Department of Human Services

Centrelink services to support successful reintegration

10th Biennial ACEA Conference
Queensland

Presented by Dung Tran and Stacey Turner

7 November 2011
Overview

- The Department of Human Services (Centrelink)
- Social Inclusion and Centrelink
- Role of the Prison Liaison Officer
- Department of Corrective Services & Centrelink working in Partnership.
- Payment, Services and Assistance
- Questions
On 1 July 2011 the Human Service Legislation Amendment Act 2011 integrated the services of Centrelink, Medicare Australia, Child Support Agency and CRS Australia into the Department of Human Services.

The Department is responsible for the development of service delivery policy and provides access to social, health and other payments and services.

The Centrelink program: delivers a range of payments and services for retirees, the unemployed, families, carers, parents, people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds especially during times of major change.
The Australian Government’s social inclusion agenda recognises and aims to address the many barriers individuals face in our community. With its role of connecting and linking people to appropriate and relevant services, it is vital that this work is done well to ensure we are supporting people adequately during critical points in their lives.

As an Australian Government service delivery program, it is essential that Centrelink undertakes a key role in developing and maintaining productive collaborations and partnerships.
The Department of Human Services (Centrelink) currently has a **Program Protocol Agreement** with Queensland Corrective Services.

This agreement outlines the processes in place to assist individuals:

- Coming into the custodial system
- Exiting the custodial system; and
- Offenders on community/supervision-based orders.
Centrelink has a network of 120 Prison Liaison Officers (PLOs) Australia wide and their main role is the provision of services to individuals:

- entering prison
- while in custody; and
- when exiting custody

This service is vital to the successful re-integration of prisoners released back into our community.

Prison Liaison Officers are instrumental in establishing new relationships to better facilitate introductions of new services to inmates:

- Pre release Job Capacity Assessments
- Crisis Payments direct credited to prison trust account
- Other DHS programs - Medicare Australia & Child Support
Services for prisoners and their families

**On admission:**
- reduce the risk of incurring a Centrelink payment debt;
- receive any outstanding entitlements; and
- ensure families receive their correct entitlements and referrals to other required support.

**Prior to release:**
- enable access to income support, ensuring access to funds and an ongoing payment on release.
- enable access to a health care cards
- enable access to other transitional service such as referrals to community support services and vocational programs.
- deliver transition information as part of the Transition program.

**On community based orders:** assist offenders and parolees
- avoid conflicting requirements and obligations; and
- obtain better assessments and referrals.
Payments & Assistance

- **Crisis Payment** provides one/off additional financial assistance on release towards buying clothes, food or finding accommodation.

- **Homelessness Indicators** identity customers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to improve Department of Human Services (Centrelink) staff awareness of a customer’s personal situation and direct their intervention through additional support and understanding.

- **Vulnerability Indicators** alert Department of Human Services (Centrelink) and Job Services Australia staff that extra assistance may be required to support certain job seekers in meeting their Activity Test or participation requirements and the need to exercise caution when considering compliance action.

- **Lawful Custody Allowance** helps Indigenous people with the cost of studying while imprisoned.
Total Crisis payment paid from Apr 2010 – June 2011

Crisis Payment (Apr 10 - Jun 11)

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Profile of the offender population

1. Substance abuse
2. Unemployment
3. High mental health needs
4. Low educational attainment
3. Homelessness

(Source: QCS’s transition program)
Assessments for people with disability and other disadvantaged job seekers

**Assessment Services** identify and assess a person’s barriers to employment including medical conditions. The assessor completes a report that informs Centrelink and the employment service provider about the job seeker’s ability to work and appropriate support or services. If appropriate, the job seeker is referred to an employment service or other support to help them find and maintain work.

**Employment Services Assessment (ESAt)**
- Determine work capacity and refer to appropriate services
- Stream Services 1-4
- Disability Employment Services (ESS or DMS)

**Job Capacity Assessment (JCA)**
- All Disability Support Pension (DSP) claims
- Assessor also refers to employment services
Job Capacity Assessment in Prisons

JCA assessments are now conducted in prison

- Minimising the risk of non-attendance which could potentially suspend payment and contribute of financial hardship
- Ensuring people are linked to the appropriate service.
- Recognising medical or personal limitations that may affect ability to work.
Centres currently being services by the Prison Servicing Unit

1. Arthur Gorrie Reception & Remand Centre
2. Borallon Correctional Centre (JCA)
3. Brisbane Women’s Correctional Centre
4. Brisbane Correctional Centre
5. Darling Downs Correctional Centre (JCA)
6. Brisbane Youth Detention Centre
7. Helena Jones Correctional Centre
8. High Risk Offender Management Unit
9. Maryborough Correctional Centre
10. Palen Creek Correctional Centre
11. Numinbah Correctional Centre
12. Woodford Correctional Centre
13. Wolston Correctional Centre
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

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