QCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordination Unit: Building a better future with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

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Overview

• Strategic Policy Setting.
• Role and work of the Coordination Unit.
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy.
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum.
• Defining Cultural Safety for the Correctional context
• Northern Strategy - Cultural Intervention Project.
• Work Going Forward
Strategic Policy Setting
The Social Responsibility Charter sets out the values that QCS will uphold into the future. Our values in the four key areas of social, environment, financial and governance, will underpin the work we will do to become the leading provider of corrections in Australia, as set out in Delivering Justice - Improving Corrections.
Delivering Justice – Improving Corrections: QLD Corrective Services Framework for Reform

Improving Corrections sets out our six priorities, how these will benefit the community and how we will measure success. Our priorities are:

1. Serving the Community;
2. Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Over-representation;
3. Partners in rehabilitation;
4. Pathways for Corrections;
5. Green Corrections; and
Role and work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordination Unit
The Coordination Unit works with a range of agencies, including the Departments of Communities - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, Justice and Attorney-General, Queensland Police Service, Family Responsibilities Commission, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, community justice groups and others to address the issues that bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into contact with the correctional system.

Additionally, the Coordination Unit works with other Directorates including Probation and Parole to support and expand the presence of Probation and Parole offices in rural and remote areas, Custodial in relation to providing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and Offender Intervention Services.

The Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordination Unit supervises and provides guidance to the Project Manager – Cultural Intervention and jointly overseas the Northern Program.
Providing services in remote communities

• A new approach focused on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in prison

• Provides greater support to courts, parole boards and offenders

• Permanent Probation and Parole offices in Aurukun, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Normanton, Cooktown, Thursday Island and Weipa, Woorabinda, Palm Island
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy

• Breaking the cycle of re-offending
• Ensuring programs and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders and victims is effective and culturally relevant
• Increasing diversion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders from custody
• Recruitment, retention and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
Reducing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in justice system
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum

- Brings all QCS cultural staff which is about 45-75 staff.
- CLO salary upgrade.
- Review of Programs.
- LOA Working Group.
Defining Cultural Safety for the Correctional context.
Healing/Rehabilitation

• Is personal and means different things to different people, communities, tribes, nations.

• Its wholistic

![Diagram with sections: Spiritual, Physical, Mental, Emotional]
“Aboriginal people believe that the spirit child comes from the earth... I haven’t seen this belief about the spirit child in any other culture, even Indigenous ones. We come from this earth, we are born from the earth. We believe that the whole of life is a spiritual experience and that we as Aboriginal people are actually more spirit than matter... I really believe that emotions can create chemical reactions in the body. If we don’t face those emotions, it can create sicknesses... So for Aboriginal people, the whole of life is a spiritual experience, and so the whole of sickness is a spiritual process. The spirit can not be in balance if it is out of balance with the body. If you’re spiritually unwell, you can’t help but affect the whole of your being... See, the impact of colonialism has been huge... we Aboriginal people are spiritual people and we are still recovering because of colonialism... There’s not a lot of understanding about the part of white Australia because they have this misguided belief that colonialism doesn’t affect the... Of course it does! It’s made them into the people they are today, which means they cannot hear what Aboriginal people are telling them... Many are trying to run away from their own history... As they get older and more mature [chuckles], hopefully they’ll have a better understanding... You see, that mouth of the snake... our people have retreated into the belly of the snake. It’s our consolidation of our Aboriginality, a renewing of our identity. Only recently have we begun emerging from the mouth of the snake with renewal and consolidation of who we are... You see, it’s the white terms of reference, it’s their misinterpretations that have given definition to Aboriginal illnesses.”

Cultural Safety history and application

• In Australia: a working definition…
  “Cultural safety… is the need to be recognised within the … system and to be assured that the system reflects something of you – of your culture, your language, your customs, attitudes, beliefs and preferred ways of doing things”. (Eckermann et al, 1992: 215).

• Moving from ‘cultural awareness’ to ‘cultural safety’.
• Moving from ‘othering’ (Moreton-Robinson, 2000) to reflexivity (Phillips, 2003)
• Moving from individual actions to system-wide responsibility.

• DEFINITION:
  “A client feels that their cultural, social and human values are respected, and that an organisation providing services to that client re-orients its institutional practices, values, resource and governance arrangements accordingly.” (Phillips, 2007)
Northern Strategy - Cultural Intervention Project.
Snap shot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offenders in Northern Centres and on Community Based Orders as at 27 June 2011

• Townsville Correctional Centre 63% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men are represented.
• Townsville Women Correctional Centre has 71% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.
• Townsville Farm 80% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.
• Lotus Glen 71% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.
• Lotus Glen Farm 72%.
• Northern Region Parole 54% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.
• Far Northern Region Parole 60% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.
Northern Strategy/Northern Program

- Aims for excellence in holistic offender management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offenders:
  - Visits.
  - Rehabilitation.
  - Reparation.
  - Incentive Programs specifically designed for the Northern and Far Northern Regions.
  - Case management designed for the Northern and Far Northern Communities.
Northern Strategy/Northern Program

• Corrections policies and practices consider how to reduce the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners to close the gap on their over-representation.

• The Northern Framework is a philosophical change, focusing on:
  – Interaction.
  – Community links. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners are able to connect with their families and communities for rehabilitation.
  – Holistic intervention.
Northern Strategy/Northern Program Scope

- Programme Manager: Gil Hainey and Michael Stubbins

- The Cultural Intervention Project: Managed by Ruth Link (Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns). This project is an initiative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordination Unit.

- The Townsville Service Delivery Project: Managed by Gail Quincey (Townsville). This project sits in the Custodial Directorate.

- The Lotus Glen Commissioning and Transition Project: Managed by Anne Morgan. This project sits in the Custodial Directorate.

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Health Project – yet to start.
Northern Strategy - QCS Alignments

• Department of Community Safety: Indigenous Priority Statement 2009-2013
• 5 % target to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Officers across the Agencies (we currently have 4.4%)
• Review of Program.
• Services in remote communities.
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum.
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy.
Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in a Correctional Environment (FACE)

- The framework is about orientating our service model to the population profile of Northern QCS Facilities. FACE seeks to provide a culturally safe service model and an acculturated prison environment targeting:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Offenders/Prisoners
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Staff
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Community

Objective of FACE:
- To link Offenders/Prisoners to community for management and rehabilitation purposes.
- To connect with and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff to be apart of the journey with cultural management and rehabilitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait prisoners.
- To connect with Traditional Owners of the land the Centres are located and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities prisoners come from via Culture in Custody Protocol Respect Agreement and Culture in Custody Protocol Partnership Framework. We are creating a connection that will endure machinery of government, changes to our polices etc.
Framework for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders in a Correctional Environment

Cultural Safety
- Policy
- Structured day
- Visiting Processes
- Induction
- Service Delivery Model
- Cultural Intervention Strategy
- Legislation
- Media
- Probation & Parole
- TCA/EMG

Community
- Acknowledgement of Country
- Respect
- Community Connection
- Cultural signs
- Partnerships
- Spirituality
- Cultural Education
- Firestick (I & II)
- Pre-intervention
- Life Skills
- Foundation Skills
- LLN
- Vocational Skills
- Education Activities
- Cultural Offender Unit
- Victims of Crime
- Sex & Well-being

Supporting Agencies
- DEEDI
- DEEWR
- FACSHI
- Project 2800
- Health

Acculturation
- Industry / Employers

Queensland Corrective Services
Queensland Government
Linking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities Via Cultural Protocol
Culture in Custody Protocols: Partnership Framework

• Purpose (an Example Wulgurukabba):
  – To recognise and acknowledge that the Wulgurukabba Traditional Custodians of the land, water and winds in which Townsville Correctional Complex is located.
  – To develop a foundation for a positive working relationship between QCS and Wulgurukabba people.
  – To articulate the intended spirit of collaboration and cooperation between the Parties in relation to the management and rehabilitation of Wulgurukabba people and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under custodial or community based orders.
  – To obtain permission and authorisation from the Wulgurukabba People for people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of offenders in custody or on community based orders to assist in the management and rehabilitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders from their communities.
Culture in Custody Protocols: Partnership Framework

• Annual Meeting
  The Parties will meet annually in September with dates to be agreed too between the Parties, in order:
  – to review the Culture in Custody Protocols Partnership Agreement: a discussion of the progress of the two parties relationship, any conflicts, or difficulties experienced how the Agreement could be updated to address these issues.
  – for each party to provide an update on activity relevant to the working relationship between both parties.
  – for each party to identify any collaboration projects and collaboration opportunities.
  – discuss the progress of the partnership.
  – Meet the change requirements of QCS and/or the Wulgurukabba people.
Culture in Custody Protocols: Respect Agreement

- Outlines what QCS is doing to build a better future with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.
- Provides our Commitment to the Traditional Owners of our Commitment to them.
- Provides the commitment by the Traditional Owners to QCS.
- The Culture in Custody Protocol Respect Agreement and Culture in Custody Protocol Partnership Framework is currently being negotiated with Wulgurukabba and Bindal and Muluriji Traditional Owners.
Wulgurukabba Country Signage
• WulguruKabba traditional custodians, supports the partnership of Townsville Correctional Complex for their acknowledgement and respect of ancestral lands, lore/laws and culture.
• WulguruKabba traditional custodians acknowledge the aboriginal clans/moieties/nation, of many far reaching and neighbouring language nations, also the culturally diverse historical aboriginal and islander peoples, who have had and continue to have vital roles in working towards individual and community social well being.
• It is very important to maintain our cultural and spiritual values with each other to keep us strong. Our culture is of the land, of which we are from.
• Artwork description is here.
• Queensland Corrective Services Acknowledges and Respects Wulgurukabba People, Culture and Country.
BINDAL COUNTRY
(Clan of the Birri Gubba Nation)
This centre operates on Bindal Traditional Country. The Bindal Clan of the Birri Gubba Nation provides support to Queensland Corrective Services and promotes cultural diversity in this facility by assisting in reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system.

This artwork was painted by Damien Donaldson, which translates the meaning “our land around the centre, mainly the Mount Elliot and Cape Cleveland area”. Our Mother and Father looking over and caring for the land and appreciating its beauty.

Queensland Corrective Services acknowledge and respects the Bindal people, culture and country.

This sign is endorsed by the Bindal Traditional Elders of this Country.
Welcome to Country Sign
Lotus Glen CC
Muluridji Country
• This Centre is constructed on Muluridji Traditional Country. The Muluridji Aboriginal Nation provides support to Queensland Corrective Services and promotes cultural diversity in this facility by assisting in reducing the overrepresentation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system.

• This artwork was painted by Laurel Neil, which translates the meaning of Mareeba as the “meeting place” of the Granite Creek k and the Barron river. These two rivers are considered important places for Muluridji people for cultural and historical values and traditional associations.

• Queensland Corrective Services Acknowledges and Respects Muluridji People, Culture and Country.

• This sign is endorsed by the Muluridji Traditional Elders of this Country.
Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff
• 3245 staff – including 140 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officers – CLO’s; CDO’s; P&P staff (4.4%)
• 2011-12 operating budget is $641m for QCS
• including $70m for Probation and Parole
• cost per prisoner per day $180 (Aust average $210)
• cost per offender in community $9.50 (Aust average $17)
Correctional centre locations

- Lotus Glen
- Townsville
- Capricornia
- Maryborough
- Woodford
- Woodford
- Numinbah
- Palen Creek
- Darling Downs
- Brisbane Women’s Helana Jones
- Brisbane
- Wolston
- Arthur Gorrie
- Borallon
Prisoner numbers

• As at 27 June there were 5539 prisoners
• Male prisoners - 5130
• 3623 non-Indigenous males
• 1507 Indigenous male prisoners (29.38%)
• Female prisoners – 409
• 268 female prisoners
• 141 female Indigenous prisoners (34.47%)
• 1279 persons on remand
Correctional centres – prisoner numbers as at 27 June 2011

• Lotus Glen 510 (348 x 71%)
• Lotus Glen Farm 95 (60 x 72%)
• Townsville men 426 (268 x 63%)
• Townsville women 123 (87 x 71%)
• Townsville Farm 41 (33 x 80%)
T.R.I.B.E Wulgurukabba Bindal Country

- **Purpose**
  - Maintain support between staff.
  - Empowered to achieve work goals. Eg: supervisor, manager.
  - Unity strengthened in the work place.
  - Improved work performance. Accountability & security. (Retention of staff).
  - Cultural Protocols.
  - Murri gape vine.
  - Create belonging.
  - Connectedness to reality.
  - Positive role models. A) At work. B) Outside of work.
  - Direction/Support/Mentor.
  - Family centered model approach.
  - Realistic goals. (Operational/Administrative) professional.
T.R.I.B.E Wulgurukabba Bindal Country

**Function**
- Workshop ideas & comments that can be presented to the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Forum through the cultural unit.
- Information sharing: A) Between staff. B) Between staff QCS management.
- Discuss any barriers that may have come up at work & how can it be resolved (resolutions).
- Advocate for greater awareness and the importance of our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Organising staff functions.
- Collaborative leadership.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Cultural awareness program design.
- Community engagements partnership (Internal/External).
- “Reality” – Cultural advice work readiness program.
- Commitment/consultation from management and staff.
U.N.I.T.E.D Mob Managing Our Business

• PURPOSE:
  – Community Engagement
  – Recognition and Respect
  – Staff Support
  – Support indigenous offenders
U.N.I.T.E.D Mob Managing Our Business

- **FUNCTIONS**
  - Cultural Connection;
  - Cultural Support;
  - Breaking barriers;
  - Consultations;
  - Social engagements - Working with school kids/elders gender groups/justice group/cultural business/fogs/indigenous organisation
  - Each other - Interagency/staff-email group etc/prisoners/community engagement.
  - Developing and supporting people/mentoring/informing decision making/pro development.
  - To Acknowledge good work staff doManagement/ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forums/business improvement forum/A&TSI coordination unitStaff – Pathways for retention/promotion; Leadership; Peer support/building integrity/family well being Inter Agency Network;
  - Establishment of a staff e-mail group; Staff consultationEducation supportSupport for prisoners regarding court/cop/conditions/sentence lengthsBreak language barriers – make forms easier to understand/create video induction in different languages
Fire Stick: A Cultural Interface Workshop

- Partnership with Training Connections Australia.
- Provided to all Lotus Glen and Townsville Centre Staff.
- 4 packages:
  1. Aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff.
  2. Aimed at Management.
  3. Aimed at Administrative and Custodial Officers.
  4. Aimed at professional staff.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prisoners

Community Connection
Cultural Connection and
Cultural Interface
Cultural Rehabilitation
Community Connection

• QCS Cultural Calendar
• **NAIDOC at TCC**
  • Day 1: Staff Focus
  • Day 2: Community Focus
  • Day 3: Male Prisoner Focus
  • Day 4: Female Prisoner Focus
  • Day 4: Staff Awards Night
  • Kelvin Anderson Reconciliation and Closing the Gap Award: Julie Inglis
  • Harold Mara Mentoring Award: Shane Crowley
  • Fred Lemson Quiet Achiever Award: Ned Stephen
NAIDOC Shirt and Poster Competition Feb-March 2011

By Gordon John Graham.
Community Expo Day
Community Expo Day
“Yallada”
Community Expo Day
Cultural Connection - Cape York
Dance Troop
Palm Island, Doomadgee, Townsville Dance Troop
Mornington Island Dance Troop
NAIDOC Poster Winner – Presentation
Torres Strait Island Dance Troop
Aboriginal Dance Troop
Staff Awards Night
Bama Community Grapevine

• Bama Murri Grapevine – Workshop conference
Work Going Forward

- Townsville Service Delivery Model 2011-2016
- Community Consultation Stage 1
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Forum Townsville 15-16 November 2011
- Outcomes of the Program Review
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Justice Strategy
Acculturating QCS Services

- Aesthetics
- Visiting processes
- Criminogenic programs
- Activities
- Education
- Vocation education
- Gendered cultured approach to our women
- Embedding Respect, Recognition, Cultural Protocol, Partnership, Connection, and Consultation
Stage 1 – Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival

• Stage 1 – Generating New Ideas
• Stage 2 – Examining Options
• Stage 3 – Recommendations
• Stage 4 – Program Approval
Townsville Service Delivery
Model 2011-2016
Visual Model

Performance

People Performance
- Offender Management
- Human Resources
- Training
- Satellite Team
- Portfolio Management Teams

Governance
- Business Improvement
- Compliance

Prisoners

Stakeholders
- Complex Cultural Change
- Business Services
- Safety and security
- Intelligence Services

Objectives
- Objective 1
  - Cultural Services
  - Medical services
  - Offender Development
  - Communities

Objectives 2
- Complex Cultural Change
- Centre Services
- Private Sector

Objectives 3
- Staff Capacity/Capability

Objectives 4
- Government Agencies
- Private Sector Partnerships

Objectives 5
- Strategic Leadership

Objectives 6
- Complex Cultural Change

There is only one purpose to our work. It is the welfare and wellbeing of the people.
Our Journey
Cultural safety and Cultural Intervention Project – intersection

- QCS working much more closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to understand trauma, its impact on prisoners and staff, and its implications for healing, prevention, sentencing and after-care
- **Process of reform will be as important as the new services themselves.**
- Reform will require changes to the culture and organisational arrangements of the correctional institution, not just the individual actions of staff.
- Whole organisations responsibility and leadership from those who need to lead.
Summary & Contacts

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References

References