26%	5.69%	10.98%
ACSO Total	4.69%	3.07%	4.70%	3.36%	8.00%
Grand Total	7.46%	6.40%	7.73%	X	X

Overall, the rate of re-offending by registered CSEPP clients was low (7.46%). This is well below re-offending rates reported in the literature. It is low for both clients placed in employment and those not placed as well, suggesting a positive program effect in addition to any employment effect. The re-offending rate was lower for clients placed in employment, however; an expected program result, but gratifying nonetheless. It shows a clear relationship between employment and reduced recidivism.

There were differences between male and female clients in terms of rates of re-offending.

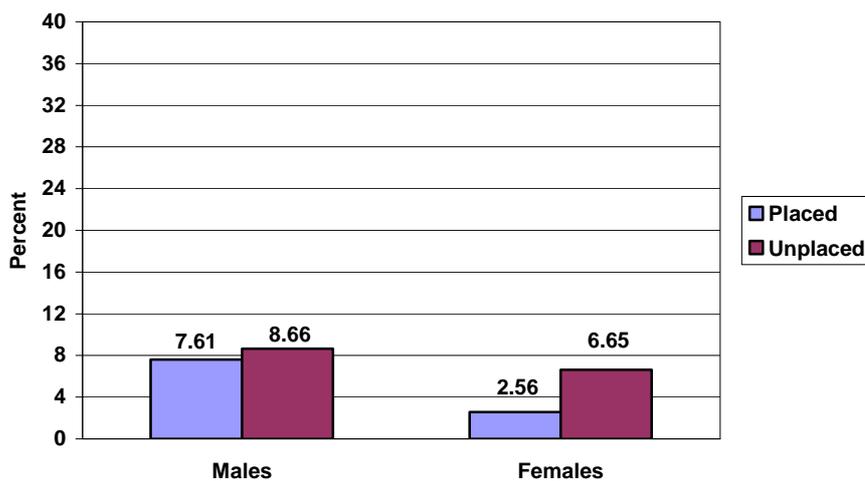


Figure 25: Re-offending rates of male and female clients.

Females had an overall lower re-offending rate compared with males, regardless of whether they had been placed into employment. However, for both males and females, employment placement had a positive effect on the re-offending rate. The effect of employment placement on recidivism was much greater for females than for males.

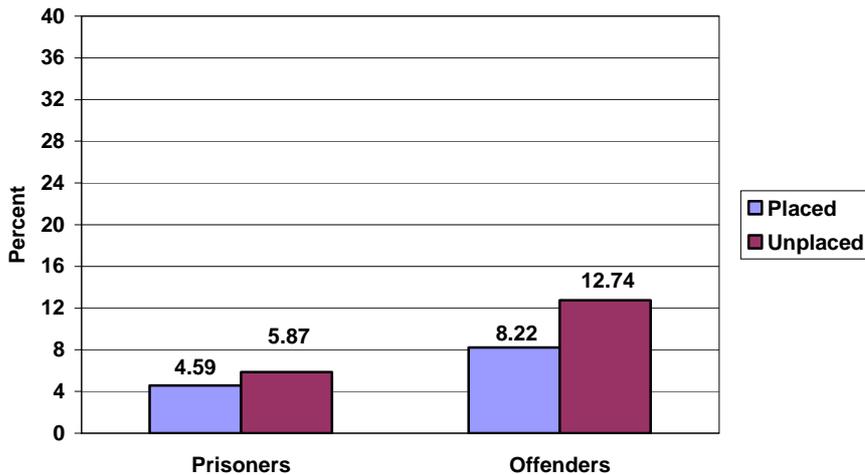


Figure 26: Re-offending rates of prisoner and offender clients.

Prisoners had slightly more than half the re-offending rate of offenders overall, irrespective of whether the prisoners were placed in employment or not. Male prisoners in particular had a low re-offending rate compared to male offender clients. This difference may be confounded somewhat by location differences in service provision. It is important to note that prisoners, upon release, may relocate to any one of the community corrections locations. In any case, for both prisoner clients and offender clients, employment placement had a positive effect on re-offending rate. The effect of employment placement on recidivism was much greater for offender clients than for prisoner clients, but unplaced prisoner clients had a very low rate of re-offending, a lower rate than offender clients who were placed into employment, in fact. This result indicates that the program has worked very well for prisoner clients, and that there is an overall ‘program effect’ in addition to the positive effect of employment on re-offending. It has also obviously worked well for offender clients as well, in that their rates of re-offending were also very low, well below non-program statistics within the corrections system and reported in the literature.

There were differences in rates of re-offending related to provider as well.

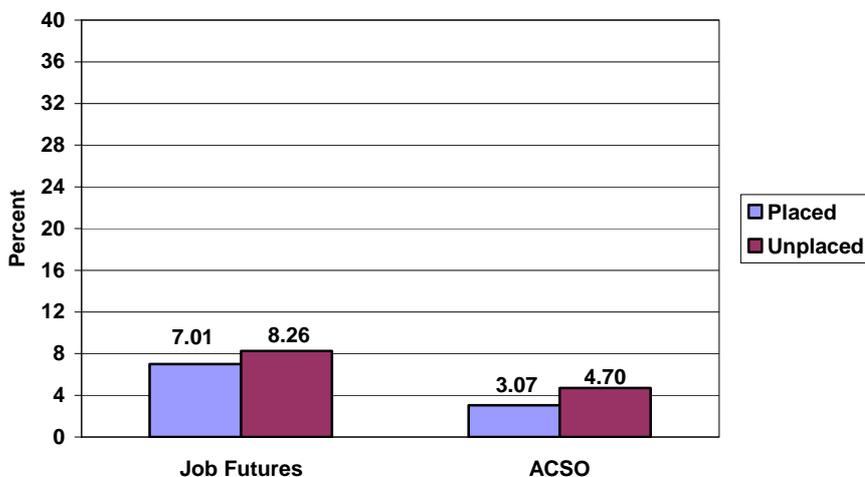


Figure 27: Re-offending rates of Job Futures consortium and ACSO clients.

Lower re-offending rates were associated with ACSO for both clients placed into employment and those not placed, but the differences were not great. The slightly higher rates associated with the Job Futures consortium may be related to their concerted effort to engage clients with a high risk of re-offending, but that cannot be determined. In any case, rates were low for both providers.

There are clear indications from these results of positive effects of the program on recidivism. Even program clients not placed in employment have had low rates of re-offending. Those placed in employment have performed even better. Of course, there may also be some location effects and other confounding variables. In any case, the program appears to be achieving its objective of reduced re-offending to a very impressive extent.

Additional Analyses of Recidivism

Additional analyses of recidivism were conducted to investigate more fully program effects on re-offending. As described above, the procedure for conducting the additional recidivism analyses included working with IT staff within Corrections Victoria to create two random samples of 600 clients each: one a set of CSEPP client files and one a set of non-CSEPP client files. Because they are random samples, no location matching, criminal history matching, gender or age matching, or any other standardising steps were conducted. The validity of the results is based solely on the randomness of the sampling procedure. Furthermore, having been derived from the PIMS database exclusively, the samples are restricted to clients with some sort of custodial sentence (arguably at higher risk of re-offending than those with no custodial sentence on record). The results in this section must be considered suggestive and not conclusive because they do not represent the total of CSEPP clients, just prisoner clients. Also, to repeat our earlier caveat, the two samples could differ significantly in terms of time since release, given that the CSEPP population from which that sample was drawn comprises only pre-release and relatively recently released clients, while the non-CSEPP population has a much greater range of time since release. This is important because time since release is known to be a reliable predictor of re-offending. Further analysis of the data already provided was not possible due to current rollout of CJEP (the new data management system). Therefore, further research is necessary to make valid comparisons. These results are also suggestive of the kind of further research that is needed in investigating more thoroughly factors that influence success in reintegration.

The measures of recidivism included ‘rate of recidivism’ (number of offences per day), ‘recidivism seriousness’ (rated severity of offences), and ‘poly-recidivism’ (number of different offences) recorded. The figures below depict the differences between the CSEPP client sample and the non-CSEPP client sample on those three measures.

Offences per day

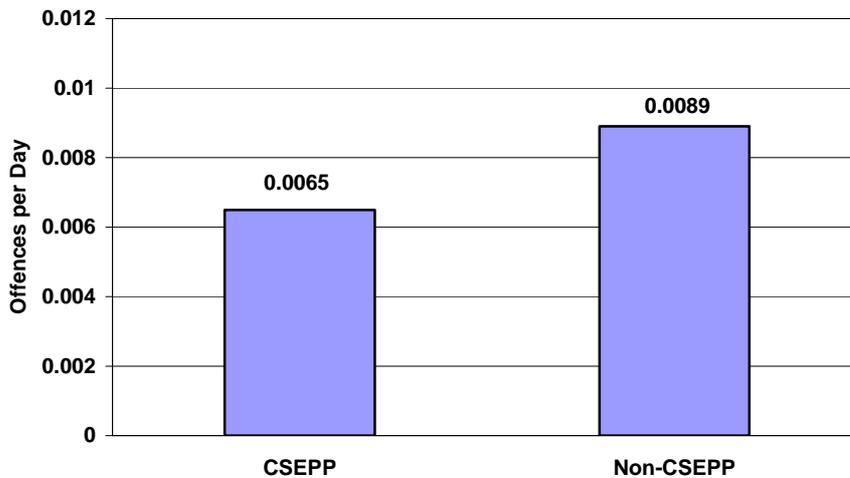


Figure 28: Recidivism as average number of offences per day for CSEPP and Non-CSEPP samples.

Number of offences per day was expected to be small of course. It is a useful measure because it allows us to standardise the unit of time. Figure 28 reveals that CSEPP clients committed fewer offences per day ($M = .0065$), compared with the rate of re-offending for non-CSEPP clients ($M = .0089$). The difference between CSEPP clients and non-CSEPP clients was found to be statistically significant, $F(1, 1508) = 5.98, p < .05$.

Recidivism seriousness

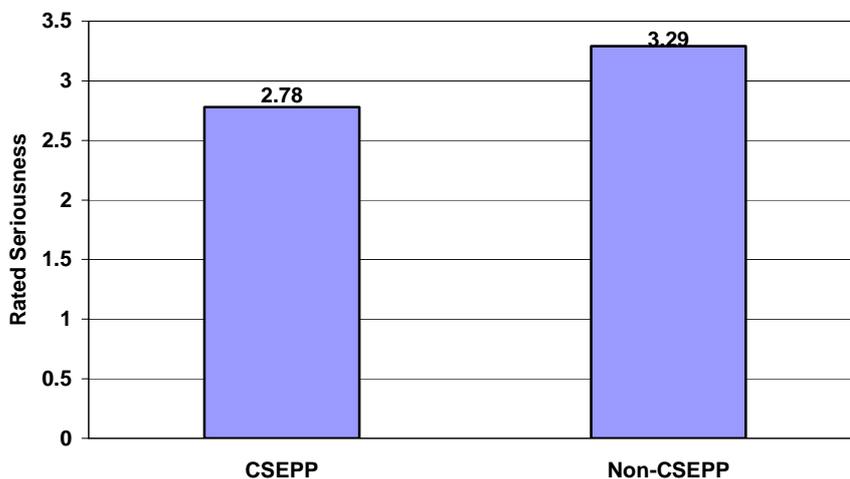


Figure 29: Average recidivism seriousness for CSEPP and Non-CSEPP samples.

Figure 29 reveals that the average seriousness of CSEPP client offences was 2.78, indicating an average just below 'moderately serious' (e.g., robberies, burglaries, intention to harm). The average for non-CSEPP clients was 3.29, somewhat greater than 'moderately serious'. The

difference between CSEPP clients and non-CSEPP clients in relation to recidivism seriousness was also found to be statistically significant, $F(1, 1508) = 23.69, p < .001$.

Poly-recidivism

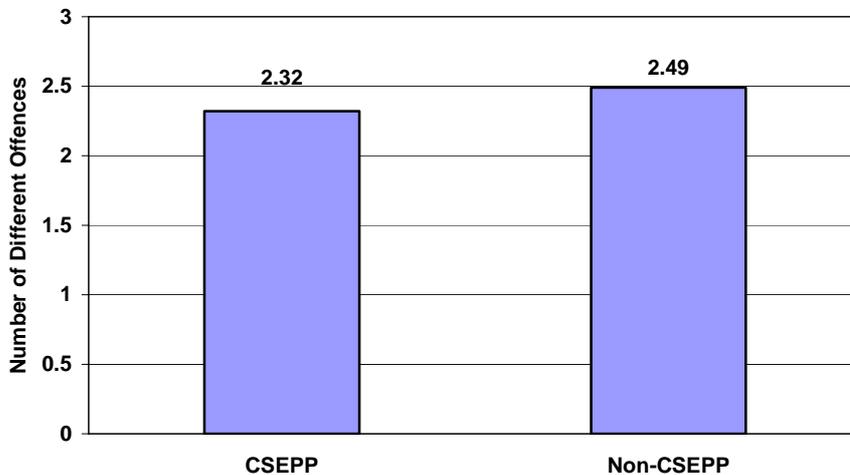


Figure 30: Average number of offences for CSEPP and Non-CSEPP samples.

Of the CSEPP clients in the sample who had re-offended, the average was 2.32 different kinds of offences, while re-offending non-CSEPP clients averaged 2.49 different kinds of offences. The difference between CSEPP clients and non-CSEPP clients in relation to poly-recidivism, that is, the number of different offences committed, was statistically significant, $F(1, 1508) = 7.31, p = 0.01$.

Recidivism of CSEPP Clients Pre and Post Registration

In addition to comparisons between CSEPP clients and non-CSEPP clients, we also investigated pre and post CSEPP registration offending within the CSEPP sample. That investigation included the three recidivism measures: rate of recidivism; recidivism seriousness; and poly-recidivism. The results of that investigation are reported and presented in the figures and text that follow.

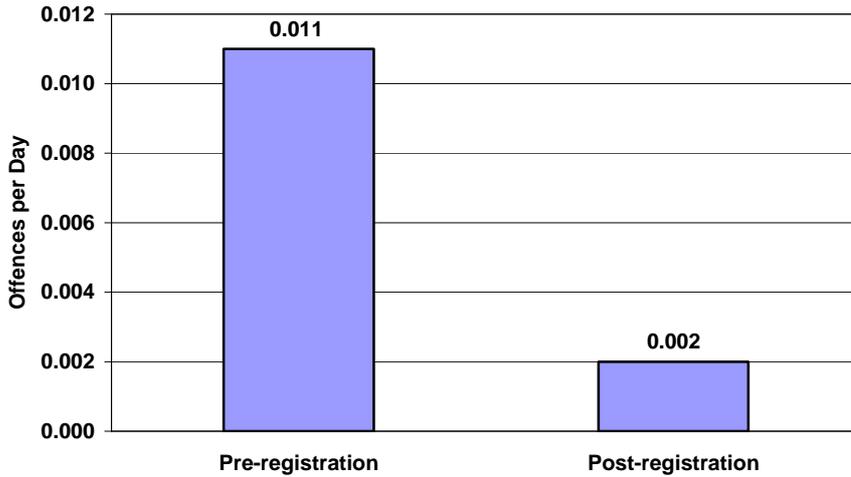


Figure 31: Average offences per day for CSEPP clients, pre and post CSEPP registration.

As above, the number of offences per day was expected to be small. It is a useful measure because it allows us to standardise the unit of time. There was a definite reduction in number of offences for the sample of CSEPP clients following registration. The difference in number of offences per day before and after CSEPP registration was statistically significant, $F(1, 586) = 61.10, p < .001$, indicating that the difference could not be a ‘chance’ result. The decline in number of offences per day equals a decline of 82% in offending ($.002/.011 = .18$).

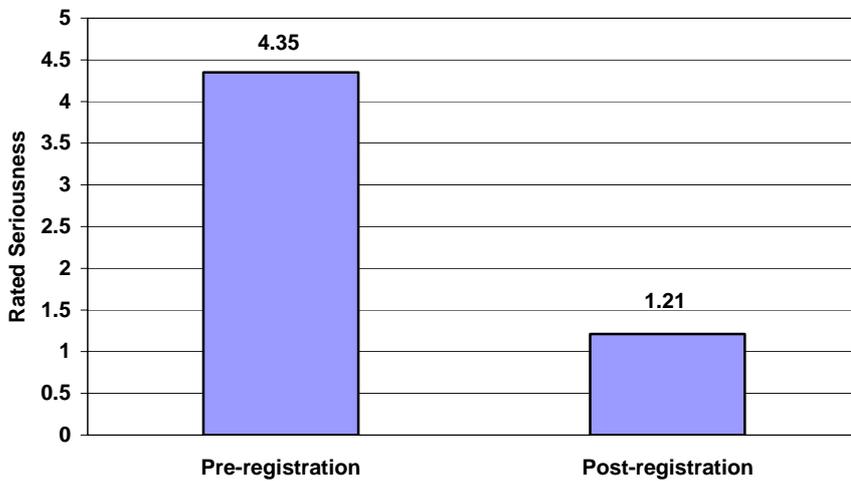


Figure 32: Recidivism seriousness for CSEPP clients, pre and post CSEPP registration.

There was also a reduction in recidivism seriousness for CSEPP clients following their CSEPP registration. That difference too was statistically significant, $F(1, 586) = 594, p < .001$, indicating that the difference could not be a ‘chance’ result. The decline in seriousness of offences equals a decline of 72% in offending ($1.21/4.35 = .28$).

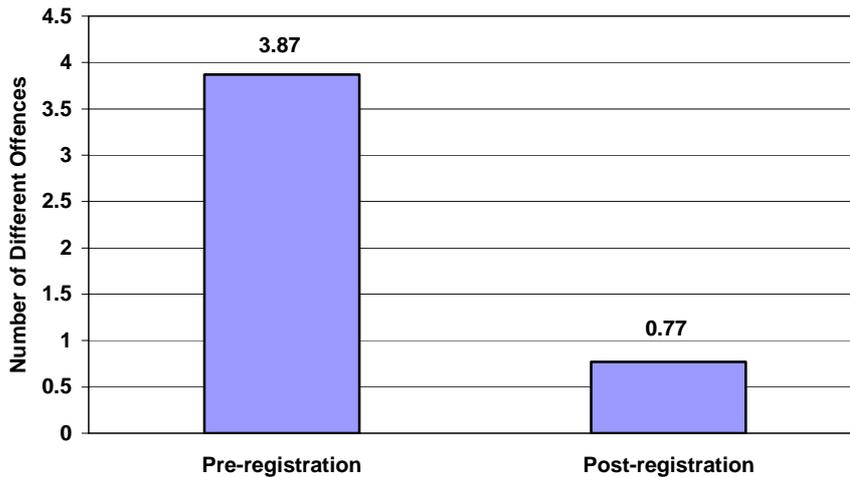


Figure 33: Poly-recidivism for CSEPP clients, pre and post CSEPP registration.

For poly-recidivism as well, the number of different offences committed, there was a reduction in offending by clients in the CSEPP sample following their CSEPP registration, and that difference was statistically significant, $F(1, 586) = 1156, p = 0.01$, again indicating that the difference could not be a ‘chance’ result. The decline in number of offences per day equals a decline of 80% in offending ($.77/3.87 = .20$).

4.4.4 Summary of Recidivism Outcomes

Several major findings came out of the recidivism outcomes analysis.

- The rate of re-offending by registered CSEPP clients was very low (7.46%), well below re-offending rates reported in the literature (perhaps 40% over a two year period).
- Re-offending was low for both clients placed in employment and those not placed, suggesting a positive program effect as well as an employment effect.
- Lower rates of re-offending for clients placed in employment shows a clear relationship between employment and reduced recidivism.
- There were differences between male and female clients in terms of rates of re-offending; females had an overall lower re-offending rate, and employment placement had a much greater effect on lower recidivism for females.
- Prisoners had slightly more than half the re-offending rate of offenders overall, irrespective of whether the prisoners were placed in employment or not.
- Male prisoners in particular had a low re-offending rate compared to male CCS clients.
- Comparison of CSEPP and non-CSEPP clients showed lower recidivism for CSEPP clients on all three recidivism measures.
- Comparison of pre and post CSEPP registration recidivism of CSEPP clients showed reduced recidivism after registration on all three recidivism measures.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Employment Outcomes

Employment outcomes for the CSEPP program as a whole were considered in relation to several measures: the number of registrations, placements, outcomes, and validations; the proportion of registrations converted to placements; the proportion of placements converted to 13 week outcomes; and the proportion of registrations converted to outcomes. Location outcomes investigated were the proportion of registrations converted to outcomes and the average number of days from registration to outcome for those clients who did achieve an outcome.

The major findings to come out of the employment outcomes analysis include: an overall employment placement rate of 34% in the first two years and 40% in the first four months of the third year; and an overall 13 week outcomes rate of 16% in the first two years and 19% in the first four months of the third year. Gender differences were identified including: males comprised 80% + of registered clients and females comprised just less than 20%; males and females had had nearly equal rates of registration following referral; relatively fewer females were placed in employment, but a higher percentage of those placed achieved 13 week outcomes; and females had relatively less conversion of registrations to 13 week outcomes.

The whole process of client progress is marked by variable rates of participation. Across gender, client status, and providers, rates of converting registrations to placements have been highly variable, while conversions of placements to outcomes have shown very little variation. Within the first two years of the pilot, conversions of placements to outcomes were very near 50% irrespective gender, client status, or provider. This suggests that extra effort, new knowledge, or innovative procedures will be necessary to raise that rate. In the first four months of the third year, some variations have been apparent. Conversions of registrations through to 13 week outcomes were also highly variable. Location variations were also identified, in relation to percentage of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes and in average number of days between registration and 13 week outcome for clients who do achieve an outcome. In general, prison locations recorded lower conversion rates and more days taken to achieve outcomes. These results are not surprising, given pre-release time in the program, complexity of client support needs, and specific support needs associated with release.

The program numbers suggest that it took some time to get program management and service delivery processes in place before the volume of clients began to produce the flow through required to achieve target outcomes. That is probably due to normal establishment issues and compounded by intermittent disruptions that were the result of the conditions described in the previous section. Certainly, once the extension to the contract was resolved, over the first four months of the third year, there has been a substantial increase in the volume of clients coming into and progressing through the program, and the program is performing well above the original target rate. Another suggestion derived from the numbers is that there is a strong emphasis on assisting prisoner clients who have comprised 55% of the total client population, while comprising approximately 35% of the criminal justice system population. This commitment to assisting prisoners is consistent with the program objective of focusing on clients with a high risk of re-offending.

Interpreting Results

The conversion rates tell us that it is quite easy to ‘sell’ the program to prisoners, in that they had a much higher rate of referrals becoming registrations than did offenders. However, it was harder to achieve outcomes with prisoner clients. The process of a client progressing from registration to placement to outcome is quite resource intensive (relatively small percentages of registered clients do achieve outcomes, especially, thus far, prisoner clients). In the recent four month period, however, more than 61% of prisoner placements were converted to outcomes, with 15.6% of prison clients progressing from registration through to a 13 week outcome, a very encouraging sign. Even at the rate that has consistently been achieved (slightly less than 50%) the program must be considered economically viable because of the economics of reduced recidivism and the social costs to everyone when clients continue a criminal lifestyle.

The employment outcome results compare well with outcomes achieved for other high support needs client groups in specialist and in mainstream employment assistance programs. A review of Job Network provider performance in working with disadvantaged and Intensive Support clients (including anyone unemployed for more than 3 months) suggests a rate of 13 week outcomes just below 30% (DEWR, 2003). A referent ‘four star’ Job Network Intensive Support provider has reported a 31% success rate in achieving 13 week outcomes. High program retention and later rates of employment were reported for a supported employment program in the US (Finn, 1998), but that program is very different from the open employment focus of CSEPP. The Queensland Department of Corrective Services employment assistance program has reported a 31% success rate in placing clients into supported employment. CSEPP had a placement rate of 33% in the first two years and a placement rate of 40% in the first four months of the third year.

The contracted target for CSEPP over the two year pilot period was 450 outcomes from 2500 registered clients, a rate of 18%. That was almost achieved in the two year period, and is being exceeded thus far in the third year. Our projection for the future is that the program will continue to perform at or above its current rate. There are three key reasons for continuing high performance:

- Learning and expertise gained during the pilot period is already reflected in improved performance.
- Stability in the operating context was lacking during at least half of the initial pilot period, but is now a current condition that is likely to be maintained into the future.
- Provision of a three-year contract would provide enough security to control staff turnover and provide internal stability to the program.

Although CSEPP 13 week outcome rates were not as high as the Job Network figures cited, the client group is undoubtedly one, on the whole, with extremely intensive support needs, particularly when one considers the high proportion of prisoner clients.

4.5.2 Recidivism Outcomes

Recidivism outcomes were investigated by examining re-offending rates of the whole CSEPP client population, and also by comparing random samples of CSEPP clients and non-CSEPP clients. Recidivism measures included: rate of recidivism (offences per day); recidivism

seriousness (rated 'seriousness' of offences committed); and poly-recidivism (number of different offences committed). Re-offending has been low in the client population as a whole (7.46%); low in comparison to reported figures in the literature that suggests generally high rates of recidivism (Travis et al., 2001). As earlier pointed out, it is important to note that the timeframe for program involvement (12 months) is shorter than the two-year timeframe used in many studies of re-offending. However, existing research literature also suggests that a high proportion of re-offending occurs within 3 – 6 months of a prison release, indicating that program results are impressive by comparison.

Comparisons between clients placed in employment and those not placed, indicated that re-offending of clients placed in employment was lower, but re-offending was quite low for clients who had not achieved a placement yet as well. These results suggest that the program itself has a positive effect on recidivism, in addition to the employment effect that is suggested by the results. Re-offending was lower for females than males and substantially lower for prisoner clients than offender clients. In fact, prisoner clients had slightly more than half the re-offending rate as that of offender clients.

The additional analyses based on the random samples of CSEPP clients and non-CSEPP clients showed lower recidivism for the CSEPP sample on all three measures. All differences were found to be statistically significant. Analysis of recidivism rates of the CSEPP sample clients before and after registration in the program showed reduced recidivism after registration on all three recidivism measures. Those differences were all found to be statistically significant as well.

Interpreting Results

These results show quite clearly that CSEPP clients have experienced definite reductions in re-offending, in the rate of offending, the severity of offences, and the range of offences committed. As we have pointed out already, there is a strong focus in the program on engaging prisoners as clients with medium to high risk of re-offending. That is clear from the high proportion of prisoner clients in the CSEPP client population. The dual emphasis of the program on employment and reduction of re-offending is an important element in the program logic and design. It is also important to its success. It is reasonable to assume that the low rates of re-offending, even among those clients not placed in employment suggests a motivation to change on the part of clients in general, as well as simply an intention to seek employment. As such, the program either attracts committed clients, develops in clients some commitment to reintegration, or a combination of both conditions. It is not possible to determine at this point which factor is the greater contributor to reduced re-offending.

It is highly probable that, in the future, the current rates of re-offending will be maintained or improved, although the rates achieved to date are extremely low. Again as earlier explained, it is important to note that the timeframe for program involvement (12 months) is shorter than the two-year timeframe used in many studies of re-offending. However, existing research literature also suggests that a high proportion of re-offending occurs within 3 – 6 months of a prison release, indicating that program results are impressive by comparison. The reasons for our confidence in the current performance being maintained are that:

- There has been a strong focus on continuous improvement within the program from the beginning.
- The focus on transition from prison to community has been strong from the beginning and improvements to the transition process have been made and will undoubtedly continue to be made.
- The stability in the program workforce that has been achieved in the past six months and will be maintained if a three year contract were to follow the pilot period.
- Continuing the high level of communication with Corrections Victoria location staff that is evident in most locations and improving communication in the few where improvement is required.

Because CSEPP is more than an employment program and also focuses on assistance in transition / reintegration, there is a high probability that providers will maintain attention to assisting clients in reduced re-offending. Because re-offending is associated with being unemployed, success in placing and maintaining clients in employment is likely to lead to reduced re-offending. In short, the two main objectives of the program, employment and reduced re-offending, are inter-dependent. A focus on continuous improvement of performance by providers with respect to the program structures and processes as a whole should ensure a continuation of impressive and improving rates of employment and maintenance of low rates of re-offending among CSEPP clients as the program moves into the future.

Section 5: Indirect Gains Associated with the Program

5.1 Introduction

A third empirical component of the evaluation involved investigation of broader, more indirect gains associated with client involvement in the program. From the perspective of program logic and program design, the CSEPP was conceptualised, developed, and delivered as a reintegration program, as much as an employment assistance program. This is quite clear from the tender and contract, as well as from the evaluation brief. Therefore, it is important to assess the extent to which the program has facilitated positive change for clients, which promotes their reintegration into the community. Although no causal links can be drawn, it is reasonable to assume that change in an individual's life conditions associated with continuing participation in the program can be at least partially attributable to program involvement.

In order to investigate broader changes relevant to reintegration, the evaluation has focused on changes within several life domains. These include: physical and psychological health; housing; employment and training; finances; social network; substance use; criminal justice activity; and corrections program participation. Several specific questions were addressed in relation to each of those domains. Another element of the program's logic, reflected in the documents mentioned above, has been a recognition that steps forward are generally small and progress is often not linear, but rather marked by intermittency and occasional temporary regressions. With those acknowledgments in mind, we have approached this component of the evaluation with a focus on indirect gains.

In analysing the results of this investigation, we have focused on the broader, indirect outcomes for the group of CSEPP clients as a whole and also focused on differential outcomes related to length of time in the program. Length of time in the program has been investigated by comparing outcomes for four cohorts of CSEPP clients: those new to CSEPP (pre-release prisoners and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 1 month); 3 month clients (3 month post-release prisoner clients and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 3 months); 6 months clients (6 month post-release prisoner clients and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 6 months); and 9 month clients (9 month post-release prisoner clients and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 9 months).

5.2 Summary of this Section

Key Findings: Indirect Gains from the Program

- For the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients, there is evidence of increasing housing stability over time. Among the 9 month client group over 80% reported long-term or continuing arrangements.
- Employment and training conditions for clients also indicate poor employment histories, but improving conditions and increasing stability over time in the program. The employment rate increased from 30% for new offender clients to over 80% for the 9 month client group. There were also increases in the number of days worked in the past month, number of weeks in the position, hours worked per week, and income earned for the 9 month client group.
- Finances for clients also showed signs of improving for the 9 month group, with over 80% reporting income self-sufficiency. Lack of money as an impediment to getting or keeping a job, housing, family, health, or drug and alcohol treatment was generally lower for the 9 month group.
- The 9 month clients reported more friends than did the other client groups, and they had an equivalent level of family support.
- With respect to substance use, there was a much more frequent history of heroin and other hard drug use among pre-release prisoner clients than for the other client groups. There were also fewer pre-release prisoner clients who were drug and/or alcohol free (prior to incarceration) compared to the other client groups.
- Substance use was equivalent across the groups. However, approximately half of the client participants reported no drug or alcohol use at all, and the 9 month offender clients reported that drugs and alcohol were less of a problem in their daily life than did the other groups.
- The results taken as a whole indicate volatility of conditions among the new client, 3 month client, and 6 month client groups, with signs of improvement by 9 months.
- For the 9 month client group, there were definite improvements in housing, employment and training, finances, and social network development.
- There was improvement by 9 months of program participation in four of seven domains, with the domain of health rated as quite good, and consistently so, across offender client groups, and substance use and criminal justice activity much the same across the four groups.

The profile of clients within the program indicates a wide range of life conditions. Typically, there is evidence of disadvantage and support needs across a number of life domains. .

- The typical client was male, between 28 and 35 years of age.
- The typical client had completed Year 9 or 10 of their education.
- They either had never been married or were married or in a de-facto relationship (typically, not separated).
- Clients' physical health was generally reported to be good to very good, although the majority of pre-release prisoner clients reported at least one chronic medical condition, mostly frequently Hepatitis C; medical conditions tended not to have much impact on daily lifestyle.
- Clients' psychological health was reported as generally good to very good; three quarters of both pre-release prisoner clients and new offender clients reported no chronic conditions of mental ill-health with a similar pattern observed for the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients. Those reporting mental ill-health reported moderate impact on daily lifestyle.
- Their housing status was quite varied; however, typically housing became more stable with more time in the program.
- Typically, finances were not reported as a major problem, only moderately problematic in relation to day-to-day living expenses; however, finances improved with length in program.
- Their social networks were relatively intact, with typically good family relations described, but relatively few friends (again, more reported by those in the program longer).
- Typically, moderate alcohol and drug use was reported by clients, however those in the program longer reported substance use to be less problematic to them.
- The typical client had no record of re-offending once in the program (only three in the sample had re-offended including breaches), but almost all had an order to complete (either custodial or non-custodial) for most of the time that they were in the program.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Demographic Information on the Sample

For this component of the evaluation, the sample comprised approximately equal numbers of prisoner clients and offender clients. The sample comprised five groups.

- Pre-release prisoner clients (n = 28)
- 'New' clients comprising offender clients registered with CSEPP for one month (n = 20)
- 3 month clients comprising prisoner clients 3 months post-release and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 3 months (n = 28),
- 6 month clients comprising prisoner clients 6 months post-release and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 6 months (n = 22)

- 9 month clients comprising prisoner clients 9 months post-release and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 9 months (n= 11) (Note that the small number of 9 month clients is partly due to the period of industrial bans that reduced referrals to a minimum 9-12 months ago).

The pre-release prisoner clients and 1 month offender clients served as a comparison with other groups, in that we would expect to see little in the way of indirect gains given that they were either in prison or had only been in the CSEPP program for one month. The 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month client groups provided an opportunity to investigate indirect gains related to time in the program.

Table 18 shows the frequency of pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and 3 month clients (prisoner clients and offender clients), 6 month clients (prisoner clients and offender clients), and 9 month clients (prisoner clients and offender clients) with respect to gender, education level and marital status.

Table 18: Percent distribution of gender, education level and marital status for pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	Pre-release Prisoner clients	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	(n=28)	(n=20)	(n=28)	(n=22)	(n=11)
	%	%	%	%	%
Gender					
Male	63.3	70.0	75.0	77.3	72.7
Female	36.7	30.0	25.0	22.7	27.3
Educational Attainment					
Did not complete primary school	7.1	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Did not complete high school	82.1	66.7	58.3	40.0	90.0
Some TAFE Units	3.6	13.3	20.8	10.0	0.0
Completed TAFE course	3.6	6.7	12.5	35.0	10.0
Some university units	0.0	0.0	4.2	5.0	0.0
Completed university degree	3.6	0.0	4.2	10.0	0.0
Marital Status					
Married/de facto relationship	46.4	6.3	41.7	42.9	50.0
Never married/not with partner	50.0	75.0	41.7	47.6	40.0
Divorced	3.6	0.0	8.3	9.5	0.0
Separated	0.0	18.8	4.2	0.0	10.0
Widowed	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	0.0

Most pre-release prisoner clients and new offender clients originated from Australia (93% and 81%, respectively), as did those clients in the 3 month (71%), 6 month (91%), and 9 month (70%) groups. Ages ranged from 21 to 44 years for the pre-release prisoner clients ($M = 29.4$, $SD = 6.4$), with the majority being males (63.3%). Ages ranged from 18 to 45 years for the new offender clients ($M = 27.9$, $SD = 8.5$), with the majority males (70%). Clients who had been in the CSEPP program for 3 months, 6 months, or 9 months were generally older. Ages ranged from 22 to 56 years for the 3 month clients ($M = 34.9$, $SD = 9.1$), with the majority males (75%). Ages ranged from 18 to 56 years for the 6 month clients ($M = 31.8$, $SD = 10.8$), with the majority males (77%). Ages ranged from 23 to 51 years for the 9 month clients ($M = 32.9$, $SD = 8.6$), with the majority males (73%). It should be noted that the gender distribution of pre-release prisoner clients closely

matches the prison population and the gender distribution of the other four groups shows a slightly lower distribution of males than exists within the criminal justice system.

The majority of the pre-release prisoner clients (82.1%) and new offender clients (66.7%) had not completed high school. Among the pre-release prisoner clients, the average highest level of education of those who had not completed high school was Year 9 ($M = 9.6$, $SD = 1.53$). Likewise, for the new offender clients, the average highest year level reached by those not completing high school was Year 9 ($M = 9.9$, $SD = 0.9$). Across the five groups, the 6 month clients had the highest frequency of high school completion (60%), whereas only 10% of the 9 month clients had completed high school indicating that those who were in the program the longest were more educationally disadvantaged. For the 3 month clients, the average highest year level reached by those not completing high school was Year 10 ($M = 10.0$, $SD = 1.1$). Likewise, for the 6 months clients, the average highest year level reached by those not completing high school was Year 10 ($M = 10.5$, $SD = 1.2$). For the 9 month clients, the average highest year level reached by those not completing high school was also Year 10 ($M = 10.3$, $SD = 1.4$).

At the time of their arrest, the large majority of pre-release prisoner clients were either never married/not living with their partner (50%) or were married or in a de facto relationship (46%). Following their incarceration, only 7 of 12 pre-release prisoner clients (58.3%) were still married or in a de facto relationship. Just over half of the prisoner clients had children (54%, $mdn = 2$). Three quarters of the new offender clients had never been married and 50% of the group had children ($mdn = 1.5$). Clients from the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month groups were typically either married/de facto relationship or had never been married. About half of the 3 month (58.3%, $mdn = 2$), 6 month (47.6%, $mdn = 2$), and 9 month (40%, $mdn = 3$) clients had children.

In summary, the typical pre-release prisoner client is male, 29 years of age, has a Year 9 education, and has either never been married or is married or in a de-facto relationship (not separated or divorced). The typical new offender client is male, 28 years of age, has a Year 9 education, and has never been married. The typical 3 month client is male, slightly older at 35 years, has a Year 10 education, and is either married/de facto relationship or has never been married relationship (not separated or divorced). The typical 6 month client is male, 32 years of age, has a Year 10 education, and is either married/de facto relationship or has never been married relationship (not separated or divorced). The typical 9 month client is male, 33 years of age, has a Year 10 education, and is either married/de facto relationship or has never been married relationship (not separated or divorced).

5.3.2 Instrument

Two instruments were used in this study: a Pre-release Questionnaire for pre-release prisoner clients; and a Community-based Questionnaire for the post-release prisoner clients (3 month, 6 month, 9 month) and offender clients (new offender clients, 3 month offender clients, 6 month offender clients, 9 month offender clients).

Pre-Release Questionnaire

There were ten sections in the Pre-release Questionnaire. The questionnaire included 75 questions that focused on:

- age, ethnicity, education level, marital status, living arrangement prior to incarceration, and employment history;
- employment, education, and training in prison;

- substance use history;
- housing conditions prior to incarceration and anticipated accommodation upon release;
- employment conditions prior to incarceration and anticipated employment conditions upon release;
- current health conditions;
- finances prior to release and anticipated finances upon release;
- type and level of social support in prison;
- pre-release planning and preparation; and
- general questions relating to immediate, short-term, and long-term goals upon release.

Response format included open-ended questions (e.g., what chronic medical conditions do you have?), seven-point Likert rating scales (e.g., 1: not a problem to 7: an extremely big problem), and yes/no responses (e.g., have you had a job while you have been in prison?).

Community-based Questionnaire

There were also ten sections in the Community-based Questionnaire. This questionnaire included 56 questions focused on much the same issues as those addressed in the Pre-release Questionnaire (apart from prison-specific questions). Here the questions pertained to the respondent's present situation in the community. The sections were as follows:

- information pertaining to their release (prisoner clients only);
- age, ethnicity, education level, marital status;
- housing conditions, including stability of housing;
- financial situation;
- employment conditions (including stability of employment), education, and training;
- substance use;
- current health conditions;
- social network;
- criminal justice activity (re-offending, supervision and reporting, program participation); and
- general questions relating to immediate, short-term, and long-term goals.

Response format included open-ended questions (e.g., what chronic medical conditions do you have?), seven-point Likert rating scales (e.g., 1: not a problem to 7: an extremely big problem), and yes/no responses (e.g., have you had a job while you have been in prison?).

5.3.3 Procedure

Prospective participants were identified in terms of the length of their involvement in the program: pre-release and new (1 month); 3 months; 6 months; and 9 months or more. Selection/invitation was based on most recent to least recent person within each category across seven CSEPP locations. Invitations to participate in this component of the evaluation were made by CSEPP providers and CV locations personnel. Prospective participants were contacted by researchers, a time was arranged to conduct the interview, and the interview was conducted at the participant's convenience. All questionnaires were completed as a structured interview, whereby the interviewer read the questionnaire to the client participant who responded verbally. The interviewer recorded the response. Interviews with pre-release prisoner clients for whom appointments were made through a CSEPP provider, were conducted in consulting rooms within the prisons' programs units. For offender clients, some interviews were conducted at CCS locations, some at CSEPP locations, and some by telephone if elected by the participant.

5.3.4 Data Analysis

Percent distributions were produced for relevant variables associated with the seven sections addressed in this report (Health, Housing, Employment and Training, Finances, Social Network, Substance Use, Criminal Justice Activity). Means and standard deviations were calculated for relevant interval and ratio scale variables from the seven sections (e.g., average earnings, average rating of health). Between-group differences in client responses (pre-release prisoner clients/new offender clients and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients) were examined using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) on specific variables from the seven sections.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Health

General Physical and Mental Health

Participants were asked to rate their physical and psychological health on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 'extremely poor' (1) to 'extremely good' (6). Table 19 shows the mean and standard deviation of scores for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 19: Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) of the physical and psychological health rating for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	Pre-release prisoner clients	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Physical Health	4.2 (0.8)	4.4 (0.9)	4.2 (0.9)	4.0 (1.0)	4.5 (1.0)
Psychological Health	4.3 (1.0)	4.3 (1.2)	4.5 (1.1)	4.0 (1.2)	4.6 (1.2)

The pre-release prisoner clients reported good to very good physical health, as did the new offender clients. The 3 month and 9 month clients also reported good to very good physical health, with the 9 month clients reporting the highest physical health rating. The 6 month clients had the lowest physical health rating, still indicating good physical health. A one-way ANOVA on the physical health rating for the five groups revealed significant between-group differences in physical health ratings, $F(4, 102) = 2.76, p < .05$, with the 6 month clients ($M = 4.0$) having a significantly lower mean physical health rating than did the new offender clients ($M = 4.4$). Even though the mean score for the 9 month clients was higher ($M = 4.5$) than that of the 6 month clients, the difference did not prove statistically significant because there was more variation in 9 month responses.

The pre-release prisoner clients reported good to very good psychological health, as did the new offender clients. The psychological health ratings for the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month groups were also high, indicating good to very good psychological health. A one-way ANOVA on the psychological health rating for the five groups revealed no significant between-groups difference ($p > .05$) in the psychological health rating.

Chronic Medical Conditions

Participants reported the existence of any chronic medical conditions and conditions of mental ill-health. Table 20 presents a percent distribution of diagnosed chronic medical and psychological conditions for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients. As several participants had multiple medical and psychological conditions, the percent refers to reported conditions rather than number of clients (therefore the percent totals do not equal 100%).

Table 20: Percent distribution of diagnosed chronic medical and psychological conditions for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	Pre-release prisoner clients	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Chronic Medical Condition					
No chronic medical condition	28.6	80.0	46.4	50.0	54.5
Hepatitis C	46.9	4.3	30.0	9.1	8.3
Asthma	9.4	13.0	13.3	18.2	25.0
Diabetes	3.1	4.3	3.3	9.1	16.7
Hepatitis B	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
Dyslexia/Learning Difficulties	3.1	4.3	3.3	4.5	0.0
Other	12.5	4.3	6.7	4.5	0.0
Psychological Health					
No psychological condition	75.0	75.0	84.6	77.3	72.7
Depression	10.0	14.3	11.1	8.7	9.1
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anxiety Disorder	0.0	4.8	0.0	4.3	9.1
Schizophrenia	3.3	0.0	0.0	8.7	0.0
Paranoia	3.3	4.8	3.7	0.0	0.0
Antisocial Dissociative Disorder	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Borderline Personality Disorder	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bipolar Disorder	0.0	4.8	3.7	4.3	9.1

The large majority (71.4%) of pre-release prisoner clients indicated that they had a diagnosed chronic medical condition. The two most prominent medical conditions for the pre-release prisoner clients were hepatitis C (46.9%) and asthma (9.4%). Fewer new offender clients had a diagnosed chronic medical condition (20%); the most prominent condition was asthma (13%). About half of the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients had a diagnosed chronic medical condition, with hepatitis C, asthma, and diabetes the most frequently reported medical conditions.

Only four pre-release prisoner clients reported that they were currently receiving in-prison treatment for a chronic medical condition and none had missed taking medication for the medical condition while in prison. Three new offender clients were currently receiving treatment for their medical condition(s) and none had missed taking the medication. A large proportion of the 3 month (6 clients), 6 month (8 clients), and 9 month (5 clients) clients were taking medication for their medical condition(s) and only one 3 month client had missed taking their medication.

One quarter of the pre-release prisoner clients and new offender clients reported a diagnosed psychological condition. The most prominent psychological condition for both of these groups was depression (pre-release prisoner clients: 10.0%; new offender clients: 14.3%). The 3 month client group had the fewest number of people with a diagnosed psychological condition (15.4%) and the 9 month clients had the highest number of people with a diagnosed psychological condition (27.3%). Depression was the most frequently reported psychological condition for the 3 month clients at 11.1%, while depression (8.7%) and schizophrenia (8.7%) were the most prominent psychological conditions for the 6 month clients. Similarly, the most prominent psychological conditions for the 9 month clients was depression (9.1%), anxiety disorder (9.1%), and bi-polar disorder (9.1%).

Three of the seven pre-release prisoner clients who reported a psychological condition indicated that they were currently receiving in-prison treatment for an existing psychological condition. Of the six pre-release prisoner clients who were on medication for a psychological condition, only one indicated that she had missed taking her medication while in prison. None of the new offender clients who reported a psychological condition were receiving treatment for their psychological condition. In contrast, all of the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients who reported a psychological condition were currently receiving treatment for their psychological condition; of these one 3 month client had missed taking their medication.

Health Impact on Lifestyle

Participants were also asked to rate the effect of the medical condition and/or psychological condition on their daily lifestyle using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'no effect at all' (0) to 'an extremely serious effect' (6). Table 21 shows the mean and standard deviation of these scores for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 21: Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) of the effect of chronic medical and psychological conditions on daily lifestyle ratings for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	Pre-release prisoner clients	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Chronic Medical Condition					
Hepatitis C	0.2 (0.6)	0.0 (-)	0.9 (1.5)	1.3 (2.3)	0.0 (-)
Asthma	1.3 (1.5)	1.3 (1.5)	2.5 (2.1)	1.3 (1.5)	0.3 (0.6)
Diabetes	0.0 (-)	1.0 (-)	1.0 (-)	2.5 (0.7)	4.0 (2.8)
Psychological Health					
Depression	5.0 (-)	3.5 (2.5)	3.7 (1.5)	3.0 (-)	6.0 (-)
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	3.0 (-)	-	-	-	-
Anxiety Disorder	-	0.0 (-)	4.0 (-)	2.0 (-)	2.0 (-)
Schizophrenia	-	-	-	2.0 (1.4)	
Bi-Polar Disorder	5.0 (-)	5.0 (-)	4.0 (-)	0.0 (-)	0.0 (-)
Paranoia	4.0 (-)	6.0 (-)	-	-	-

The pre-release prisoner clients and new offender clients who reported medical conditions rated, on average, that hepatitis C had no effect on their daily lifestyle and that asthma had little effect on their daily lifestyle. As well, one pre-release prisoner client and one new offender client rated diabetes as having no effect and a slight effect, respectively. A similar pattern was observed for the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients, with hepatitis C rated, on average, as having little to no effect on daily lifestyle. Asthma was reported by the 3 month clients as having somewhat of an effect on daily lifestyle ($M = 2.5$) as was diabetes ($M = 2.5$) by the 6 month clients. However, the 9 month clients rated diabetes as having, on average, quite a serious effect ($M = 4.0$) on daily lifestyle.

With respect to psychological conditions, one pre-release prisoner client reported that depression had a very serious effect ($M = 5.0$) on their daily lifestyle, while the new offender clients reported that it had a moderate effect ($M = 3.5$) on daily lifestyle. A similar pattern was observed for the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients, with the former two groups reporting that depression had a moderate effect and one 9 month client reporting that depression had an extremely serious effect ($M = 6.0$) on their daily lifestyle. Bi-polar disorder was rated by one pre-release prisoner client and one new offender client as having a very serious effect on daily lifestyle, while one 6 month client and one 9 month client reported that this psychological condition had no effect on their daily lifestyle. While interpretation is limited due to the low numbers in each cell, it appears that ratings for psychological conditions were higher than for chronic medical conditions, indicating a more serious effect on daily lifestyle for psychological conditions.

5.4.2 Housing

Place of Residence

Housing was investigated in terms of a participant's reported place of residence. The majority of pre-release prisoner clients reported that they were living in their own home (32.1%) or in the family home/family member's house (28.6%) in the month prior to their arrest. The length of time that the pre-release prisoner clients had stayed at this residence prior to their arrest varied considerably, with 39.3% having lived there less than three months, 32.1% having lived there 6 to 18 months, and 28.6% having lived there for two years or more, indicating some instability in housing prior to arrest for more than one third of the sample. A large number of pre-release prisoner clients indicated that they had arranged a place to stay prior to leaving prison (75%). Of the seven pre-release prisoner clients with no arrangements for housing, all but one indicated that they had someone to help them find a place to stay when they got out. The new offender clients reported that they had spent most nights in the past month in their own home (68.4%), the family home/family member's house (21.1%), or at friends' houses (10.5%).

Likewise, the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients reported that they had spent most nights in the past month in their own home (3 month: 63%; 6 month: 36.4%; 9 month: 55.6%). The remainder had been mainly staying in the family home or with family members (3 month: 29.6%, 6 month: 45.5%, 9 month: 33.3%). One 6 month client was in transitional housing and one 9 month client was staying in a caravan park.

Stability of Accommodation

Participants also reported on the stability of their accommodation in terms of two variables including the 'arrangement' they had with co-residents (short-term, long-term, permanent, or stay as long as desired), and the number of housing moves in the past month. Table 22 shows the scores (percent, means) for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 22: Stability in housing for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	(n = 20)	(n = 28)	(n = 22)	(n = 11)
Living Arrangements				
Short-term arrangement (< 1 month)	-	11.5%	31.8%	20.0%
Long-term arrangement (3-11 month)	10.5%	3.8%	4.5%	20.0%
Permanency (12+ mo)	5.3%	11.5%	-	-
Stay as long as want	84.2%	73.1%	63.6%	60.0%
Mean number of moves in past month	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.5

Living arrangements were quite stable for the new offender clients, with the majority (84.2%) indicating that they could stay as long as they liked in their current housing situation. The majority of the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients also had an arrangement to stay as long as they liked in their current housing situation (3 month: 73.1%, 6 month: 63.6%, 9 month: 60%). More than thirty% of the 6 month clients (31.8%) and 20% of the 9 month clients had a short-term housing arrangement, typically living on a week by week or monthly basis.

The number of times the participants had moved in the past month provided another measure of housing stability. As shown in Table 24, the 6 month clients reported that they had moved an average of 0.4 times in the past month ($SD = 0.7$) compared to 0.9 times ($SD = 0.8$) for the 3 month clients. A one-way ANOVA showed that there were no significant between-groups difference ($p > .05$) in the mean number of housing moves made in the past month for the four groups.

5.4.3 Employment and Training

Employment Background of Pre-release Prisoner Clients

Prior to prison entry, all of the pre-release prisoner clients had, at some time, been employed in Australia. The length of time lapsed since being employed varied considerably for the pre-release prisoner clients, ranging from one month to 13 years, and was obviously related to the time served in prison. However, most pre-release prisoner clients reported that they did not have a job at the time of their arrest (85.2%), indicating a period of unemployment prior to prison entry.

Pre-release prisoner clients reported that they typically relied on funds from a number of sources to support themselves in the six months prior to their arrest, with a heavy reliance on public assistance alone (22.2%), public assistance and doing crime (18.5%), and wages from an employer and doing crime (18.5%). In terms of illegal activity, a large proportion of the pre-release prisoner clients (71.4%) reported that half or more of their income at the time of their arrest was derived from illegal activity. Of pre-release prisoner clients, 17.8% indicated that all of their income at the time of their arrest came from illegal activity. The average estimated release funds for the pre-release prisoner clients was \$392 (range \$80 to \$2,000). The average reported release funds for the 3 month post-release prisoner clients was close to this approximation at \$290 ($SD = \127).

Virtually all pre-release prisoner clients (89%) reported that they had not found a job to start upon their release from prison. The three prisoner clients who had found a job had done so with the assistance of family members and friends. Of those pre-release prisoner clients who did not have a pre-arranged job, about half indicated (53.8%) that they planned to look for work within the first month of prison release. All pre-release prisoner clients planned to apply for public assistance upon release, mainly Centrelink payments (37%) or the Newstart allowance (37%). In terms of training, half of the pre-release prisoner clients indicated that they would need additional training to prepare them for a job; about one-third (31.3%) had already contacted a job-training program.

Employment Status and Conditions

Participants also reported on their current employment status and conditions (whether they had found a job, hours worked per week, contract type, and weekly income). Table 23 shows the scores for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 23: Percent distribution and mean and standard deviation (in brackets) for specific employment characteristics for the new offender clients and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	New offender clients	3 mo clients	6 mo clients	9 mo clients
	(n = 20)	(n = 28)	(n = 22)	(n = 11)
Found a job				
Yes	30.0%	32.1%	40.9%	81.8%
No	70.0%	67.9%	59.1%	18.2%
Hours worked in week	33.0	30.9	25.7	37.6
Contract type				
Casual	20.0%	14.3%	27.3%	36.4%
Permanent	5.0%	14.3%	9.0%	9.1%
Short-term	5.0%	-	-	18.2%
Cash-in-Hand	-	3.6%	4.5%	18.2%
Unemployed	70.0%	67.9%	59.1%	18.2%
Average weekly income	\$584.2	\$366.3	\$405.0	\$600.0

Relatively few new offender clients (30%) reported that they had a job; this is consistent with being registered with the employment assistance program for only a short time. However, a similar pattern of underemployment was observed for the 3 month and 6 month offender clients, with 32% and 41%, respectively in employment. Encouragingly, the majority of the 9 month offender clients were employed (81.8%). This, to some degree, is expected given continuing involvement in the employment assistance program, but it does indicate that the program is working. Chi-square analysis confirmed a significant difference in the frequency of clients employed, $\chi^2(3, N = 81) = 9.5, p < .05$.

In terms of job-type, most clients were employed in construction/building (new offender clients: 66.6%; 3 month clients: 50%; 6 month clients: 33.4%; 9 month clients: 25%), hospitality (6 month clients: 33.4%; 9 month clients: 50%), or cleaning (new offender clients: 33.3%; 3 month clients: 25%). Few clients (new offender clients: 15%; 3 month clients: 21.4%; 6 month clients: 31.8%; 9 month clients: 18.2%) indicated that they were enrolled in any job-training program other than the CSEPP employment assistance program. For those clients without a job, most indicated that they planned to look for work within the next month (new offender clients: 75%, 3 month clients: 89.5%, 6 month clients: 86.7%, 9 month clients: 75%).

Of those clients employed, most held a casual position (new offender client: 20%; 3 month: 14.3%; 6 month: 27.3%; 9 month: 36.4%). One 3 month client had a cash-in-hand job (3.6%) and four had a permanent position (14.3%). Of the four groups, a higher frequency of 9 month clients had a casual position and one held a permanent position (9.1%). The average weekly take-home pay was highest for the 9 month clients ($M = \$600$) and lowest for the 3 month clients ($M = \$366$), although this difference was not statistically significant due to the high variability in job earnings. Table 23 also shows that the new offender clients who were employed worked an average of 33 hours per week. The 6 month clients worked the fewest hours ($M = 25.7$) per week and the 9 month clients worked the highest number of hours ($M = 37.6$) per week, with the latter representing full-time employment. A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant between-groups difference in the number of hours worked per week.

Job Stability

Given that job instability is often associated with prisoner and offender clients, three measures of stability in employment were determined: (1) the number of paid jobs since release/in the past month; (2) the number of weeks in paid employment; and (3) the longest time the clients had had a paid job since release/in the past month. Table 24 provides the means and standard deviations for these variables for the new offender clients, the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 24: Mean and standard deviation (in brackets) for variables associated with stability in employment for the new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	(n = 20)	(n = 28)	(n = 22)	(n = 11)
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Number of paid jobs	1.0 (0.7)	1.0 (0.0)	1.3 (0.5)	1.1 (0.3)
Number weeks in work	3.4 (2.8)	7.7 (4.6)	9.3 (9.4)	27.7 (32.4)
Days in work in past month	20.3 (11.6)	23.0 (12.6)	16.7 (14.1)	24.5 (8.8)

There was little variation in the number of paid jobs held by the clients, with the new offender clients, 3 month clients, and 9 month clients all reporting that they had held one job since their release/over the past month. The 6 month clients had held an average of 1.3 jobs. The new offender clients had been in the same job for an average of 3.4 weeks, which is consistent with being in the CSEPP program for a short time. Encouragingly, the 9 month clients had been in the same job for an average of 27.7 weeks (about 7 months) which is expected given continuing involvement in the employment assistance program. This indicates that the program is successful. In terms of how consistently the clients had worked in the past month, the 6 month clients reported that they had had a paid job for an average of 16.7 days (about 2.5 weeks) in the past month. Of the four groups, the 9 month clients indicated that they had had a paid job for the largest number of days in the past month ($M = 24.5$ days). This indicates that these clients had been employed for at least 3.5 weeks in the past month, which is consistent with full-time employment.

Only a small proportion of the 3 month and 9 month clients reported that they received employment benefits such as health insurance (12.5% and 11.1%, respectively), which may be attributed to the casual nature of the positions. None of the new offender clients and 6 month clients reported that they received employment benefits. Encouragingly, most clients (new offender clients: 78.9%; 3 month clients: 63%; 6 month clients: 81%; 9 month clients: 60%) expressed an interest in furthering their education.

5.4.4 Finances

Income

Income to meet day-to-day living expenses was not considered an issue for pre-release prisoner clients. The majority of the new offender clients (90%) had applied for public assistance. Likewise, most of the 3 month (81.5%) and 6 month (81.8%) clients had applied for public assistance (mainly the Newstart allowance) and all but two 3 month clients and one 6 month client had received a payment. Fewer 9 month clients (45.5%) had applied for public assistance, which may be attributed to their higher employment rate. Approximately 70% of each client group reported

that they had enough money to support themselves (new offender clients, 70%; 3 month clients, 70.4%; and 6 month clients, 68.2%). A higher percent of the 9 month (81.8%) clients indicated that they had sufficient finances, which is understandable given that they had a higher weekly income from paid employment than did the other client groups. For the large part, the clients supported themselves via public assistance (new offender clients: 70.8%; 3 month: 54.3%; 6 month: 66.7%) or paid employment (new offender clients: 12.5%; 3 month: 31.4%; 6 month: 25.9%). As indicated above, the 9 month clients were less reliant on public assistance (33.3%) and more reliant on paid employment (60%) for income. Of interest, only one 3 month client identified illegal activity as a source of their income.

Lack of Finances

The extent to which lack of money presented a problem in key areas of the prisoner client's and offender client's life was examined using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all a problem' (0) to 'an extremely big problem' (6). The impact of 'lack of money' on several life domains was investigated including finding or keeping a job, getting a suitable place to live, restoring family relationships, continuing health care, and getting drug and/or alcohol treatment. Table 25 provides the means for these variables for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 25: Average reported impact of lack of money on five life domains for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	New offender clients	3 month clients	6 month clients	9 month clients
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Finding or keeping a job	2.2 (2.3)	1.9 (1.9)	2.2 (1.9)	1.9 (2.2)
Getting suitable place to live	1.3 (2.1)	1.5 (2.0)	2.0 (2.1)	1.3 (2.3)
Restoring family relationships	1.4 (2.1)	1.1 (1.7)	2.0 (2.3)	0.9 (1.5)
Continuing health care	1.6 (2.2)	1.8 (2.0)	1.9 (1.9)	0.9 (1.4)
Getting drug and/or alcohol treatment	1.2 (2.0)	0.8 (1.5)	1.0 (2.1)	0.2 (0.6)

The mean scores for clients were generally low, indicating that lack of money did not present much of a problem for them. In general, the 9 month clients reported that lack of money was less problematic in comparison with the other client groups, although this difference was not statistically significant ($p > .05$). The 6 month clients tended to have the highest mean scores, indicating that lack of money was somewhat of a problem for finding and keeping a job, getting a suitable place to live, and in restoring family relationships.

5.4.5 Social Network

Level and Type of Social Support for Pre-release Prisoner Clients

For those pre-release prisoner clients with children, reported contact (via telephone, mail, or visits) was relatively frequent, with an average of 33 contacts made in the past three months, roughly equating to about three contacts per week. In the past three months, pre-release prisoner clients reported receiving an average of five letters or cards from adult family members and nine letters or cards from friends or acquaintances, which equates to about 2 and 3 per month, respectively. There was a heavy reliance by pre-release prisoner clients on telephone contact, particularly with family

members. In the past three months, pre-release prisoner clients reported talking on the telephone with adult family members and friends on an average of 42 occasions and 17 occasions, respectively. The large majority of pre-release prisoner clients (89%) reported having received money in their commissary.

In terms of the number (and type) of visitors received by the pre-release prisoner clients over the past three months, most were family members ($M = 2.07, SD = 1.78$), with very few friends ($M = 0.32, SD = 0.69$), professional contacts (e.g., lawyer, chaplain) ($M = 0.28, SD = 0.54$) or program staff ($M = 0.28, SD = 0.61$). A repeated measures ANOVA confirmed that there was a significant difference in the number of visitors received, $F(1,35) = 13.10, p < .001$, with significantly more family members (about 2) reported as visitors in the three month period than either friends, professional contacts, or support staff. The pre-release prisoner clients were also asked how many contact visits they had had in the past three months. The most visits were received from partner/spouse ($M = 8.5, SD = 8.2$) and friends ($M = 6.38, SD = 8.40$), compared to professional contacts ($M = 3.75, SD = 4.23$) and program staff ($M = 3.43, SD = 3.87$). Taken together, these findings suggest that the pre-release prisoner clients had about two family members who visited them in a three-month period, typically their spouse/partner and a parent. The spouse/partner visited most often, about eight times in a three-month period.

Level and Type of Social Support for Post-release prisoner clients and Offender Clients

Participants were also asked to identify up to seven people who provided them with emotional and/or practical support. The average number of family members, friends, professionals (e.g., lawyer) and support workers was calculated, together with the average level of practical and emotional support provided by family members. Table 26 shows the scores for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

Table 26: Number and type of people who provide social support, as well as perceived level of support from family for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	New offender clients	3 month offender clients	6 month offender clients	9 month offender clients
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Number of family members identified	1.7 (1.4)	2.4 (1.6)	2.4 (1.7)	1.9 (1.6)
Number of friends identified	0.7 (1.0)	0.4 (0.8)	0.5 (0.7)	0.9 (1.1)
Number of professionals identified	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.1 (0.3)
Number of support workers identified	0.4 (0.8)	0.2 (0.5)	0.3 (0.5)	0.1 (0.3)
Total number of people identified	2.8 (1.7)	3.0 (1.5)	3.2 (2.0)	3.0 (1.9)
Family member				
Level of emotional support	4.2 (1.3)	4.7 (0.9)	4.3 (1.4)	4.5 (1.5)
Level of practical support	3.2 (1.9)	4.1 (1.6)	3.7 (1.7)	4.1 (0.9)

There was little variation in the number of individuals who were identified as providing practical and/or emotional support to the clients. The 6 month clients reported the highest number of people who provided them with support ($M = 3.2$ individuals identified) and the new offender clients reported the fewest number of people who provided support ($M = 2.8$ individuals identified), although these between-group differences were not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Across the four groups, 5% of the clients reported having no one as a source of social support, two clients identified 7 people and one client identified 8 people as a source of social support. As expected, family members were reported most often by all clients as a source of social support. Virtually no

professionals were identified as a source of social support and very few support workers were also identified by the client groups.

The table above also shows the mean level of emotional and practical support provided by family members (i.e., spouse, parents, child, siblings). Family members only are identified in the table because the level of identified support from friends was minimal, and there were virtually no clients who reported professionals and support workers as a source of social (emotional and/or practical) support. Emotional support related to perceived level of encouragement to the client to stay away from criminal activity, the strength of the emotional connection, enjoyment in time spent together, help in giving advice or support in personal relationships and with drug/alcohol treatment, and how much of a positive influence the individual was perceived to be by the client. Practical support related to help in finding or providing a suitable place to stay, finding or getting access to a suitable job, providing food, and giving money to the client when they really needed it.

Results indicated that the reported level of emotional support provided by family members was high, ranging between 4.2 for the new offender clients and 4.7 for the 3 month clients (a maximum score of 6 represents 'extremely' emotionally supportive), although these differences were not statistically significant ($p > .05$). There was less perceived practical support than emotional support received from family members, with the new offender clients reporting the lowest level of practical support ($M = 3.2$) and the 3 month and 9 month clients reporting the highest level of practical support ($M = 4.1$ for both), although these differences were not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

5.4.6 Substance Use

The pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients were asked what drugs they had used prior to prison/in the past month, how problematic drugs had been in their life prior to prison/in the past month, and whether they had been/were in a substance use program. Table 27 shows the scores for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients. As several participants reported using a combination of drugs, the percent refers to reported drugs rather than number of clients (therefore the percent totals do not equal 100%).

Table 27: Percent distribution of drugs used prior to prison/past month, and extent that drugs and alcohol caused problems for the pre-release prisoner clients, new offender clients, and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients.

	Pre-release prisoner clients _a	New offender clients _b	3 month clients _b	6 month clients _b	9 month clients _b
Percent of drugs used in six months prior to prison_a/past month_b:					
Alcohol	23.9%	38.2%	35.2%	32.5%	38.0%
Marijuana	18.3%	23.5%	20.4%	15.0%	14.3%
Heroin	18.3%	2.9%	9.3%	10.0%	9.5%
Amphetamines	15.5%	2.9%	3.7%	2.5%	9.5%
Ecstasy	5.6%	-	1.9%	2.5%	-
Ice	4.2%	-	-	-	-
Other	2.8%	-	3.7%	-	-
No use of drugs and/or alcohol	28.6%	55.0%	50.0%	68.2%	54.5%
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Extent of problem caused by drugs	4.8 (1.9)	2.9 (2.5)	1.6 (1.8)	3.3 (2.9)	1.5 (3.0)
Extent of problem caused by alcohol	1.9 (2.7)	0.0 (0.0)	0.3 (1.0)	0.8 (1.5)	0.6 (1.1)
Number of times drunk alcohol _b	-	4.8 (5.7)	5.4 (7.8)	5.0 (6.2)	5.9 (8.4)
Number of drinks per session _b	-	4.7 (3.5)	4.1 (4.3)	5.4 (3.3)	4.8 (3.7)
Percent in substance use program	89.3%	31.6%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%

Substance Use of Pre-release Prisoner Clients

Substance use of pre-release prisoner clients was investigated in terms of their use prior to imprisonment. The majority of pre-release prisoner clients (71.4%) indicated that they had used drugs in the six months prior to prison, whereas 28.6% had not. For those pre-release prisoner clients reporting drug use, the four most frequently reported drugs were alcohol (23.9%), marijuana (18.3%), heroin (18.3%), and amphetamines (15.5%). In terms of frequency of drug use, in the six months prior to prison entry most pre-release prisoner clients who reported using drugs indicated a heavy use (more than 30 times per month) of heroin and marijuana, with 64% and 67% reporting heavy use of those drugs respectively. Pre-release prisoner clients reported less frequent use of amphetamines, with one-third of the group using that drug 1-5 times each month.

The majority of pre-release prisoner clients who reported using drugs indicated that heroin had caused them the most problems in the past (64.7%); to a lesser extent, amphetamines were cited as having caused the pre-release prisoner clients the most problems (17.6%). Despite the reported problems, heroin was identified by half of the pre-release prisoner clients who reported using drugs as their most preferred drug, with amphetamines a close second (22.2% of drug users reporting a preference). The pre-release prisoner clients who reported a history of drug use indicated that drugs had caused, on average, quite a big to very big problem in their life ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.9$). Of concern, 75% of pre-release prisoner clients who reported using drugs indicated that they had used half or more of their income on drugs in the six months prior to prison entry; 22% of pre-release prisoner clients who reported using drugs indicated that they had used half or more of their income on alcohol. In terms of alcohol use in the six months prior to prison entry, the average number of drinks consumed per month by the pre-release prisoner clients was relatively low, at eight ($SD = 12.0$); although the number of drinks typically consumed in a session was high at eight ($SD = 7.8$), suggesting a tendency toward binge drinking. The pre-release prisoner clients who reported a

history of alcohol use also indicated that alcohol had caused, on average, a slight to somewhat of a problem in their life ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 2.7$).

The pre-release prisoner clients were also asked to indicate how alcohol-affected and drug-affected they were at the time of their arrest using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' (0) to 'extremely' (6). The majority of pre-release prisoner clients (78.6%) reported that they were not at all affected by alcohol at the time of their arrest. In contrast, 21.4% of pre-release prisoner clients reported that they were very drug-affected at the time of their arrest, while less than half indicated that they were unaffected by drugs at the time of their arrest (43%). The large majority of pre-release prisoner clients who indicated a problem with substance use had received some form of drug and/or alcohol treatment (89.3%) either in prison or out of prison.

Substance Use of New Offender Clients, and 3 Month, 6 Month, and 9 Month Clients

The pattern of substance use is somewhat similar for the new offender clients and the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients, although the proportion of clients who reported using drugs is lower among these groups than for the pre-release prisoner clients. Fifty percent or fewer of the clients (new offender clients: 45%, 3 month clients: 50%, 6 month clients: 31.8%, 9 month clients: 45.5%) indicated that they had used drugs in the past month. For the four groups, the three most frequently reported drugs by clients who had recently used drugs were (in descending order), alcohol, marijuana, and heroin. In terms of frequency of drug use, most of the new offender clients, and 3 month and 6 month clients who reported using drugs indicated a low use (1–5 times per month) of heroin and marijuana. While the two 9 month clients who used heroin also indicated a low use (1–5 times per month), the rate of marijuana use was higher at 6–15 times per month for the three clients reporting marijuana use.

For those who reported using drugs, heroin was identified as having caused the most problems by the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients, and it was also the drug that they preferred. The 6 month clients who reported using drugs indicated that drugs had caused, on average, a moderate to quite a big problem in their life ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 2.9$), while the affected 9 month clients reported the lowest impact of drugs in their life ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 3.0$). Unlike the pre-release prisoner clients, relatively few clients who reported using drugs indicated that they had used half or more of their income on drugs in the past month (new offender clients: 0%; 3 month clients: 21.4%; 6 month clients: 57.2%; 9 month clients: 0%). Only a few clients reported using half or more of their income on alcohol (new offender clients: 0%; 3 month clients: 10%; 6 month clients: 0%; 9 month clients: 12.5%).

As shown in Table 27, with respect to alcohol use in the past month, the average number of drinks consumed per month by the clients was relatively low (averaging 5.2 across the four groups); although the number of drinks typically consumed in a session was quite high (averaging 4.7 across the four groups). Despite the high proportion of alcohol use among the four groups, alcohol was rated as having caused little to no problem in their life. Of those clients who had indicated a problem with substance use, relatively few had received any kind of drug and/or alcohol treatment (new offender clients: 31.6%; 3 month clients: 14.3%; 6 month clients: 14.3%; 9 month clients: 0%).

5.4.7 Criminal Justice Activity

Corrections Victoria Program Participation

Prisoner clients were asked a number of questions concerning their engagement in prison services. Virtually all pre-release prisoner clients (89.3%) reported having a job while in prison. There was a wide variation in the type of prison jobs reported by the prisoner clients, with most indicating at least two areas of employment. The three most frequently cited prison jobs were carpentry/woodwork (24%), gardening (16%), and janitorial jobs (16%). While most pre-release prisoner clients reported that the jobs had taught them skills that they did not have prior to prison entry (60%), the majority (75%) did not plan to try to find work in the same area as their prison job following release.

All but one pre-release prisoner client (96.4%) reported that they had participated in a prison-operated program. There was a wide variation in the type of programs that pre-release prisoner clients reported participating in. Alcohol and substance use treatment/counselling was the most commonly reported program engaged in by pre-release prisoner clients (70.4%), followed by job-seeking programs (40.7%), education programs (40.7%), job-training in a specific trade or industry (38.5%), life skills training (30.8%), cognitive/behavioural programs (29.6%), parenting programs (25.9%), and mental health treatment/counselling (22.2%). Less than twenty% of the pre-release prisoner clients had participated in a violence reduction/anger management program (18.5%), health education program (14.8%), stress management program (7.4%), or job training in work ethic (3.7%). Approximately one-third of pre-release prisoner clients indicated that they were restricted from program participation (36%), with the most frequently cited reasons being the scheduling of prison programs (22.2%), limited access/long waiting lists (22.2%), and being in the drug unit (22.2%).

About half of the pre-release prisoner clients (48.1%) had been or were engaged in a release planning program, although some pre-release prisoner clients indicated that they were to commence release planning shortly thereafter. For those who had completed a release planning program, the four main features identified by the pre-release prisoner clients were obtaining their birth certificate (11.6%), applying for public assistance (11.6%), résumé preparation (11.6%), and providing a referral to specific (needed) services (11.6%). In addition to the CSEPP program, some pre-release prisoner clients reported that they had been given details of several programs that they could access upon their release, mainly relating to housing assistance (26%) and substance use treatment/counselling (13%). Thirty percent of the pre-release prisoner clients reported that they were not linked up to any other programs.

Program Participation of Post-release Prisoner Clients and Offender Clients

Besides the CSEPP program, in which all were obviously involved, and substance abuse programs, in which 16.5% of the clients reported some involvement, relatively few clients (new offender clients: 26.3%; 3 month clients: 8.0%; 6 month clients: 18.2%; 9 month clients: 0%) indicated that they had participated in any other programs in the past month. The majority of programs related to counselling (mental health, substance use, anger management), and further education.

Re-offending

The new offender clients and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients were asked three questions relating to criminal activity: (1) whether they had been arrested since their release/in the past month; (2) whether charges were laid; and (3) what charges were laid. One client from the new offender client group and one from both the 3 month and 9 month client groups reported that they

had been arrested and charged since their release/in the past month. These charges related to assault, burglary, and cannabis possession respectively.

Supervision and Reporting

Several questions related to supervision and reporting requirements. Participants were asked if they had a reporting requirement, how often they were required to report, whether they had a requirement to report for urine tests and/or sign-in at a police station, and whether they had met these requirements. A relatively large number of the 3 month post-release prisoner clients, (10 of 14 clients), 6 month post-release prisoner clients (1 of 2 clients), and 9 month post-release prisoner clients (1 of 2 clients) indicated that they had a reporting requirement, with most reporting either twice per week or once per month. Less than 20% of the 3 month clients (19.2%) and only one of the 9 month clients had a requirement to report for urine tests. Only one 6 month client indicated that they were required to sign-in at a police station.

The majority of the new offender clients (70%) and offender clients who had been in CSEPP for 3 months (71.4%) indicated that they were currently serving orders, with most offender clients indicating a requirement to report fortnightly to a community corrections officer. Few offender clients who had been in CSEPP for 6 months (55%) and 9 months (33.3%) indicated that they were currently serving orders. The majority of the clients (new offender clients: 90%; 3 month clients: 100%; 6 month clients: 50%; 9 month clients: 100%) indicated that they had met their requirements for reporting since their release.

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 Summary of Results

The results taken as a whole indicate volatility of conditions among the new client, 3 month client, and 6 month client groups and more consistency among the 9 month group. For the 9 month client group, there were definite improvements in housing, employment and training, finances, and social network development. Thus, there was demonstrable improvement by 9 months of program participation in four of seven domains, with the domain of health rated as quite good, and consistently so, across offender client groups, and substance use and criminal justice activity much the same across the four groups. Following is a summary of the life conditions and indirect gains reported for the participants in the indirect gains evaluation.

Education – A very large proportion of clients had not completed secondary education, with most having completed either Year 9 or Year 10. There was no real difference in relation to length of time in the program.

Marital Status – Slightly less than half of clients were married or in a de facto relationship. Slightly less than half were never married or had a partner. A relatively small percentage were separated or divorced. Separation or divorce was reported by more new offenders.

Health – All groups reported good to very good physical and psychological health. About 50% of the 9 month clients had a chronic medical condition. Hepatitis C was most prevalent among the pre-release prisoner clients, and asthma and diabetes were most prevalent among the 9 month clients. Equivalent numbers of 9 month clients reported a psychological condition (about 30%), with depression the most prevalent.

Housing – Evidence of increased housing stability over time, with 80% of the 9 month clients reported long-term or continuing arrangements.

Employment – Evidence of poor employment histories, but with improved employment and training conditions over time in the program; 80% of the 9 month clients were employed compared to 30% of the new offender clients. There was increased hours worked, weekly income, days worked in past month, and number of weeks worked for the 9 month clients than for the other groups.

Finance – Evidence of improved financial conditions for the 9 month group. Over 80% of the 9 month clients reported self-sufficiency and this group was less reliant on public assistance than the other groups.

Social Network – The 9 month clients reported more friends as social support than the other groups and an equivalent level of family support. The 9 month clients also reported receiving a high level of emotional and practical support from family members, as did the other groups.

Substance Use – About half of the 9 month clients reported drug/alcohol use in the past month. The proportion of drug users was much the same across the groups, with alcohol and marijuana the most frequently reported drugs used. Higher proportion of drug/alcohol use among the pre-release prisoner clients with over 70% reporting a substance use history prior to prison

Criminal Justice Activity – One new offender client and one 3 month and 9 month client reported that they had been arrested and charged in the past month. Fewer 9 month clients were currently serving Community Corrections Orders.

5.5.2 Implications

This summary of results supports the proposition that there are both persistent support needs and indirect gains over time associated with the program in addition to the employment outcomes and recidivism outcomes achieved. The results also suggest that improvement is a slow process.

- Clear and consistent improvements were only associated with clients who had been in the program for 9 months, and even then improvements were not huge, just consistently apparent. This suggests two things. First, it is clear that by 9 months in CSEPP, there are real signs that a fair proportion of clients can succeed in reintegration.
- Second, it is clear that there is still a need for long-term support beyond 9 months, and possibly beyond one year.
- This also suggests a need to set program objectives to provide individual assistance over a quite protracted time period.
- It also has implications for the study of reintegration in that it points to the weakness in most follow-up and post-program research which has tended to be conducted within shorter time frames. Of course, an additional difficulty of longitudinal research over longer time periods is the attrition of those who succeed in reintegration and simply disappear, not wanting further involvement with the criminal justice system, just a 'normal life'.

- The results also support the widely held view of the comprehensiveness of support needs. Up to the 9 month period, conditions across all of the life domains investigated fluctuated dramatically. Even for those clients in the program for 9 months, only a small percentage can be described as being in a very secure and stable position with respect to those life domains.
- Definite improvements are well demonstrated, but small to moderate at best.
- Particularly in relation to employment and training, there is generally a great deal of room for improvement, even at 9 months of program involvement, indicating a continuing need for some kind of employment assistance, if only intermittent.
- The results certainly do suggest CSEPP participation is broadly promotive/assistance of improved lifestyle and supports, at least, the beginning of reintegration.

5.5.3 Necessary Changes to Facilitate Sustained Client Development

- **Increase the emphasis on non-employment outcomes.** Although the program is clearly designed as an employment assistance program, there are also explicit expectations for other outcomes (such as training and work experience outcomes) and other forms of support (referral to other providers and direct support in activities not directly employment-related). The need for attention to the comprehensive needs of clients in order to achieve employment outcomes is recognised. Despite the absence of reporting and no specific rewards (contract-based remuneration) associated with non-employment activities, such as training courses and assistance with other support needs, there is evidence of a strong focus on such activities throughout the program. By formalising reporting of those outcomes (and remunerating providers for the achievements), the preparatory element of sustained client development would be better recognised and better supported.
- **Provide more assistance with life change and transition issues.** This is not the direct role of this program or its providers, but is necessary to facilitate sustained client development. Beyond referral to other services and/or connecting clients to the broader set of social welfare services provided by provider organisations, the suggestion is for further development and strengthening of program connections with other relevant services throughout the external social services network. This observation relates to our view that a whole of government response, working together with non-government organisations, is necessary to meet the extensive and intensive support needs of the client group in a way that supports sustained client development and reintegration.
- **Lengthen program eligibility time.** Nine months appears to mark the beginning of a positive turn; twelve months is not sufficient to ensure continuing stability. Two years would be better. This was suggested by several interviewees as a possible improvement to the program. Those comments were made in reference to their observations of slow progress by many clients. The results of this component of the evaluation support those observations. Results of the outcomes evaluation (Section 4) indicate a fairly high proportion of clients who do remain in the program for 12 months and are not yet placed into employment. Others have been placed, some more than once, without achieving a 13 week outcome. Lengthening the eligibility period would provide more time for individual clients to gain employment or achieve 13 week outcomes and more time for post-placement support for those in need.

Section 6: The CSEPP Evaluation: Summary of Results and Recommendations

6.1 The Process Evaluation

6.1.1 The Program Model

The logic and design of the Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) cohere extremely well. The assumptions underlying the program and its main design features are consistent with international and Australian literature and are relevant to the immediate corrections operating context, with its focus on reintegration. The program logic and design are consistent with international and Australian literature on employment assistance for ex-prisoners and offenders, particularly the literature on specialist employment services, as well as the literature on support needs that suggests comprehensive and intensive support is necessary. The program logic and design are certainly consistent with the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy* that is in place for Corrections Victoria. For the most part, there is a good match between the assumptions and the design features as well. In our view, the program model is very strong and coheres well. However, there are three elements of the program logic and design that would benefit from revision, although none of those elements constitute major flaws in logic or design. Elements that would benefit from revision are:

- Neither the level nor the kinds of employer involvement intended in the logic and design of the program has been achieved to date. We consider this to be a logic and design fault rather than an implementation fault. There is no evidence in the literature of significant employer involvement on a continuing basis; generally employment involvement is limited to hiring individuals and participating in job fairs. Our own experience with employers in the context of employment of people from disadvantaged groups also suggests minimal employer involvement beyond employing a client. Beyond a small number of individual employers, we do not consider it realistic to expect much active employer involvement as advocates or trainers.
- Although the program is clearly designed as an employment assistance program, there are also clearly enunciated expectations, but no targets, for other outcomes (training and work experience outcomes) and other forms of support (referral to other providers and direct support in activities not directly employment-related). Not providing reporting mechanisms and not rewarding outcomes achieved, leads, at the least, to a lack of information on the extent to which those expectations are being met. Lack of acknowledgement of non-employment outcomes is also reported as frustrating to providers and a cause of some friction.
- We do not question the basis for targeting ‘high risk’ groups and restricting client selection to these groups. The ‘high risk – high need’ commitment of the Department is laudable. Given the *CLTMS* objective of reducing beds by 600, it may be more effective to take all medium to high risk applicants into such reintegration / offence reduction programs rather than target specific groups as in the pilot (by age, length of sentence, etc). It may also be advisable to identify target groups on a location-specific basis, given the demographic variability across locations. Although previous history of offending has been shown to be a

good predictor of re-offending, it is less effective for young or 'new' offenders whose offending may be escalating.

In any case, these three are each quite specific short-comings. In general, we found good congruity between program model and program implementation. The major focus of attention within the program is on achieving employment outcomes, both in terms of day-to-day activities and in terms of program targets. Despite the absence of reporting and no specific rewards (contract-based remuneration) associated with non-employment activities, such as training courses and assistance with other support needs, there is evidence of a strong focus on such activities throughout the program. There is also evidence of involvement in service development activities, not just employment placement and support. Involvement in such activities in the absence of reporting obligations suggests recognition on the part of providers of the importance of those activities and outcomes, and real congruity between the program model and how it has been implemented.

6.1.2 Service Models

The Job Futures consortium model has several strengths:

- very well-developed management structures and processes; labour intensive, but worth the investment;
- the 'momentum-building' approach that is part of the model; getting the relationships, the structures, and processes right before focusing on achievement of outcomes has led to a constant improvement in performance and relatively smooth management of the consortium and each location;
- allows flexibility in resource use, allowing diversion of needed resources; and
- identification of prison clients as the primary target group and development of a process for moving that group through to employment; the model attempts to achieve its outcomes with the group arguably most at risk of re-offending.

There are two potential limitations to this model.

- One is that there can be a fairly high 'maintenance' cost associated with a consortium. However, in this case, by our observation, the maintenance cost is justifiable given the maturity that has been achieved in the consortium. By having a central management structure, the cost may actually be lower than if several providers were contracted, each with a project manager. The peer support meetings probably enhance total quality and productivity beyond their cost.
- Another potential limitation to the model is that the project manager for the consortium does not have any direct line management authority; rather she/he must manage by a combination of persuasion, a functioning executive group, a steering committee, and MOUs between members. This arrangement depends on having a manager with well-developed interpersonal skills. Although this is a potential limitation to the model as a model, in this case, performance has not suffered because individual managers have had the necessary skills.

The ACSO model has strengths as well.

- One is that a small scale location-specific model allows ease of adapting to local conditions.
- One is that blending of individual staff roles is more easily managed on a small scale.
- The focus on partnership-building in relation to project development is another strong feature of the model.
- The ‘rocket launching’ approach, trying to achieve outcomes as soon as possible, allowed diversion of resources into service development activities and more intensive support to prison clients later in the pilot (current community and partnership building projects forming the platforms for launching later outcomes).
- One cost attached to the model, although it may not be inherent in the model, rather a situation-dependent result, has been a weakened relationship with the CCS.

Service delivery model features considered exemplars of best practice within the prison locations include:

- the consultant should be a local resident rather than a long distance commuter;
- the consultant should have a designated location within the prison, preferably in the programs unit; a designated place promotes client contact;
- the consultant should also maintain a high profile within the prison;
- involvement in prison programs and offering training are other preferred approaches to service; and
- expansion of the transition employment consultant role created by Melbourne Citymission that has been successful.

Service delivery model features considered to reflect best practice within the CCS locations include:

- being integrated into the CCS location;
- locations that have integrated consultants into the CCS have been successful in the program;
- local consultants rather than delivering service from a distance; the ‘delivery at a distance’ approach was tried and rejected at several locations early;
- a team approach to delivery as opposed to the lone consultant is a definite advantage, if it can be managed;
- consultants with well-developed knowledge and skills in relation to the client group, the corrections environment, and provision of employment assistance; it is an advantage to have staff with a corrections background; and
- providing ‘cross-fertilisation’ through such opportunities as the peer support meetings.

6.1.3 Program Implementation Issues

Operating Context

The program officially commenced in July of 2002, but took approximately another two to three months to get fully operational, due to a short delay in delivery of initial funds and normal program establishment activities that precede taking on clients. From the beginning, basic assistance has included assessment of individual support needs and employment prospects and aspirations, preparation of résumés, interview skills training, assistance with job search, provision of material support for interviews and for attendance at work (boots, work clothing, mobile phone, train or bus fare). In some cases, the employment consultant actively markets the client with an employer and may advocate on the client's behalf. However, in most cases, employment consultants do not interact with a prospective employer, but rather leaves the direct contact to the client (also leaving the issue of disclosure with the client). In some cases, the employment consultant attempts to link the client to other relevant support, although Community Corrections Officers (CCOs) are also often involved in that activity.

The early part of 2003 was rather uneventful, with CSEPP building momentum as employment consultants continued to develop knowledge of their clients and of effective employment assistance practices for this client group. As the year progressed, some apparent friction began developing within the Job Futures consortium in relation to consortium management. By all descriptions, morale began to be affected. In June of 2003, there was a change in the CSEPP manager for the Job Futures consortium. The management of the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) was unchanged, but ACSO began to experience a certain difficulty of its own in managing its relations with the Community Corrections Services (CCS) location. Both of those issues have since been addressed.

From November 2003 through part of February 2004, the whole program was affected by work bans that were imposed within Corrections Victoria (CV), as part of prolonged industrial action. CSEPP consultants did not receive referrals from prison staff or from most CCOs in community corrections services. Consultants focused attention on existing clients, but the bans had a significant impact on new registrations. During the same period, in fact two days before Christmas, one of the consortium members announced that it was going out of business. In a matter of hours, other members agreed to take on the staff and to cover the locations of that provider, ensuring continuing support for clients and continuing complete coverage of the program.

An additional condition that began having an impact at this time was the restructure and formation of Corrections Victoria from the former Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner and CORE. The restructure occurred in July of 2003. The restructure has had an effect on personnel, procedures, and processes within prisons and CCSs, and, therefore, an effect on CSEPP as well. Turnover of CV management staff has affected relations between CV and CSEPP. It is important to acknowledge that the restructure and the continuing redevelopment of corrections services in Victoria will continue to impact on CSEPP. In any case, from around March, 2004, referrals to the program recommenced, once work bans were removed. However, almost all managers and employment consultants interviewed reported rising anxiety among providers as the end of the two-year pilot approached with no word of whether the contract would be extended or renewed. By early June, 2004, nearing the conclusion of the two-year contract, providers received an assurance of another year of funding, but had not yet received formal, written notification.

In short, during the second year of the pilot, there were significant disruptions, mainly due to circumstances outside of providers' control. The staff turnover rate was high over the second year as well. Turnover does not appear, however, to have adversely affected overall performance to any real extent. This is likely due to mechanisms that are in place for induction and support of new employment consultants within the Job Futures consortium and due to effective recruitment of replacement staff. Program development, introduction and continuous improvement of processes, and the achievement of outcomes have all been realised within a context of profound change and periodic high uncertainty. The four months from July of 2004, with a one year contract extension, were relatively crisis free and provided an opportunity for CSEPP providers to perform to full potential. Even with the period of disruption in the first two years, the program performed well and demonstrated that it is very robust.

Stakeholder Perspectives on the Program

Interviews were conducted with a large number of stakeholders associated with the seventeen CSEPP locations including CSEPP consultants and managers, CV locations personnel, and CSEPP clients. There is evidence of very strong support for the program across stakeholder groups. A number of issues emerged from the interviews that highlight the support for the program and also identify some areas for improvement of current implementation.

When asked about the 'best features' of CSEPP, a large number of features were named. The most frequently named best features included (in descending order):

- the case management approach;
- the program is for prisoners (pre-/post-release) as well as offenders, and provides continuity of contact;
- accessibility of the program;
- ability to network and link clients into other programs;
- non-prejudicial nature of the program and its staff;
- staff commitment to the client group;
- voluntary nature of the program;
- specialist nature of the program;
- the incremental approach taken (recognition of slow progress and small steps); and
- the level and type of resourcing.

When asked to identify aspects that could be improved, three of the most frequently named 'improvements' actually referred to enhancements. Almost half of CSEPP and CV interviewees suggested expanding coverage of the program across the state and broadening eligibility criteria to allow a wider range of clients. Approximately one-quarter suggested making the program permanent. These results suggest strong support for the program.

'Current limitations and possible improvements' identified by interviewees included:

- broadening measurement of major outcomes to include non-employment outcomes such as training, work experience, and volunteer work completed;

- including measurement of ‘micro-gains’ such as résumé completion, application completions, interviews attended, etc;
- improving promotion of the program by both CSEPP and CV; and
- improving the process of transition from prison to community.

In addition to these areas of possible improvement, interviewees also identified various program management issues that are believed to affect, and be relevant to, implementation. Relevant issues that have emerged include:

- General management issues and conditions such as data management and reporting could be improved; staffing issues mainly related to turnover of CV and CSEPP staff; relations and interface between CSEPP and CV; a need to acknowledge potential for values conflict between CSEPP and CV (related to disclosure and reporting);
- Management of the Job Futures consortium issues and conditions such as ‘growing’ the consortium to maturity as important (reported as a success); the sensitivity of consortium management by a combination of persuasion, executive group, steering committee, MOUs, and peer meetings; allocation of staffing/resources across locations;
- Management of ACSO issues and conditions such as developing/expanding links within the community; project development at Barwon prison and establishment of a working relationship with that location (reported as a success); repairing of relations with the Geelong CCS;
- Management by the Department of Justice issues and conditions such as providing CSEPP providers with more information about changes within CV; providing more feedback on Department perceptions of CSEPP as a program; providing more regular feedback to providers (location-specific feedback) on performance; more direct involvement by Department managers (also cited as area for improvement).

Several recommendations emerged from interviews with stakeholders, analysis of documents, and our observations of program processes. Those recommendations, together with others derived from the other two evaluation components are contained in this section of the report. Those recommendations mainly refer to ‘fine tuning’ of the program, extension or expansion of the program, and adjustment to wider system conditions that would benefit the program.

6.2 The Program Outcomes Evaluation

6.2.1 Content of the Outcomes Evaluation

The evaluation of program outcomes focused on employment outcomes and rates of re-offending. Analyses were conducted on the whole CSEPP client population outcomes as reported by providers, and on two random samples, one of 600 CSEPP client files and one of 600 non-CSEPP client files, which were generated from the CSEPP client database and the PIMS system with the assistance of Corrections Victoria. Employment outcomes for the whole client population have been reported in terms of: number of referrals, registrations, placements, 13 week outcomes, and validations; proportion of referrals that have become registrations; proportion of registrations that

have become placements (placements/registrations); proportion of placements that have become outcomes (outcomes/placements); proportion of registrations that have become outcomes (outcomes/registrations); and proportion of outcomes that have been validated/confirmed (validations/outcomes). Location differences have been reported in relation to proportion of registrations that have become outcomes (outcomes/registrations) and average number of days between registration and 13 week outcomes. Results for the program as a whole and for each location have been reported. Results for the first two years (ending June 30th, 2004) and results for July – October 31st have been presented separately. Those results have been reported in terms of frequencies and proportions (percentages).

Recidivism results have been reported for the whole CSEPP client population. Rates of re-offending for CSEPP clients have been reported in terms of percentages of clients re-offending. Rates for all registered clients, those clients placed in employment and clients registered but not placed in employment, have been calculated and analysed further to determine overall program recidivism rates, and if there are differences related to gender, prisoner/offender client status, or provider. Additional analyses of recidivism outcomes, based on random samples of 600 CSEPP client histories and the 600 non-CSEPP client histories, have been reported as well. The additional analyses used three recidivism measures: rate of re-offending (average number of offences per day); seriousness of re-offending (rated severity of offences); and poly-recidivism (sum of different kinds of offences committed). Comparisons between the CSEPP sample and the non-CSEPP sample have been reported. Recidivism within the CSEPP sample has also been reported, in terms of rates of re-offending before and after registration in CSEPP, using the three measures described.

6.2.2 Summary of Employment Outcomes

Results of the employment outcomes analyses demonstrate that the program is achieving outcomes as intended. Despite some rather significant disruptions (described above), the program was very near its targets at the end of the two year period and achieving well above that in the first four months of the third year. The composition of the client population confirms that providers are indeed targeting clients with a high risk of re-offending. There are several major findings that result from the employment outcomes analysis.

- The program had an overall employment placement rate of 34% in the first two years and 40% in the first four months of the third year.
- The program had an overall 13 week outcomes rate of 16% in the first two years and 19% in the first four months of the third year.
- 80% + of registered clients have been male and just less than 20% female.
- Males and females had nearly equal rates of registration, fewer females were then placed in employment, but a higher percentage of those who were placed achieved 13 week outcomes; females also had a lower rate of conversion of registrations to 13 week outcomes than do males.
- Prison clients comprised 55% of the total registered client population in the first two years and the first four months of the third year of the program. Although having a higher rate of registration than CCS clients, prison clients had a lower rate of placement in employment and a lower rate of converting registrations to 13 week outcomes.
- Across gender, client status, and provider groups, rates of converting registrations to placements were highly variable, while conversions of placements to outcomes showed very little variation (mostly near half of placements become 13 week outcomes), and conversions of registrations through to 13 week outcomes were also highly variable.
- Locations differed in both percentage of registrations converted to 13 week outcomes and in average number of days between registration and 13 week outcome for clients who achieved an outcome; prison locations had lower conversion rates and took more days to achieve outcomes (both results that are not surprising, given pre-release time in the program as well as complexity of support needs and support needs associated with release).

6.2.3 Summary of Recidivism Outcomes

Results of the analyses of recidivism outcomes demonstrate that the program is achieving its objective of reduced re-offending. This was confirmed by both the analysis of whole client population re-offending, and the analyses of the sampled data. There are several major findings to come out of the recidivism outcomes analysis.

- The rate of re-offending by registered CSEPP clients was very low (7.46%), well below re-offending rates reported in the literature (perhaps 40% over a two year period).
- Re-offending was low for both clients placed in employment and those not placed, suggesting a positive program effect as well as an employment effect.
- Lower rates of re-offending for clients placed in employment shows a clear relationship between employment and reduced recidivism.
- There were differences between male and female clients in terms of rates of re-offending; females had an overall lower re-offending rate, and employment placement had a much greater effect on lower recidivism for females.
- Prisoners had slightly more than half the re-offending rate of offenders overall, irrespective of whether the prisoners were placed in employment or not.
- Male prisoners in particular had a low re-offending rate compared to male CCS clients.

- Comparison of CSEPP and non-CSEPP clients showed lower recidivism for CSEPP clients on all three recidivism measures.
- Comparison of pre and post CSEPP registration recidivism of CSEPP clients showed reduced recidivism after registration on all three recidivism measures.

6.3 Indirect Gains Associated with the Program

6.3.1 Content of the Indirect Gains Evaluation

Finally, the evaluation also investigated indirect gains associated with CSEPP participation. A total of 109 CSEPP clients have been included in this evaluation: 28 pre-release prisoners; 20 ‘new’ clients comprising offender clients registered with CSEPP for one month; 28 ‘3 month clients’ comprising prisoner clients 3 months post-release and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 3 months; 22 ‘6 month clients’ comprising prisoner clients 6 months post-release and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 6 months; and 11 ‘9 month clients’ comprising prisoner clients 9 months post-release and offender clients registered with CSEPP for 9 months or more. The smaller number of 9 month clients is partly due to the period of industrial bans that reduced referrals to a minimum 9-12 month ago.

Each participant completed a comprehensive interview questionnaire assessing current conditions across several life domains including: physical and psychological health; housing; employment and training; finances; social network; substance use; and further criminal justice involvements. The questions pertained to the respondent’s present situation in the community. The questions referred to: information pertaining to their release (prisoner clients only); age, ethnicity, education level, marital status; housing conditions, including stability of housing; financial situation; employment conditions (including stability of employment), education, and training; substance use; current health conditions; social network; criminal justice activity (re-offending, supervision and reporting, program participation); and general questions relating to immediate, short-term, and long-term goals.

6.3.2 Summary of Results Related to Indirect Gains

The profiles of clients within the program indicated a high proportion of clients between mid-20s and mid-30s with low education, poor work histories and poor employment prospects, and histories of some degree of alcohol and/or drug abuse. In certain other respects, clients were typically relatively well-prepared to succeed in the community.

- Typically, the client was male.
- They were mainly between 28 and 35 years of age.
- Most had not completed secondary school, having completed Year 9 or Year 10.
- Most were either never been married or were married or in a de-facto relationship (typically, not separated).

- The typical client had no record of re-offending once in the program (only three in the sample had re-offended including breaches), but almost all had an order to complete (either custodial or non-custodial) for most of the time that they were in the program.

Results of the analyses of indirect gains associated with CSEPP program participation indicate that the program is contributing to general improvement across life domains, particularly associated with length of time in the program. The major findings to come out of the indirect gains evaluation provide dual insights. Comparisons of the conditions reported allow insight into the nature and extent of gains over time other than employment obtained and sustained. Results on the whole provide a fairly comprehensive profile of CSEPP clients in terms of a wide range of life conditions.

- Their physical health was generally reported to be good to very good, although the majority of pre-release prisoner clients reported at least one chronic medical condition, mostly frequently Hepatitis C; medical conditions tended not to have much impact on daily lifestyle.
- Psychological health was reported as generally good to very good; three quarters of both pre-release prisoner clients and new offender clients reported no chronic conditions of mental ill-health with a similar pattern observed for the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients. Those who did report mental ill-health reported a moderate impact on their daily lifestyle.
- For the 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month clients, there is evidence of increasing housing stability over time. Among the 9 month client group over 80 % reported long-term or continuing arrangements.
- Employment and training conditions for clients also indicate improving conditions and increasing stability over time. The employment rate increased from 30% for new offender clients to over 80% for the 9 month offender client group. There were also increases in the number of days worked in the past month, number of weeks in the position, hours worked per week, and income earned for the 9 month client group.
- Finances were generally not reported as a major problem, only moderately problematic in relation to day-to-day living expenses; however, finances improved with length in program. Finances also showed signs of improving, with less problems reported by the 9 month group and over 80% of that group reporting income self-sufficiency. Lack of money as an impediment to getting or keeping a job, housing, family, health, or drug and alcohol treatment was generally lower for the 9 month group.
- Social networks were typically reasonably in tact, with good family relations described, but relatively few friends (again, more reported by those in the program longer). The 9 month clients reported more friends than did the new, 3 month, and 6 month client groups, and they had an equivalent level of family support.
- With respect to substance use, there was a much more frequent history of heroin and other hard drug use among pre-release prisoner clients (prior to incarceration) than for the other client groups. There were also fewer pre-release prisoner clients who were drug and/or alcohol free (prior to incarceration) compared to the new offender clients and 3 month, 6 month, and 9 month client groups.

- Substance use was equivalent across the groups, however, approximately half of the client participants reported no drug or alcohol use at all, and the 9 month offender clients reported that drugs and alcohol were less of a problem in their daily life than did the other groups.
- The results taken as a whole indicate volatility of conditions among the new client, 3 month client, and 6 month client groups.
- For the 9 month client group, there were definite improvements in housing, employment and training, finances, and social network development.
- There was demonstrable improvement by 9 months of program participation in four of seven domains, with the domain of health rated as quite good, and consistently so, across offender client groups, and substance use and criminal justice activity much the same across the four groups.

The picture that emerges is definitely one of slow incremental positive change while being registered in the program. The client profile that emerges is one that suggests that CSEPP clients typically have poor employment histories, poor employment prospects, and multiple support needs that persist over a long period of time (9 months at the very least). Probability of successful reintegration for most clients would be considered low without the program because of the very low starting point (low level of education and poor employment history), the complexity of their support needs (training, socialisation, housing, drug and alcohol support, finance and budgeting, etc), and the resistance within the general community to their inclusion (a situation that often leads to their reverting to familiar people and environments that lead back to a criminal lifestyle). The study of indirect program gains shows that the program has been able to provide clients with assistance in sustaining lifestyle change.

6.3.3 The Program in Terms of the Evaluation Components

The process evaluation, outcomes evaluation, and evaluation of indirect gains associated with the program together provide an understanding of CSEPP. The figure below provides a conceptual representation of the program as a whole. It depicts the progression, with program structures and processes leading to employment and recidivism outcomes, and those outcomes contributing to indirect gains in other life domains that lead to successful reintegration.

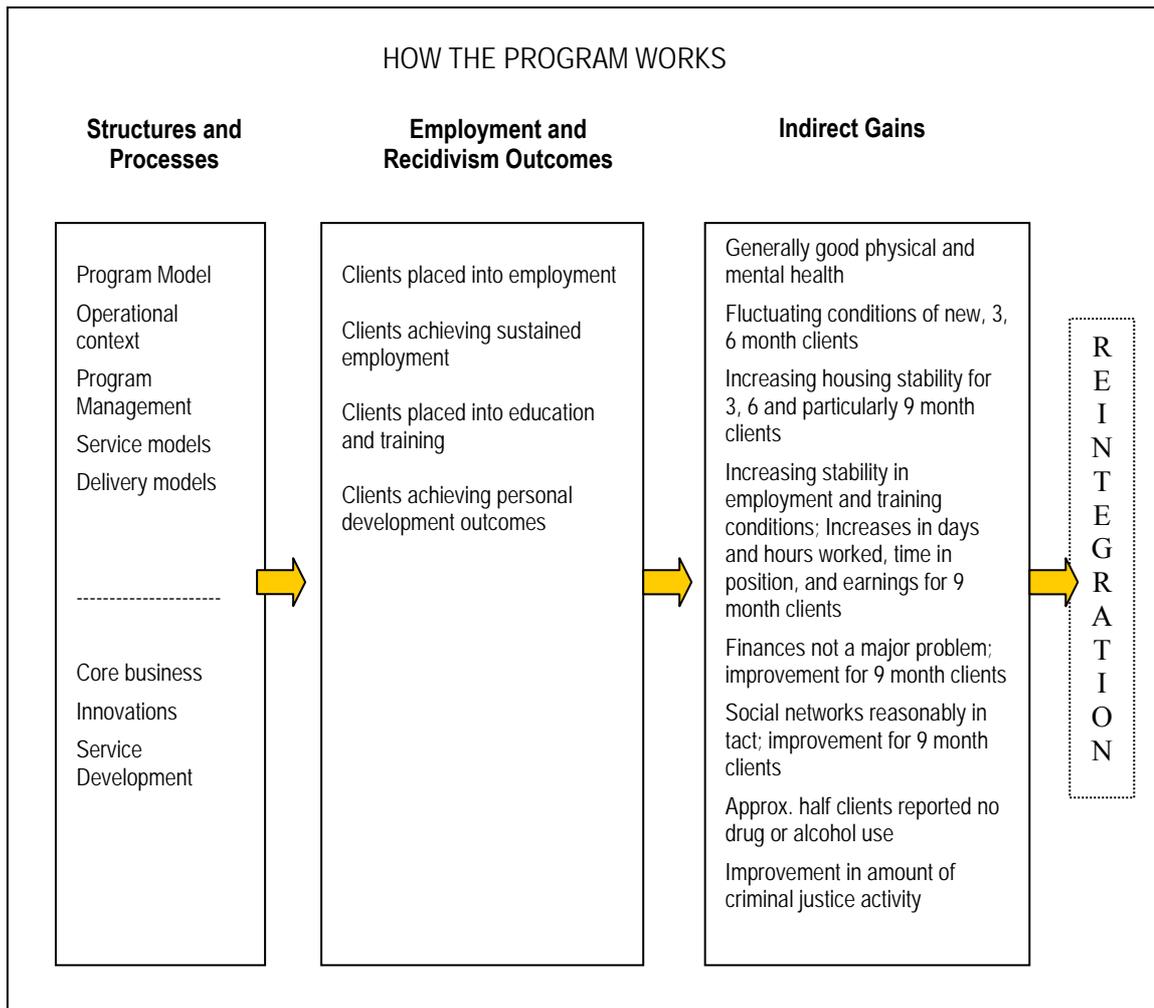


Figure 34: How the Program Works

As we have stated earlier, in our view the pilot program has been very successful, in terms of program model integrity, program management, and program delivery. It is highly regarded by stakeholders including Corrections Victoria locations personnel, employment consultants responsible for its delivery, and clients who have participated in the program. The program clearly meets an unmet need of this client group. The program has been tried, tested, tuned, and demonstrated to be effective in assisting clients into sustained employment and reducing re-offending. The ‘learnings’ that have been documented and described in this evaluation should serve as a basis for future further development and expansion of the program.

6.4 Major Recommendations

The four major recommendations with respect to the Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) are that:

1. The program be continued.
2. The program be expanded.
3. The Department of Justice revise its approach to program management.
4. The program be evaluated on a continuing basis, for purposes of quality assurance, continuous improvement, and program and service development.

We have a number of specific recommendations that relate to each of these main recommendations.

Recommendation 1 – Continue Offering the Program

It is recommended that the Department of Justice continue offering the program. The program model is quite sound. It has a high degree of internal consistency. It coheres well with Corrections Victoria policy and the policy framework in that it is recognised that employment plays a significant role in reintegration and, therefore, reduction of re-offending. Additionally, within the documentation relating to CSEPP, prisoners and offenders are acknowledged to have comprehensive and intensive support needs and to require specialist assistance. The commitment by Corrections Victoria to focus on ‘high risk – high support needs’ is central to the *Corrections Long Term Management Strategy*. By taking a rehabilitative approach to reintegration, through CSEPP, the Department of Justice is contributing to the broader social agenda of the Victorian government as well. The program itself coheres well with suggestions of ‘best practice’ from the international and Australian literature. On the basis of our knowledge of employment assistance programs across disadvantaged groups, the program is well-designed and delivered. The program has been well-received within the corrections community and has achieved good employment and recidivism outcomes in the pilot period, despite operating conditions that were very unfavourable at various times for a significant portion of the first two years of the pilot period.

There are nine specific recommendations associated with this major recommendation. They relate to revision of the program model and modifications to existing conditions that will improve the program.

Recommendation 1.1 - It is recommended that the program logic and design be revised in relation to employer involvement in the program.

Employer education/attitude change should be seen as a longer-term objective and one best dealt with on a system level as well as on the individual level. Individual change will produce slow system change. The challenge of employer education and attitude change should be approached from the system level because that can produce more rapid pervasive change in attitudes. Employer participation in CSEPP should be a secondary objective with an expectation of incremental increases. Start with events like the job fairs and Barwon prison projects, in addition to the individual employers who may be in a position to contribute. CSEPP providers can provide ‘success stories of employer participation’ to Corrections Victoria for use in promotion, but it would be better for Corrections Victoria to make employer participation a government objective. This objective could be achieved by setting some moderate program targets for employer participation and engaging employer peak bodies such as ACCI, VECCI, and BCA as supporters and advocates.

Recommendation 1.2 - It is recommended that the time frame for achieving and reporting employment outcomes be extended.

At least two options for achieving outcomes should be offered. In addition to the existing 13 weeks of continuous employment, we suggest that 20 weeks of employment over a 26 week period should be adopted as an equivalent. This would provide greater flexibility and acknowledge the tendency to begin an employment history with shorter-term jobs. We consider 20 of 26 weeks to be a definite indicator of sustained employment because 20 weeks constitutes more than 75% of the time frame and the employment would be sustained over a time frame twice that of 13 weeks. Other equivalent outcomes should be considered as well, in consultation with providers. Support for this recommendation comes from stakeholder interviews and results of evaluation of indirect gains.

Recommendation 1.3 – It is recommended that the micro-gains in employment including completion of résumé, number of applications completed, and number of interviews attended be included in the reporting process.

Such a change is consistent with the program logic that includes acknowledgement of slow and incremental client development. Several interviewees commented on inclusion of micro-gains in the reporting process as a demonstration of client achievements as well as for accountability purposes. The additional value to the Department of recording and keeping data on micro-gains is that those micro-data can contribute to policy development. Contracted outcomes are often not the only relevant considerations to policymakers. Outcomes relevant to reducing broader economic and social costs, as well as contributing to reduced re-offending, are relevant to policymaking and should be counted.

Recommendation 1.4 – It is recommended that reporting of non-employment outcomes, including courses completed, licences gained, and work-related skills training completed be included in the reporting process.

This recommended change is also consistent with the program logic which clearly acknowledges broader outcomes as relevant to the program and relevant to reintegration. Several interviewees commented on inclusion of training, work experience, and volunteer work in the reporting process as a demonstration of client achievements as well as for accountability purposes. Similar to the above recommendation, non-employment outcomes that contribute to the objective of reduced re-offending should be given formal reporting status. In addition to their relevance as contracted outcomes, non-employment outcomes can contribute significantly to Departmental and broader government policymaking.

Recommendation 1.5 – It is recommended that CSEPP staff induction training be implemented for all new staff across provider organisations.

It is understood that induction training is provided through a providers' manual to all new Job Futures consortium employment consultants. This is an excellent feature of the program. In the future, this training should be provided to all new employment consultants across provider organisations, aimed at developing the knowledge and skills essential to effective employment assistance for this client group. All new staff, regardless of provider should complete induction training as a quality assurance feature and to reduce the productivity loss associated with appointing a new staff person.

Recommendation 1.6 – It is recommended that peer support meetings be provided across the whole program (across provider organisations).

This, to some degree, implies program expansion across the state, but is recommended even without expansion or with moderate expansion. In our view, peer support is an important element of the program's success when operating within a consortium model. With a more collaborative approach to contract management, the Department could host bi-monthly peer support meetings for employment consultants as a means of promoting peer learning, feedback to the Department, and collaboration between / among providers.

Recommendation 1.7 – It is recommended that three-year contracts be offered, consistent with the Job Network system.

Three-year contracts should be offered to CSEPP providers, consistent with the Job Network system. The three year contract is really an industry standard for employment services and should be adopted because it would provide greater job security for consultants and reduce any threat of them being attracted to mainstream employment service providers. Contracts of shorter duration can undermine overall productivity by diverting attention into re-tendering activities more frequently in addition to raising staff turnover.

Recommendation 1.8 – It is recommended that the Department find means of providing attractive career development and professional development opportunities, as well as enhanced working conditions for its CCOs and Programs staff.

Generally, turnover has been reported as high across the system for Community Corrections Officers (less so for prison location programs personnel). This is recognised as a continuing issue for the Department. Although CV staff turnover is not the focus of this evaluation, stability in the CCO workforce does have an impact on the delivery of programs at locations with high turnover due to the need to regularly engage in educating new CCS staff about the program and to regularly develop new working relationships. CCOs are critical to CSEPP, in that they provide the largest number of referrals of clients. Acknowledging the difficulties inherent in what we are suggesting, we recommend that the role of corrections officers be expanded. An increase in number of CCOS, with reduced caseload and an expanded case management role would lead to some job enrichment by putting corrections officers more often in a position to take direct action in addressing client needs. Such a change may well reduce staff turnover as well.

Recommendation 1.9 – It is recommended that there be much more contact between a CSEPP executive and Department representatives.

It is also important to address issues of the relationship between CSEPP providers and CV/Department of Justice managers responsible for the program. CSEPP relations with locations managers and personnel are already good to very good in most locations. Relationship maintenance at a senior level needs development. The relationship should probably be formalised, beyond contractual obligations, to include regular meetings and establishment and/or adherence to procedures to ensure exchange of information and good communication. Such a forum can contribute to a sense of real partnership in addition to improving communication. Systemic solutions to emerging problems could be achieved with such a working partnership. It would also provide opportunities to discuss issues of potential values conflict and friction between Department and providers. In such a forum, agreed positions could be negotiated. This recommendation is also relevant to main Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 2 – Expansion of the Program

It is recommended that the Department expand the program to cover the entire state. Again, the program model is quite sound. The program has been well-received within the corrections community, among community corrections personnel and among prisons personnel. The program has achieved good employment and recidivism outcomes in the pilot period. It is difficult to operate within the prison context when only certain communities to which prisoners relocate are included. There are also inequities in making the program available to only some individuals and communities. Therefore, we recommend expansion of the program across the entire state. There are five specific recommendations associated with this major recommendation. They relate to the management and implementation of expansion.

Recommendation 2.1 – It is recommended that the involvement of current providers, ACSO and the Job Futures consortium be expanded in a future, state-wide CSEPP.

This involvement may include expanding their delivery capacity, but it should also include provision of advice to the Department on how, where, and when to expand. Performance in the pilot warrants continuation of involvement for both providers. Much has been learned about resources necessary to deliver and processes that work. That knowledge is invaluable to expansion of the program. The approach to expansion should include a combination of preferred-tendering (invitations to tender from the two current successful providers) and open tendering (open, publicised invitations to prospective new providers). A combination of current and new providers in an expanded program would provide a healthy mix and variation of service models and practices.

Recommendation 2.2 – It is recommended that inclusion of new providers in an expanded program be based on provider characteristics and conditions shown in the pilot to be critical to program success.

Should the expansion include introduction of new providers, it should be determined that consortium/provider candidates are well-connected locally, well-resourced and skilled to deliver in this highly specialised area (caution is advised). Ideally, there should be a broader profile to the provider organisation with a range of other relevant services available from within the provider organisation, but with corrections and employment as key strengths in the existing profiles of prospective provider organisations.

Recommendation 2.3 – It is recommended that expansion be accompanied by formation of a provider network and promotion of an integrated system of support services for the client group.

Some of the assumptions underlying the program include: need for long-term support; likelihood of slow and intermittent progress; need for basic skill development in relation to pre-employment preparation; and need for referral to other services such as housing, health services, and personal support services. Ultimately, what is needed is an integrated network of support services for prisoners and offenders. Such an integrated system should include employment assistance, housing assistance, personal support services, drug and alcohol treatment services, and other relevant services. In an expanded program, providers should be encouraged to form a network that can both allow better access to services not already available through their broader social welfare organisation profile and also facilitate the bringing together of an integrated system of support services. Such a provider network could promote greater collaboration among providers as well.

Recommendation 2.4 – It is recommended that a variety of service models be implemented to suit local conditions.

The consortium model has been shown to be effective when well managed, as has been the case in the pilot. The model that focuses on essentially one geographical area for a provider, as does the ACSO model, has also worked quite well. If delivered appropriately, it may ensure better coverage in a particular location, and is built and maintained on local networks and knowledge (resources developed slowly and not associated with ‘imported’ providers). Whatever models are implemented, it is necessary to ensure that truly local providers are contracted or enlisted into a consortium rather than delivering service from a distance. Location delivery models should be based on an analysis of the local ‘ecology’ as described in Section 3 of this report.

Recommendation 2.5 – It is recommended that outlet coverage be provided at locations within all regional centres.

Minimally, expansion should include program delivery at locations in all regional centres throughout the state. There is sufficient population within regional centres and surrounds to justify expansion without requiring real resource intensive efforts. In order to cover smaller towns and serve clients in more remote areas, it is recommended that satellite units be administratively attached to larger location offices and that mobile or ‘rover’ consultants be assigned to those areas. Negotiation of targets to accommodate travel and distance would be necessary.

Recommendation 3 – Department Management of the Program

It is recommended that the Department revise its approach to contract / program management. Issues and conditions related to management of the program by the Department of Justice were identified in stakeholder interviews. Issues included: Department staff could be more directly involved and have more direct contact with the program; more information could and should be provided about changes to the structures and management of Corrections Victoria, especially on changes affecting operations of locations and the CSEPP; and more content and regularity of feedback to providers on performance and Department perceptions would improve relations. In short, more of a collaborative partnership approach is possible, and in our opinion, preferred. Reported lapses in information have included lack of specifics about relevant implications of the restructure of Corrections Victoria, lack of announcements of departures of key Department staff, and lack of confirmation of a contract extension. More minor lapses in information were reported in relation to lack of regular meetings and lack of regular feedback on provider performance. Therefore, we recommend revision of the style, structures, and procedures associated with contract / program management to facilitate greater collaboration and involvement. A traditional purchaser-provider approach that keeps the Department at arm’s length is not, in our opinion, suited to this program and, indeed, of questionable value in any case. Development and encouragement of a collaborative partnership approach is well-advised.

Recommendation 3.1 – It is recommended that the Department revise its approach to project / program management.

This recommendation refers not only to CSEPP, but to contracted programs generally. Consequently, it may require some culture change within the Department. Because of the highly structured way that Corrections Victoria operates, it is important that program providers have clear endorsement from central Department management and that the program be recognised as operating under the guidance of the Department. Fostering a spirit of collaboration will encourage more open communication as well. Incorporating what has been learned about contract / program management through the CSEPP experience into a Department-wide approach that moves away from a traditional purchaser-provider approach and promotes a collaborative partnership approach is well-advised. Other programs would also benefit from such an approach.

Recommendation 3.2 – It is recommended that mechanisms for communication and reporting be formalised and implemented.

Consistent with the previous recommendation's focus on collaboration and partnership, it is also important to establish formal mechanisms for communication and reporting. A number of such communication channels should be established including a regular schedule of meetings between providers and Department of Justice managers, regular feedback by the Department to providers on performance, regular joint program review sessions, joint planning sessions, and joint annual reviews of the program. Improved communication will contribute to greater stability for the program and a sense of security for both Department and providers.

Recommendation 4 – Regular Monitoring and Further Research

It is recommended that program evaluation be conducted on a continuing basis for purposes of quality assurance, continuous improvement, and program and service development. This will involve conduct of a program of regular monitoring of program performance and further research. Ongoing evaluation should be highly collaborative including evaluators, providers, and Department managers. It should be characterised by regular meetings and communication and clear cycles of evaluation, feedback, and planning further developments. In addition to the ongoing program evaluation, specific research should be conducted into program benefits and costs in relation to broader economic and social costs, and into determinants of success in reintegration. There are three specific recommendations associated with this major recommendation.

Recommendation 4.1 – It is recommended that a program of continuous program evaluation should be conducted that includes quarterly analyses of performance (whole program performance, performance by provider organisation, performance by location).

By this, we refer to evaluation of program structures and processes to ensure smooth operation and identification of innovations and developments. We also refer to analysis of the regular reports of employment, recidivism, and other program outcomes. As described above, it should include regular meetings and communication and clear cycles of evaluation, feedback, and planning further developments. It should be largely formative (informing the program in an ongoing and interactive way that affects delivery positively), but have summative components as well that summarise results at landmark points, draw conclusions, and make more firm recommendations.

Recommendation 4.2 – It is recommended that a comprehensive benefits – costs analysis be conducted.

A study of program benefits and costs should be undertaken. Beyond benefits to clients who are program participants, there are broader benefits and costs associated with the program not yet measured. For example, sustained employment has broader effects; in many cases other benefits include less dependence on welfare and welfare agencies, desistance from crime, more stable social relations, and payment of income tax (as examples). Broader economic benefits may well far exceed actual program costs. This has been found to be the case in relation to other disadvantaged groups in specialist employment services. Broader social benefits of changed lifestyle often include improved family relations, breaking a generational cycle of crime, and benefits to the community in terms of less victim impact with less crime (again, as examples). In any case, a comprehensive study of benefits and costs of the program would be very useful to policymakers responsible for implementation and further development of the *CLTMS*. It would also be a very useful contribution to program management, development, and delivery.

Recommendation 4.3 – It is recommended that a comprehensive study of determinants of success and ‘failure’ in reintegration be undertaken.

The Indirect Gains Evaluation described in Section 5 of this report begins the exercise and goes some way toward investigating the ‘big pieces’ of the reintegration puzzle: health; housing; employment and training; finances; social network; substance use; and further criminal justice involvement. A large-scale longitudinal study is needed to advance understanding to the point of identification of determinants and interventions, and the extent to which those interventions might promote success and prevent or reduce ‘failure’ (re-offending, escalation, chronicity, etc.). We recognise the many issues that impinge upon conducting longitudinal work with this client group, but also recognise the superiority of that approach for the questions requiring investigation. Perhaps a large scale cross-sectional study with a smaller longitudinal component should be considered as a methodologically reasonable and achievable alternative to pure longitudinal research. In any case, the question of what makes reintegration work and how is it achieved are among the most important questions in the field of corrections.

6.5 Concluding Statement

6.5.1 The Cost of Crime and the Economics of Intervention

Recently, Mayhew (2003) and Mayhew and Adkins (2003) estimated costs of crime in Australia, breaking down total costs into 'crime costs' and 'costs of dealing with crime'. Crime costs were divided into property, medical, lost output, and intangible costs (\$19,030 million), and the costs of dealing with crime was divided into criminal justice system, victim services, security, and insurance (\$12,750 million). The total estimated cost of crime per year was \$31,780 million. This is an average annual cost of almost \$1600 per Australian resident. Social costs include, but not exhaustively: loss of a significant number of potentially contributory members of the community; loss of potential workers from a currently shrinking workforce; victim impact of crime; impact of crime on community safety; and security concerns.

In Victoria, between 1994 and 2003, the state's prison population increased by more than 50%, and the costs of incarceration are high; currently calculated at between approximately \$40,000 per annum, per prisoner for minimum security and approximately \$76,000 per annum, per prisoner in maximum security prisons (Auditor General Victoria, 2003). Corrections Victoria estimates that approximately 60% of people who re-offend are unemployed at the time that they re-offend (Victorian Department of Justice, 2000–2001), indicating that unemployment contributes significantly to recidivism. There is good evidence that employment assistance is an important intervention.

Provision of employment assistance to ex-prisoners and offenders is a labour and resource intensive endeavour. The number and scale of barriers to employment, together with the level and extent of support needs of the client group as a whole, make achieving sustained employment very difficult. Barriers include lack of work history, low level of education and training, gaps in personal and work history, history of dependence on benefits, high level of substance abuse, reporting requirements impinging on work schedule, chronic medical conditions, undiagnosed mental illness and several issues related to employer reluctance to employ. Support needs typically include employment assistance, housing assistance, family and personal counselling, social support when family and social network are not sufficient or appropriate, need for training in finances and budgeting, and drug and alcohol treatment in many cases. In addition to employment, achievement of reintegration within the community also appears dependent on several of the same variables and also must be considered difficult to achieve. On the other hand, the social and economic costs of not providing such assistance are undoubtedly much greater than the effort required to achieve positive outcomes.

There are numerous intangible benefits associated with employment of ex-prisoners and offenders including those related to the individual (e.g., increased social contact, improved self-esteem and confidence, personal satisfaction, reduction in psychiatric symptoms, and improved financial conditions), as well as wider system level benefits including reduced crime and re-incarceration rates, reduced costs within the corrections system, improved community safety, and the addition of capable and enthusiastic workers into a shrinking workforce. In addition, there are potential social justice benefits related to employment of ex-prisoners and offenders including improved attitudes of employers toward hiring ex-prisoners and offenders, promotion of equality of opportunity, and improved societal attitudes related to the inclusion of ex-prisoners and offenders in labour market

activities. It must be acknowledged that very little criminal behaviour can be attributed to ‘character defects’; the vast majority is as the result of often extreme social disadvantage.

The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) has attempted to meet the challenge of work and life skills preparation, placement and retention in employment, and assistance with broader issues associated with reduced re-offending and reintegration of ex-prisoners and offenders. The total CSEPP program cost for the two year pilot period was \$1.9 million. For that, more than 400 clients were placed into sustained employment and only slightly less than 7.5% of more than 3,000 registered clients re-offended. The cost per sustained employment outcome was approximately \$4,750 and the cost of reducing re-offending to such a low level for the entire client population was only approximately \$650 per registered client. Given the total cost of crime, these costs must be considered very low. In the case of CSEPP, the cost of the intervention which has been very effective warrants continuation and expansion of the program into the future.

In short, the cost of crime is high. However, the cost of effective intervention is much lower when managed and delivered by dedicated, committed, skilled, and well-resourced providers working in partnership with locations personnel and central management of corrections services. Reintegration support for people who have a history of disadvantage and social exclusion leading to criminal behaviour and criminal history does not just make ‘good sense’ on the basis of social and economic cost reduction. It also makes good moral sense in terms of redressing some of the disadvantages that have contributed to criminal outcomes and making Victoria, and Australia, a more equitable society.

6.5.2 Reintegration and the Need for an Integrated System of Support

Historically, there have been two ways of dealing with criminal behaviour. One is punishment, and one is rehabilitation. Traditionally, there are two rationales behind punishment. One is simply that some kind of ‘payment’ must be made for a wrong done, presumably in equal measures. The other is that punishment is a deterrent to others and to future criminal behaviour by the one being punished. It implies some kind of ‘learning’ from consequences. Punishment has proven to be a very costly approach to dealing with criminal behaviour, and one that has had limited effect at best.

Traditionally, rehabilitation has focused on changing the attitudes, the morality, the values, and the habits of criminals through prison-based and community-based programs. It often has included basic and limited education and vocational training as well. Rehabilitation has largely focused on the individual in isolation from their environment, in that it has focused on measurement of change in relation to program involvement. More recently, the concept of reintegration has emerged as a next generation concept related to rehabilitation. Reintegration refers to the process of re-establishing oneself within the community. The focus is not on changes achieved within or as a result of program involvement, but on application of changed attitudes, values, and behaviours within the context of everyday life.

Desistance from crime has also received a great deal of attention recently as a basic indicator of changed attitudes, values, and behaviours. Measuring desistance, however, is quite complex. The question of how long an ex-prisoner or ex-offender must be offence-free before they can be considered to have desisted, is more than a metaphysical question; it is a question that affects

measurement. Often, frequency and severity of re-offending decrease in a process of gradual desistance. More importantly, desistance from crime, although an important indicator of reintegration, is not the sum of reintegration. It is important that an individual not just become offence-free, but integrated into their community with stable employment, housing, and social network. For an individual to be crime-free and socially isolated, socially marginalised, and socially disadvantaged is not what is meant by reintegration. Also, to remain isolated, marginalised, and disadvantaged is to remain at risk of re-offending and jeopardising the changed lifestyle that the individual is creating.

Reintegration has been considered broadly to refer to “the introduction/return of the ex-prisoner to functional, personally fulfilling and responsible participation in wider society” (Baldry et al., 2002, p. 2). Employment, along with housing and drug and alcohol treatment, comprise the big three basic ingredients in reintegration of ex-prisoners and offenders within the community. Other elements critical to the process include financial stability, supportive interpersonal relationships, and healthy psychological functioning. As we have suggested throughout this report, and as it has been suggested by many others in the literature, a large proportion of ex-prisoners and offenders are in need of assistance in relation to several or all of those domains, and the need for assistance may be more than short-term.

Complicating matters further, this client group, on the whole, often lack the skills required to get assistance on their own. When having to get assistance from several different sources, ex-prisoners and ex-offenders often lack the patience, persistence, stamina, attention span, interpersonal skills, and practical-procedural information to succeed in getting needed assistance without help. The need for an integrated system of support for this group is evident. A case management model is suggested by the comprehensiveness and complexity of typical needs. Performing as an advocate and agent is clearly beyond the purview of a corrections officer or parole officer at present, and their current caseloads would make expanding the job unworkable. CSEPP has operated with a case management model, and consultants have provided some basic assistance to clients in getting other needed services, but CSEPP is primarily an employment assistance program and should remain so.

It may be possible to expand the role of corrections officers, if the caseload was reduced by increasing the number of staff in those roles. This would provide some job enrichment by putting corrections officers more often in a position to take direct action in addressing client needs. Such a change may also reduce staff turnover. In any case, creating a case management role to assist with reintegration issues is important. Another important element to an integrated system is creation of a comprehensive service inventory; a listing of agencies and resources relevant to the reintegration needs of the client group. There are housing assistance providers, drug and alcohol treatment providers, and a range of other providers state-wide that could be assembled into an inventory from which case managers would draw assistance.

In addition to the infrastructure of an integrated system, there is a need for ‘community-building’ in relation to this endeavour. At present, there is very little sense of community among the various providers relevant to the client group, despite there being a great deal of shared values and strong commitment. Without such a sense of community, achieving a truly integrated support system is unlikely. Community-building is best achieved through joint projects and regular events that bring the community of stakeholders together. To facilitate development of this dimension of an integrated system, the Department should take an active role in sponsoring projects and events that bring key stakeholders together on a regular basis. In doing so, its role should be participative, but

not directive. That kind of facilitative involvement would provide opportunities to demonstrate a spirit of collaboration and a commitment to reintegration on the part of the Department.

To conclude, achieving reintegration will remain difficult without an integrated system of support services for this client group, and without case management to assist clients connecting to needed assistance. Getting each of the 'big pieces' (employment, housing, drug and alcohol treatment) and other support services up to a standard where they are meeting clients needs is very important. Creating some 'glue' that holds those pieces together in an integrated system is perhaps equally important and the next big challenge.

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Appendix 1

An Explanation of the Delay in Commencing the Evaluation

The CSEPP program model called for evaluation of CSEPP to coincide with commencement of the program itself, in accordance with a sound principle of evaluation research. However, as a result of several circumstances, the evaluation did not officially commence until much later. The delay in commencing the evaluation is best explained by recounting a timeline of events related to selection of the evaluator and commencement of the evaluation.

- Originally, the evaluation of CSEPP was advertised in August, 2002, just after commencement of the program. The process of appointing an evaluator was commenced, but no appointment was made. (We did not apply at that time.)
- In mid-December, 2002, the tender for the evaluation of CSEPP was readvertised with a deadline for submissions in mid-January, 2003. We made a submission by the deadline in mid-January. We also obtained Deakin University ethics clearance at that point, consistent with University policy.
- In March, 2003, we were advised that we had been short-listed for the project.
- In early April, 2003, we were interviewed as part of the final Department decision making / selection process.
- It was not until late November, 2003 that we received a verbal report that we had been successful in the tender. Despite having no formal confirmation, we made application to the DOJ ethics committee for approval to conduct the evaluation.
- In early December, 2003, we organised and conducted meetings in Melbourne and Bendigo to introduce ourselves to stakeholders and give them some idea of our evaluation plan.
- In late February, 2004, (26th) a contract arrived.
- In late March, 2004 (23rd) DOJ ethics approval to commence the evaluation was received.

Originally, the design was for an evaluation with an 18 month timeline. By the time we had approval to commence, there was 9 months left to the end of December, a primarily non-negotiable end date. Thus began the process of having to revise the design to fit the timeline. Nevertheless, all elements of the original evaluation design have been retained, with minor modifications. Two compromises have been: cutting short a 'rapport-building' phase that was built into the original design and would have made relationship management much easier; and eliminating a first round of data collection and feedback that would have facilitated performance adjustments if more time had been available. A number of other internal delays and difficulties have been associated with the turnover between February and July of several key Department staff who were responsible for different aspects of the program or the evaluation. This meant that a good deal of the establishment and data collection periods of the evaluation was conducted without substantial advice or consultation from the Department. From October onward the situation improved.

Appendix 2

Location Specific Conditions Identified in the Program Process Evaluation

The Job Futures Consortium

Bendigo CCS is, at the time of writing, serviced by **VACRO**.

The original provider was Options Enterprises, the consortium member that went out of business at the end of 2003. At that time, Youth Projects took oversight of the location until another arrangement could be made. In doing so, Youth Projects placed an additional worker to assist at Bendigo and Shepparton CCSs during the transition. VACRO took on the location in June of 2004. Melbourne Citymission took on the Melbourne central business district work of Options.

The original employment consultant resigned early in 2004 and has been replaced by a new worker who are now well-integrated into the office culture. According to the acting location manager and the senior corrections officer with the most involvement with CSEPP, from the beginning, the employment consultant was employed 3 days per week and split that time between Bendigo and Shepparton. As a result, little integration into the office occurred, and the program struggled despite a strong commitment from CCS staff. In addition, the original consultant operated for some time without a computer or mobile phone, or even set office/desk space. He is described as very friendly, very client-oriented, focused on client support as much as (or more than) on employment.

The replacement person was earlier described as 'not well known' (due to low exposure). The CV interviewees expressed the view that one needs a strong local network to succeed in Bendigo, and that it would probably have been better to contract a local provider than an outsider. However, the present situation is described very positively by CV interviewees, with VACRO having two staff people on site most days, one a local resident, one from Castlemaine, both primarily working out of the location, but with their office a few blocks away.

Bendigo itself has a history of high unemployment. The 'rag trade' left Bendigo 10 -15 years ago, removing approximately 1400 jobs and several hundred job openings annually from the local market. Job availability at present is mainly in relation to skilled work, above the level of most CSEPP clients. The local community services system is extensive. The public transport system is excellent in and around Bendigo, but described as 'terrible' outside of the city. Bendigo's population is largely of European descent, with a significant proportion of long-time Indo-Chinese residents, mainly descendents of 'gold rush' immigrants.

Dandenong CCS is serviced by the
Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The current employment consultant had been in the position for more than eighteen months and is a former CCO from Frankston CCS. She operates from within the Dandenong CCS office. She also works closely, collaborating across locations, with the employment consultant from Frankston CCS. One worker serviced both offices at the beginning of the program and managed to get relationships and processes established quickly with referrals and outcomes resulting early on. That worker left at the end of 2003. For a short time, the replacement consultant from Frankston covered Dandenong until the current consultant was employed. A senior corrections officer has official responsibility for program contact, and, although some variability in CCO commitment was described, the general level of support was reported as high. The consultant is well-integrated into the culture of the workplace. An issue for this CCS is that satellite offices are not eligible for CSEPP.

Employment consultant activities include monthly visits to prisons to meet pre-release clients, attendance at courses undertaken by offenders (horticulture and OHS generally) to introduce prospective clients to self and CSEPP and later contacting the CCOs about those prospective clients, and working directly with clients. That work includes assistance with résumés, referrals to other services both within the Brotherhood of St. Laurence and outside, assistance with court orders, and placement or post-placement support for those who are work ready or employed. CCS and local community relations are described as very good, with CCS management involved in the local safety committee and the CCS conducting several community projects.

The local community is very diverse with a high concentration of Indo-Chinese residents and non-English speaking background (NESB) residents generally. There is a lot of available work, in light industry and labour hire, as well as some horticulture work, that is appropriate to the client group. The local public transport system is very good. Approximately 80–90% of CCS clients have a drug and/or alcohol problem. This results in a high number of referrals to those programs before the employment prospect can be approached.

Frankston CCS is also serviced by the
Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The current employment consultant has been in the position for 18 months and is a former CCO. He operates from an office in Frankston. He also works closely with the employment consultant from Dandenong CCS, collaborating across locations. As described above, previously one worker serviced both offices. Relationships and processes were established quickly, and the program was well underway. When that worker left at the end of 2003, the current employment consultant commenced, also covering Dandenong for a few months, until the current Frankston consultant was employed.

The consultant is well-integrated into the culture of the workplace. The location manager at Frankston is very actively involved in CSEPP, as is the senior corrections officer who has official responsibility for program contact. Staff are reported to all be highly supportive of the program. An issue for this CCS also is that satellite offices are not eligible for CSEPP (although Moorabbin was a satellite and is not now, therefore Moorabbin clients are eligible now). Like in Dandenong, employment consultant activities include monthly visits to prisons to meet pre-release clients, attendance at courses undertaken by offenders (horticulture and OHS generally) to introduce prospective clients to self and CSEPP and later contacting the CCOs about those prospective clients, and working directly with clients. That work includes assistance with résumés, referrals to other services both within the Brotherhood of St. Laurence and outside, assistance with court orders, and placement or post-placement support for those work ready or employed.

CCS and local community relations are described as very good, with CCS management involved in local safety and drugs committees and in the conduct of several community projects. The local community has a high proportion of Anglo-Australians. There is a lot of available work in horticulture (market gardens and nurseries), but transportation is difficult (poor between Frankston and Dandenong and patchy in terms of work locations). Fewer Frankston CCS clients have problems in relation to injecting drugs, but reportedly, there is more problematic cannabis use

Hume CCS is serviced by **Youth Projects**, which has its office in Glenroy.

The Hume and Reservoir CCSs are serviced by a team of three employment consultants. The team leader has been working in the program for 11 months, starting with a temporary role at Bendigo CCS (see above). Her background is in employment services with the Job Network. One employment consultant has been working in the program for 9 months, including a period of secondment. She is a former CCO from Reservoir CCS. Another employment consultant has been working in the program for 21 months, in recruitment and as a consultant. Employment consultant activities are a blend of direct client support and what is described as marketing activities.

The direct support is provided on a 'slow growth' basis, with time spent on rapport and relationship building, constructing résumés, participation in Job Clubs, assistance with job search, interviewing skills, and other placement-related and post-placement support. The role has been described as 'part social worker, part employment consultant'. Material assistance is also provided with respect to funds for clothing and/or equipment, work-related transportation costs, etc. The marketing activities described refer to developing and maintaining healthy relationships with CCOs within the CCS, Centrelink staff, and other relevant service providers. On average, one day per week is spent on site. This appears to be sufficient to maintain good relations and keep the program moving along. This approach differs from the more integrated approach taken in other locations.

The client group is described as very diverse, possibly more varied in their educational backgrounds (not all low education), less drug-affected on the whole than some other locations, with variable work skills and experience levels. Availability of work is reported to be fairly good, but most suitable work is casual and much of it removed from the public transport system, leaving clients dependent on having an automobile or push bike. Hume is also experiencing a 'community upgrade' of sorts with the building of a library, refurbishment of many of the commercial and government buildings, increasing house values, and growth in the local economy. A long term community pride in being from 'Broady' (a sort of rough and ready reputation) is reportedly giving way to pride in upward mobility as a community. The local ethos is said to be very positive and community-minded.

Morwell CCS is serviced by **Education Centre**, which has an office in Morwell.

The employment consultant interviewed has been with CSEPP since November of 2003, and has a broad background as an electrical engineer who has run companies, been a teacher, and worked in disability employment services. He is a long-term local resident with a strong commitment to the Latrobe Valley. He was originally hired to assist with a high load of referrals. Weeks after commencing, work bans put a halt to referrals until February. An anticipated rush of referrals after the bans were lifted never transpired. Only recently have referrals resumed at a reasonable rate from the CCS. The supervising employment consultant who had been with the program from the beginning left in May, 2004. A second consultant was appointed to assist with administration and perform regular duties at the end of June. The consultant interviewed works closely with the Fulham prison employment consultant and spends time weekly at that location.

Up until the work bans, this location performed very well. Since then, the employment consultants have had to thoroughly revise the existing system for administering the program at this location as well as focus on re-building the referrals and registrations. In addition to these responsibilities, the consultant interviewed spends time assisting with training in the transition program at Fulham prison, working on converting referrals to registrations, and trying to identify employment opportunities. He has explored, with some success, shuttling clients to workplaces and labour hire outlets in Melbourne and Dandenong (due to high local unemployment and low availability of jobs). He describes the CCS staff as very focused on employment for their clients and committed to supporting CSEPP. This is borne out by the interviews with the location manager and senior corrections officer who are extremely supportive of the program and describe CV location staff as also committed.

The location manager and senior corrections officer describe eligibility criteria as creating referral problems at the location (high percentage of 'find a fault' clients who are not eligible; Warragul, being a good source of referrals in the past and helping with Morwell shortfalls, is no longer part of Morwell CCS). Increasing levels of drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness among clients is seen as another impediment for employment. The local economy (throughout the valley really) has been depressed for almost 15 years. Unemployment is high. Competition for jobs is extremely high. There are waiting lists for apprenticeships. There are a few large employers, but those companies are 'closed shops' and utilise one employment agency to fill any infrequent vacancies.

Reservoir CCS, like Hume CCS, is serviced by **Youth Projects**, which is located in Glenroy.

As described, the Hume and Reservoir CCSs are serviced by a team of three employment consultants. One employment consultant has been with the program for 15 months and is a former CCO from Reservoir CCS. Another employment consultant worked in the program for almost two and a half years, both in recruitment and as a consultant. Activities at Reservoir CCS are similar to those at Hume: direct support is provided on a 'slow growth' basis, with time spent on rapport and relationship building, constructing résumés, participation in Job Clubs, assistance with job search, interviewing skills, other placement-related and post-placement support; material assistance is also provided with respect to funds for clothing and/or equipment, work-related transportation costs, etc.; marketing activities described refer to developing and maintaining healthy relationships with CCOs within the CCS, Centrelink staff, and other relevant service providers.

On average, one day per week is spent on site. Given the service model taken, this appears to be sufficient to maintain good relations and keep the program moving along at Reservoir. However, senior corrections officers have described the performance as variable over time and across individual consultants (there have been four). The location manager and a senior corrections officer are both very active in relation to the program. They describe Reservoir as a location that 'gets a lot of pilots', and there is usually pressure to perform; perhaps more so with this one. That puts pressure on staff.

The CCS office is described as having an extensive local network that can assist clients with housing, food vouchers, PSP support, and drug and alcohol treatment. Drug use among the client group is reportedly higher than at Hume CCS. Otherwise, the client group is described as diverse, with differing educational backgrounds (not all low education), with differing levels of work skills and experiences. Availability of work is reported to be fairly good, however problematic in a variety of ways. Availability of construction jobs is high, but requires individual transport (automobile). Also, there are quite a few local industrial areas, some close to trains, others removed from public transport.

Ringwood CCS is serviced by **Employment Focus**.

The employment consultant has been in place from the beginning of CSEPP and has an administrative assistant. According to the location manager, it did take 2-3 months for the program to get bedded down, but has run smoothly since then. The CSEPP staff have two fully equipped work stations allocated to them by the location manager and work from the CCS office on a full time basis, attending staff meetings regularly and participating fully in office social interactions. As a result of being physically located and socially integrated within the CCS office, the employment consultant is available to staff and clients for referrals, registrations, and for continuing work with clients in preparing résumés, job search, training and work preparation activities, etc.

This CCS office is one where CCO turnover is low, and morale is described as very good. There is a high priority of client development, and the core values of Corrections Victoria are openly espoused and encouraged. There is a great deal of support for CSEPP from the location manager and all staff. The employment consultant reports to the location manager on a regular basis, so performance is monitored quite closely and regularly announced on a location level here. The magistrates at the Ringwood court are described as all very experienced and committed to rehabilitation, which facilitates effective operation and adherence to the rehabilitation values within the CCS, as well as making local CSEPP outcomes more likely to achieve.

It was noted that negative attitudes and punitive behaviour by magistrates could have disastrous effects on a CCS's morale and performance. There are many programs offered within this CCS, so the overall focus of the office is heavily rehabilitation and reintegration oriented. The office does have two satellite offices, and attempts are made to incorporate clients from those offices, who otherwise meet the CSEPP criteria, into the program. Sometimes the employment consultant has to travel quite a bit to meet with remote clients. Local economic conditions are quite good. The eastern region of Melbourne is fairly affluent on the whole and has low unemployment, with a fair amount of light industry scattered throughout the region. Public transport is well-developed as well.

Shepparton CCS, like Bendigo CCS, is currently serviced by **VACRO**.

Shepparton CCS experienced the transition from Options Enterprises to Youth Projects which had temporary oversight of the location until VACRO took on the location in June of 2004. When the original employment consultant resigned early in 2004, he was replaced by a new worker who spent one day per week in Shepparton and was still becoming integrated into the office culture at the time of the first interviews. The process of integration continued to be somewhat slow (according to the location manager and senior corrections officer), with a significant amount of time going to travel as well. This situation of low contact and split coverage has persisted from the beginning of the program.

Once VACRO took responsibility for this location, the issue of insufficient coverage began to get addressed. A local person now works at the location two days per week. Another issue has been that neither employment consultant has been a local resident. According to the location manager and senior corrections officer, not having a local resident worker made placing offenders into employment difficult because the worker lacks local knowledge and networks, and both are considered by the location manager and senior corrections officer to be essential to placing people into employment locally.

Appointment of the local employment consultant who has extensive contacts throughout the area and splits their time with Dhurringile Prison, has resolved a long-standing difficulty. Many jobs are not even advertised. If service to the location has been inadequate in the past, the need for support is high; 53% of Shepparton offenders are unemployed. There are quite a few employment opportunities in farming around the outlying communities, but public transport to smaller communities is very intermittent (often one bus per day each way). Housing is also chronically in very short supply in and around Shepparton. At the same time, community services on the whole are quite good in Shepparton. There is an increasing number of NESB clients, most of whom are unemployed, and a fairly large Koori population in the area. Substance abuse is described as 'almost always an issue' with local offenders, but very little heroin is reported locally. Substance abuse is mainly in relation to alcohol and cannabis.

Sunshine CCS is serviced by
Djerriwarrh Employment and Education Services.

At the time of the interview, the employment consultant had been in the position for 5 weeks. He has a background in careers counselling in the juvenile justice system (blend of employment-related and corrections). In his 5 weeks, he had gone through the caseload and contacted all those clients seeking employment, made contact with and begun visiting the CCS, and commenced action plans. Previously, there was one full-time consultant and one part-time marketer working in the program at this location. Both had Job Network backgrounds with no corrections experience. According to the location manager and the senior corrections officer who has had most contact and responsibility for oversight of the program, the program has had a patchy history here. In the first 6 months of the program, the process was put in place for referrals and contact with clients, and that worked quite well. A desk was set up for the employment consultant who would come to the CCS twice a week and get referrals, make appointments, and see clients.

However, by January of 2003, the program had 'lost its legs'. Contact was reduced to faxing referrals to the employment consultant at her office, and clients often reported several weeks between referral and contact. The location manager and the senior corrections officer are both very optimistic about the new employment consultant who has been attending the CCS regularly and setting up work space there. They believed that they need to educate staff again about the program due to the lapse in the past and a fair number of new staff in the CCS. At the time of writing, five months since the first interview, the program at this location has stabilised

The local economy is described as quite strong, with a good deal of industrial work around the area. However, the train system does not run very near to the big industrial work sites, and the bus system is very poor, leading to large commuting times if one does not have a car. Housing for clients is described as a crisis management situation. Many have no housing, and there is a lack of even crisis accommodation in the area. Rental properties are in abundance, but few offenders who lack housing can afford rental costs. One additional factor for this location is a high proportion of older clients with multiple disadvantage.

Dame Phyllis Frost Centre is serviced by
Melbourne Citymission.

The employment consultant has been there since CSEPP started at DPF Centre in December of 2002. In the beginning her time was split between DPF Centre and Tarrengower, but as workload rose, she focused on DPF Centre and another consultant was hired to cover Tarrengower. This consultant is a local resident, so travel time is minimised. There is a second consultant who spends some time at DPF Centre as well. The main consultant started by coming 4 days per week, is generally at the Centre 3 days per week now, and is involved in registrations, résumé writing, training (conducting the 'Working Life' program), and other activities related to release preparation. She spends the other 2 days doing follow up in the community and administration. In the community, she contacts clients to ensure follow through with community employment consultants and provides material support for transition and work-related activity. The second consultant has a Job Network background. She spends 2 days per week in prison work, 2 days in community work, and 1 day on project administration. Her position has evolved over time, and she now has a rather specialised role of transition consultant, ensuring that the contact between clients and consultants occurs post-release, employment placements, and coordination of jobs fairs. However, she also contributes to delivery of the 'Working Life' program at DPF Centre.

The programs manager and education coordinator describe the program as very effective, very popular among prisoners, and one of the easiest to administer. Relations between the program and the prison programs staff are excellent. Marketing the program was necessary in the beginning, but now it is 'self-selling'. This is particularly remarkable because women prisoners have been widely described as less interested in post-release employment than are men, and more interested in reuniting with children and other family members.

The population is fairly diverse, with only 15% relocating locally and a substantial percentage having low SES backgrounds. According to the prison programs manager and education coordinator, success of the program has been the result of close monitoring by CSEPP and MCM management, in addition to what they describe as excellent performance by the main employment consultant. Linking the program to the education program and the education coordinator is believed to have strengthened the program's acceptance. The holistic model that drives programs at DPF Centre is described as making it a 'fun place to work' in addition to achieving results in terms of release preparation.

Dhurringile Prison is serviced by
VACRO

The original employment consultant split her time between Dhurringile and Loddon prisons. She has been with the CSEPP program from the beginning and has a long history of working with prisoners within the prison system. According to her, the first six months required educating prison staff (particularly custodial staff) about the program because nothing like it had previously existed. A local resident has been employed for several months (at time of writing) who covers both Dhurringile Prison and Shepparton CCS. Overcoming the image of VACRO as a 'welfare service' and getting staff and prisoners to see CSEPP as an employment service was also an issue. For the first year, it was very difficult because the consultant did not have an office at the prison, or even a work space, and didn't have a phone. Prisoners had difficulty finding her to make or keep an appointment. Because Dhurringile is a functioning farm, it is necessary to timetable appointments with CSEPP clients a week in advance. Even with timetabling visits and appointments, it is still the case that a huge amount of time is spent waiting for clients and 'chasing them up', and a fair number do not keep appointments because of work obligations which take them far from the administration area of the prison.

There has also been a fairly high turnover of programs staff at Dhurringile during the course of the program, and this has made matters more difficult, with a need to regularly build relationships and credibility for self and for the program. In the beginning, prison employment consultants would just register clients prior to release, then refer them to community employment consultants at the various CCS locations. However, over the second year, transition became the focus of the prison-located program. The scope has expanded, and there is more involvement in assessments, résumé preparation, release preparation, and transition planning. The program staff are very supportive of the program and how it is conducted at Dhurringile. The only perceived shortcomings from the perspective of programs staff relate to travel time for the consultant (an issue now resolved) and the eligibility restrictions.

Fulham Prison is serviced by the
Brosnan Centre

After providing support with two Brunswick-based part-time employment consultants who spent one day per week at Fulham, that approach was replaced with appointment of the current employment consultant, a Latrobe Valley/Warragul-based worker who spends at least 3 full days per week at Fulham, reserves Fridays for administration, spends a half-day per week at Morwell CCS from where he accesses PIMS and assists the Morwell employment consultant (who works with him in training at Fulham on Wednesdays), and spends the other half-day completing registrations. He mainly focuses on registrations and preparing clients for release and transfer to community employment consultants (depending on their post-release address), but also contributes regularly to training within Fulham, offering revised forms of toastmaster and other life skills courses.

In addition, he assists Bridging the Gap staff at Fulham, as the Brosnan Centre had not operated outside of Melbourne before and is only beginning to build contacts and a local network. When he started, he had to set up a system for operating that fit with Fulham and a set of protocols that worked and provided him self-sufficiency. The previous consultants had not been very systematic. In this regard, he set up a computer-based system that allows him to track client progress from referral to registration to transfer onward post-release. His largest problem is 'losing' clients when they are moved from Fulham to another prison prior to release. The programs manager, education coordinator and TAFE staff are all very supportive of the program. He has access to the housing worker's office for part of Wednesday and has no difficulty getting access to clients without delay as he moves around the prison. His registrations range from 10 to 15 per week.

Loddon Prison is serviced by
VACRO

Originally, the employment consultant splits her time between Dhurringile and Loddon prisons. Since the appointment of the local Dhurringile consultant, she is primarily responsible for Loddon. As described above, she has been with the CSEPP program from the beginning and has a long history of working with prisoners within the prison system. As at Dhurringile, the main tasks in the first six months included educating prison staff about the program and building relationships and credibility; the issue of overcoming the image of VACRO as a 'welfare service'; and getting staff and prisoners to recognise CSEPP as an employment program. She has received 'overwhelming' support from staff at Loddon. She occupies an office within the health and programs area and is easily contactable by clients. She can contact clients quite easily as well.

From the program manager's point-of-view, the program did have a slightly rough start. PIMS and email access took some time to organise and work space was an issue for a while. However, the inference was that those problems originated in DOJ as a result of insufficient implementation planning. Another helpful condition was that there has been little turnover in program staff with whom the consultant regularly interacts and all are very supportive. In fact, CSEPP and Loddon collaborated on a 'jobs fair' that included bringing a large number of employers and various service providers into the prison for a day long event. The event was highly successful by all accounts and was repeated (and is likely to be replicated in other prisons). As previously described, at first prison employment consultants would just register clients prior to release, then refer them to community employment consultants at the various CCS locations. Since the second year, transition has become the focus of the prison-located program, and there is more involvement in résumé preparation and transition planning.

Tarrengower Prison is serviced by
Melbourne Citymission

The employment consultant has been there approximately one and a half years. Previously, the consultant now at DPF Centre also serviced Tarrengower. This consultant is a local resident, so travel time is minimised. Her background is in homelessness work which involved a fair amount of ex-prisoners, but did not focus on employment. The model for service delivery was already in place when she arrived, but a good deal of self-education has been required. The consultant spends 1 day per week in the prison and, when inside, she spends most of her time registering and interviewing clients ('skill trawling' for the raw material for résumés, and assisting with release planning and long-term planning). Outside of the prison, she completes administration.

The transition consultant who also covers DPF Centre comes in to conduct the 'Working Life' program and training in résumé writing. As described above, she has a rather specialised role of transition consultant, ensuring that the contact between clients and community employment consultants occurs post-release. The location manager, programs manager, and education coordinator describe the program as being run efficiently due to processes set up in consultation with the original consultant. Referrals are made by the education coordinator and the program is seen as part of exit planning. Exit planning includes several elements including contact with VACRO, release planning, OPUS, and CSEPP for those who volunteer. Relations between the program and the prison programs staff are considered very good.

One shortcoming from the perspective of the prison managers is that there is not enough feedback on outcomes or the activities undertaken by consultants. A few difficulties inherent in the prison itself have been cited. One problem for the program is that women will often come to Tarrengower just weeks prior to release and have 'gate fever' (only focused on release), while others are moved from Tarrengower prior to release and are lost to the program in the moving. Another is the relatively high percentage of NESB prisoners, and the high percentage of mothers who are only focused on 'mothering' upon release. They believe that more and better advertising of the program is needed inside in order to attract more clients.

Won Wron Prison is serviced by the
Brosnan Centre

Unlike Fulham, Won Wron is still serviced by an employment consultant located at the Brunswick office who commutes to Won Wron, primarily because Won Wron has been in the process of closure for the past year. The employment consultant has been working in the CSEPP program for one and a half years. According to the programs manager, at the beginning there were no regular or set days for visiting Won Wron. When the programs manager had 3–4 interested prisoners, she would call and set up a visit. This approach was not really suitable, and a meeting was held in Warragul to work out a better solution.

Once the Brosnan Centre assigned a CSEPP manager and the present Fulham consultant started, conditions improved dramatically. The Won Wron consultant travels to Won Wron for two days per week and occasionally brings other staff from the Brosnan Centre or other CSEPP staff (community employment consultants) with him. He mainly focuses on registrations, but also contributes regularly to the transition program (TAP) that is offered. He also works with CSEPP community employment consultants as a prisoner nears release, keeping contact from two weeks prior to two weeks post release to ensure that a smooth transition takes place. In this regard, he set up a computer-based tracking system that better ensures contact between client and consultant upon release. He and the programs manager share the view that programs staff are very supportive of the consultant and the program. The programs manager did say that the TAFE staff at Won Wron could be more involved with the program, however.

Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO)

The remaining two locations are serviced by the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO). Those locations include Geelong CCS and Barwon prison. Staff include a manager and two employment consultants. The service model is one that includes some overlap of roles, but some specialised roles, with staff fulfilling the same roles while working across the two sites.

The manager has some direct client contact in addition to the managerial role. A fair amount of his time goes into service development activities, of which there are several, within Barwon prison and within the community.

One of the employment consultants is a former CCO from Geelong CCS who came to the program 21 months ago. She has a major role in client registrations, interviewing, and résumé writing at Barwon prison (40% of her time), does all PIMS data entry in relation to both locations (20% of her time), undertakes research into expected outcomes and best practice (20% of her time), with the remainder of her time going to travel, telephone work, other correspondence, and basic administration.

The other employment consultant came to the position a year ago after 34 years in the public service and had little experience in direct customer contact. He now has major involvement with clients and employers, finding available jobs and supporting clients throughout the job seeking process. He also has a major administration role. Approximately 60% of his time goes into job-seeking, interview preparation, and other employment support, approximately 15% goes into marketing, and 25% goes into administrative activities of various sorts. How ACSO has managed its involvement at the two sites is very different, however.

Geelong CCS

For the first 8 or 9 months, the ACSO manager would attend staff meetings and conduct special purpose meetings to promote the program and build working relationships. Within 2 months, referrals were coming in at a good rate. Employment outcomes were being achieved as well. From the location manager's perspective, it may have been relatively easy for offenders to get employment and success may have actually led to less involvement with the CCS. He also cites a failed attempt to extend the program to Colac as a possible reason for what all acknowledge was a reduced emphasis on the CCS and the offender client group. The location manager also has cited a serious disagreement over the acceptability of clients remaining on benefits and doing 'cash-in-hand' work (CCS manager and staff against it and ACSO manager supporting it). The ACSO manager acknowledges the disagreement, but from his perspective, the issue is quite complex, and the shift of attention to Barwon was simply part of a strategy that had already been in place.

The decision to commence the program with a concerted effort within the CCS location was based on a belief that outcomes could be achieved more easily there than among the prisoner client group. In any event, relations with the CCS staff began to sour. An almost complete turnover of staff within one year reduced familiarity with the program as well. Referrals slowed to almost none. In December of 2003, a CCO was hired who has a background in employment services. From mid-March, he has been given the CSEPP portfolio with a view to getting relations and the program back on track within this CCS. According to the CCO, since early July 2004, a new referral process has been put into place and regular discussions and feedback planned. However, at the time of writing, there are still unresolved difficulties and fewer referrals than earlier in the program. Geelong itself does not have a high unemployment rate, however, many people commute out of Geelong for work. Availability of jobs locally is described as not very good. Housing availability has been described as 'an extremely difficult problem'.

Barwon Prison

Barwon Prison received almost no attention from ACSO for the first 8 or 9 months, while the Geelong CCS operation got up and running. Once attention shifted to Barwon, the ACSO manager and staff have established a real presence within Barwon and work extremely well with the location manager, the programs manager, and programs staff. CSEPP staff regularly attend the prison to work with clients pre-release, and the manager is involved in several development projects within the prison, including flora and fauna propagation and breeding programs, prison industry re-development and a partnership with a large local employer, and various university and TAFE training opportunities for clients (and prisoners generally).

A good deal of other activity is prison-relevant, but not prison-located. The manager is involved in G 21, an ongoing initiative for development of greater Geelong. He is on the Geelong community safety committee (as is a representative from Barwon). He has invested significant time into getting a housing initiative going aimed at provision of post-release accommodation for prisoner clients. The prison industry re-development project involves negotiating post-release employment options with a larger employer who will/would play a significant role in the industry re-development plan. Some of these activities do also have relevance to the CCS clients that ACSO might have as well.