



ACT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
& COMMUNITY SAFETY

COMMUNICATION PLAN

ALEXANDER MACONOCHIE CENTRE PROJECT

April 2007

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

Agency: ACT Corrective Services, Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Project Office.

Project Title: Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Project.

Description: Establishment of a correctional facility to accommodate ACT sentenced and remand prisoners, both male and female, of all security classifications.

Timeframe for Project: The AMC is planned to become operational in mid 2008.

Timeframe for Communication:

Documented public communication regarding the introduction of a prison to the ACT commenced with the publication of the Australian Law Reform Commission report in 1988. Numerous reports and extensive communication led to the Government's July 2003 decision to proceed with the establishment of a prison to accommodate male and female, remand and sentenced prisoners of all classifications.

The communication process primarily will involve those groups, agencies or individuals with an ongoing interest in the operation of an ACT prison and in the management of the ACT's prisoners. This includes assisting mitigating the impact of imprisonment on prisoners' families, especially their children. Victims also will have a particular and legitimate interest in the project.

The communication will continue through each phase of project delivery and during the AMC's operation.

Once operational, it may be appropriate to establish a Community Consultation Committee to support the operation of the AMC and its interface with the wider community.

Risk:

Because of the ACT's lack of experience in having its own substantial prison, it is anticipated that there will be an initial volume of ill-informed community and media comment on matters dealing with the operation of the AMC which, in larger jurisdictions with well-established correctional traditions, would not give rise to comment. Unless this environment is managed through media and community briefings and visits, there is a clear potential for the management of the AMC simply to become unworkable.

The planned commissioning period for the AMC is mid 2008. An election is due to be held in 2008. The lead up to election periods, with respect to justice issues are frequently characterised by what passes as a law and order "debate" or what has been described as 'the devil's auction'. This presents an unsettling environment for correctional management. In addition, history of correctional administration in Australia suggests that it would be naive to expect that the commissioning period for the AMC will be free of incidents. It is during the commissioning period that potential problems in prison operation will become evident as AMC staff will be familiarising with the operation of an essentially a new business in the ACT. Care must be taken to ensure that any issues arising are dealt with maturely, in context and do not give rise to pre- election 'point scoring'. Considerable communication and consultation effort will be required to ensure that political, media and community responses to any incidents in the AMC during the commissioning period do not undermine its the future management.

Communication Objectives

1. Provide targeted, timely and accurate information on planning for, and operation of, the AMC.
2. Raise media, community and political understanding of the realities of AMC management issues.
3. Support staff and volunteers of the AMC in the execution of their responsibilities.

Key Communication Messages

The five key communication messages the Communication Plan aims to convey are as follows:

1. Housing people in the unfit-for-purpose Belconnen Remand Centre shames the ACT and its people. Constructing a replacement facility in the ACT and repatriating ACT prisoners from NSW is the right thing to do.
2. The Alexander Maconochie Centre is an important piece of social infrastructure completing the fractured justice system currently operating in the ACT. Given the NSW charges of \$203 per day (in 2006) for ACT prisoners, its construction represents value for money to the ACT.
3. The AMC's Operating Philosophy and its Operating Model is Human Rights-based. Its design represents the best in contemporary correctional and sustainability design.
4. The major focus of the AMC is on security and public safety; its integrated security system includes fencing, anti-climb cowls, micro-wave detection, microphonic cabling, security lighting, an ergonomic control room and response capabilities.
5. The design, operation and staffing of the AMC reflects a commitment to prisoner rehabilitation, reduced recidivism, the maintenance of family relationships and community engagement.

Key Stakeholders

ACT Health, the ACT Sentence Administration Board, Probation and Parole Unit ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS), Rehabilitation/Programs Unit of ACTCS, the universities and education providers, religious groups, women's rights groups, Indigenous representatives including the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Ngunnawal Elders Group, lawyers, International Commission of Jurists, the Law Society and Legal Aid, Civil Liberties Australia, the Magistrates and Supreme Courts, Australian Federal Police, Prisoners' Aid and other charity organisations, ACTCS management and staff and their unions, ACT Government, ACT and regional communities, Mental Health Services, victims groups, including the Victims of Crime Co-ordinator, VOCAL, Domestic Violence Crisis Support and SAMSSA, Official Visitor, Multi-cultural groups, ACT Council of Social Services, the ACT Ombudsman, the ACT Human Rights Commissioner, ACT Workcover, ACT business community, unions, transport services, intelligence organisations, Family Services, Drug and Alcohol agencies and support groups, parenting groups, Emergency Services Authority, Department of Immigration and Indigenous and Multicultural Affairs, Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League, the Department of Defence, Royal Australian Navy and the media.

There is likely to be a direct or indirect impact on each of the above stakeholders in the establishment and operation of the AMC.

Information Required by Stakeholders and Participants

Each stakeholder group will have differing interests and priorities and accordingly will seek different information on the AMC, its operation and particularly its interface with the community. Notwithstanding these specific interests, there is expected to be common information requirements, such as the broad design concept, the prison Operating Philosophy and Model, the proposed number and types of prisoners to be accommodated at the AMC and the level of service provision. There will also be a high level of

interest in risks to community safety and the impact of the AMC on residential areas, the environment and on health, social and transport services.

Publicising the Communication

Given the very broad parameters of previous consultation, the communication process will focus on direct contact with individual agencies and interest group representatives through face-to-face briefings and by meetings with the AMC Project office. The objective is to personalise the project with this form of contact.

Media Releases will be provided for the Attorney General at appropriate stages of development of the facility as significant milestones, documented in the AMC Project Master Control Plan, are achieved.

Communication Methods

AMC Project office correspondence, briefing presentations and meetings, media releases, website.

Consultant communication during the Preliminary Assessment (PA) and Development Application (DA) process.

Representatives of the AMC Project Office have already met with and briefed over 70 discrete agencies and community groups, some several times, and will continue to do so.

Monthly AMC Project updates to the Chief Minister.

AMC Project website at www.cs.act.gov.au/amc .

Staff engagement in AMC Project Working Groups.

Site visits by groups eg. Judiciary, Members of the Assembly, Media (when project well advanced).

Community Consultation Committee (post-commissioning).

Feedback Methods to Participants

Correspondence and meetings conducted by the AMC Project office; and communication and consultation arising from the PA and DA processes.

Evaluation of Communication

The PA and DA process outcomes.

AMC Project monitoring.

Media reporting.

E-mail traffic.

INTRODUCTION

This Communication Plan builds upon and should be considered in conjunction with the ACT Prison Project Community Consultation Plan 2001. Following the extensive consultation process previously undertaken, this Plan is primarily focussed on communication with groups and agencies which will have a long term investment in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and its operation.

The ACT Government has announced plans to proceed with the construction of a comprehensive correctional facility to accommodate the ACT's remand prisoners currently held in the ACT in sub-standard facilities and those sentenced prisoners held in NSW correctional facilities. The unfit-for-purpose Belconnen Remand Centre (BRC) and the Symonston Temporary Remand Centre (STRC) will be replaced with a new 300-bed remand and sentenced facility for ACT prisoners, 15 (initially) of whom will be placed in a minimum security Transitional Release Centre as part of their final preparation for release back into the community.

The AMC will house both male and female prisoners. This is, in itself, not unique, with several regional prisons in other Australian correctional jurisdictions housing similarly diverse prison populations.

COMMUNICATION TIMEFRAME

Communication will continue during the design and construction phases, as well as throughout the operation of the new prison. However, the priority afforded to and the time critical nature of issues will change as the AMC Project progresses. The phases of communication will be consistent with the phases of the project.

Communication	Timeline	Media Releases ¹
Preliminary Phase During this phase communication will be undertaken in relation to the philosophy, policies and principles underpinning operation of the prison in the ACT; site; timing.	<i>Ongoing.</i>	
Finalisation of the Functional Brief for the prison.	<i>February 2004 to May 2004.</i>	No. Website posting.
Development of the Procurement Strategy.	<i>February 2004 to April 2004.</i>	Public document.
Undertaking a Preliminary Assessment of the Hume site in accordance with the <i>Land Planning and Environment Act</i> .	<i>March 2004 to October 2004.</i>	Appendix 1 – Media Release, <u>Engagement of WP Brown and Partners Pty Ltd.</u> *Appendix 2 – Media Release <u>Approval of Site and Preliminary Assessment</u> Note: Appeals against the PA/DA may well eventuate,

¹ Each Media Release may be accompanied by, or be in response to, a specific event. In such cases a Media Alert will be required, together with the usual Ministerial Brief.

Communication	Timeline	Media Releases¹
		necessitating a media response/comment.
Budget Papers 2004-05.	<i>May 2004.</i>	Appendix 3 – Media Release <u>Budget Confirms Funding for ACT Prison.</u>
Communications with ACT Community	<i>2003 – 04 fiscal year. Ongoing.</i>	Appendix 4 – Media Release <u>Prison Communications with ACT Community (See App 28).</u>
Engagement of a Program Manager.	<i>June 2004 to September 2004.</i>	*Appendix 5A. – Media Release, <u>EOI Sought for ACT Prison Program Manager.</u> Appendix 5B – Media Release, <u>Selection of ACT Prison Program Manager.</u>
The legislative and regulatory framework which should apply including arrangements for monitoring, review and evaluation.	<i>Commence development - February 2004 for submission to the Legislative Assembly in Spring 2006.</i>	Appendix 6 – Media Release, <u>New Prison Legislation Tabled before Assembly.</u>
Programs and services required in the new prison such as education, rehabilitation and staged release and transitional programs.	<i>Ongoing.</i>	Programs Plan is a public document posted on the AMC Project website.
Design Phase During this phase communication will be undertaken in relation to facilities which should be provided in the prison, such as recreational facilities, training, education and employment.		Appendix 7 – Media Release, <u>Prison Project Rehabilitation Facilities and Programs.</u>
Engagement of the Design Consultant.	<i>July 2004 to October 2004.</i>	Appendix 8 -Media Release, <u>Engagement of Design Consultant.</u>
Complete Developed Design.	<i>April 2005.</i>	Appendix 9 -Media Release, <u>Sustainability in Prison Design.</u> *Appendix 10 – Media Release, <u>Our New Prison – How it Will Look.</u>
Development Application (DA). approved.	<i>January 2006.</i>	Appendix 11 – Media Release, <u>-Approval of Development Application.</u>

Early Site Works Commence	<i>June 2005</i>	Appendix 12 - Media Release <u>Early Site Works</u>
Bulk Earthworks Commence	<i>Feb 2006</i>	Appendix 13 – Media Release <u>Bulk Earth Works</u>
Environment Management System negotiated with ANU	<i>Feb 2006</i>	Appendix 14 – Media Release <u>ANU Students to Prepare Environment Management System for the AMC</u>
Engagement of Builder	<i>Mid 2006.</i>	Appendix 15 - Media Release, <u>Engagement of Builder.</u>
Construction Phase During this phase communication will be undertaken in relation to:		
Commence Construction.	<i>Mid 2006.</i>	*Appendix 16 - Media Release, <u>Construction Commenced on Prison.</u>
Appoint General Manager	<i>Mid 2007</i>	Appendix 17 – Media Release <u>Prison General Manager Appointed</u>
Security System Commissioning	<i>2008</i>	Appendix 18 – Media Release <u>Prison Security System</u>
Engagement of Dog Handlers, Drug Dogs.	<i>September 2006 – 2007.</i>	*Appendix 19 – Media Release, <u>Prison Dogs in Training.</u>
Prison Staff Recruitment.	<i>2007-2008</i>	Appendix 20 – Media Release, <u>New Prison Recruits</u>
Commence Prison Staff Training.	<i>2007-2008</i>	*Appendix 21 -Media Release, <u>New Prison Staff Commence Training.</u>
Appoint Community Advisory Committee.	<i>2007</i>	*Appendix 22 Media Release, <u>Community Advisory Committee Appointed to Prison.</u>
Commissioning/Operating Phase. During and after commissioning major aspects of communication will be:		
Local Contracts for Prison Support Services.	<i>July 2007 ongoing.</i>	Appendix 23 – Media Release, <u>Local Contracts Logistic Support for Prison.</u>
Visiting Days (State Administrators,	<i>TBA.</i>	*Appendix 24 – Media

Judiciary, Media, Assembly)		Release, <u>Thumbs Up for ACT Prison by State Correctional Administrators.</u>
Prison Open Day.	<i>TBA.</i>	* Appendix 25 – Media Release, <u>Prison Open Day.</u>
Commissioning.	<i>Mid 2008</i>	Appendix 26 -Media Release, <u>ACT Prison Open for Business.</u> * Appendix 27 - <u>First ACT Prisoners Return to ACT.</u>
Symonston Temporary Remand Centre Ceases Operations.	<i>Mid 2008</i>	* Appendix 28 – Media Release, <u>Symonston Temporary Remand Centre Closed.</u>
Belconnen Remand Centre Decommissioned ⁱ .	<i>Mid 2008</i>	* ² Appendix 29 – Media Release, <u>BRC Finally Closed for Good.</u>
Stakeholders		* Appendix 30 -Stakeholder Agenda Analysis.
Schedules		* Appendix 31 - Communication Schedule.

* Refers to potential Media Events.

INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN COMMUNICATIONS

References

To assist in the communication process, a range of documents is available on previous consultations and on research specific to the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Project. The content of these documents is available on the AMC Project web site at www.cs.act.gov.au/amc or by telephoning the AMC Project on (02) 6207 0374 / (02) 6207 0205 / (02) 6207 0868.

These documents include:

Paying the Price: A Review of Adult Corrective Services and Juvenile Justice in the ACT, ACT Corrections Review Committee (1991) ACT Chief Minister's Department, Canberra.

The Possible Establishment of a Correctional Facility in the Australian Capital Territory, ACT Corrective Services (1996) Discussion Paper: ACT Attorney General's Department, Canberra.

The Future Correctional Needs of the ACT to 2020: Evaluation of Current Systems and Alternatives, ACT Corrective Services (1997).

National Workshop One: Strategies for the Reduction of Self Harm in Custody, 29 July 1998 [Transcript of Proceedings]. ACT Corrective Services (1998).

National Workshop Two: Prison Regime – Prison Programs, Industries and Other Activities, 30 September 1998 [Transcript of Proceedings]. ACT Corrective Services (1998).

National Workshop Two: Corrections Health, June 1999 [Transcript of Proceedings]. ACT Corrective Services (1999).

Submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, ACT Corrective Services (May 1999).

Submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety: Site Issues, ACT Corrective Services (1999).

Inquiry into the Establishment of an ACT Prison: Justification and Siting. Report No 3, Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (July 1999).

The Proposed ACT Prison Facility: Philosophy and Principles. Report No 4, Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (October 1999).

Government Response to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Report on the Establishment of an ACT Prison: Justification and Siting, ACT Government April 2000.

Government Response to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Report on the Establishment of an ACT Prison: Philosophy and Principles, ACT Government April 2000.

Suicidal Behaviour in Prisons: A Literature Review, Australian Catholic University (1999) Literature review commissioned by ACT Corrective Services.

Research Report: The Management of Indigenous Prisoners, Prisoners of Different Cultural Backgrounds and Women Prisoners, University of South Australia 2000 Literature review commissioned by ACT Corrective Services.

Research Report: Rehabilitative Strategies for Preventing Re-Offending, University of South Australia 2000 Literature review commissioned by ACT Corrective Services.

ACT Prison Projections 1999, John Walker Crime Trend Analysis, Department of Justice and Community Safety November 1999.

Committee Visit to Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia Report No.11 of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, December 2000.

Getting it Right, Report of the Community Panel, December 2000.

From Exclusion to Inclusion. A report on the role of the local community in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners, Prepared by and for the ACT Prison Project Office, November 2002.

ACT Prison Projections Update 2002, John Walker Crime Trends Analysis for the Department of Justice and Community Safety, December 2002.

Proposals for Future ACT Correctional Facilities, Department of Justice and Community Safety ACT Corrective Services, May 2003.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The establishment of a prison, the classification of prisoners to be housed in an ACT prison and the preferred operating philosophy of such a facility has been the subject of extensive community consultation over many years.

The Australian Law Reform Commission concluded in its report into sentencing in 1988 that a correctional facility should be established in the ACT, to cater for all security levels, for periodic detention and for special categories of prisoners, such as the mentally ill and intellectually disabled.

In 1991, the ACT Corrections Review Committee published a report titled *Paying the Price* which recognised the financial and human cost of sending ACT sentenced prisoners to NSW correctional facilities and recommended that the ACT should establish its own prison and thereby take control of its own prisoners.

In 1996, the Government published a discussion paper that recognised the need to replace the BRC due to its poor design, its inefficient staffing levels, high operational costs and limited capacity.

In 1997 the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs of the 3rd Assembly, concluded that:

- the ACT should build its own prison, as soon as possible, to house both remandees and prisoners; and
- the facility should house both men and women and as many security classifications as possible.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety released its first interim report (Report Number 3) in the prison series in July 1999, *Inquiry into the Establishment of an ACT prison: Justification and Siting*. In response to its call for submissions, the Standing Committee received 50 submissions. The report of the committee noted (at page 11) that "Very few submissions argued against establishing an ACT prison. This is significant because submissions were received from such a wide range of community groups".

At page 14 of its report, the Committee stated that:

"...the arguments in favour of establishing a prison in the ACT to be persuasive. The establishment of a multi-purpose correctional facility together with a holistic correctional services policy framework and community-based sentencing options should result in a net social benefit. Increased control over the rehabilitation of prisoners within our local community should eventually result in less crime, benefiting the whole community."

The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety released its second interim report (Report Number 4) in the prison series in October 1999, *The proposed ACT prison facility: Philosophy and Principles*. The Standing Committee supported a rehabilitation and reintegration philosophy for the prison, with an emphasis on community communication and participation in the planning process. This report made a total of 46 recommendations covering issues such as:

- data collection;
- the guiding philosophy of the prison;
- staff and training;
- programs including work programs;
- avoiding deaths in custody;
- health issues;

- families and children;
- specific categories of prisoners and detainees such as women, indigenous people and federal offenders;
- post-release transition;
- who the facility will house;
- timing and research;
- the competitive tendering process;
- accountability;
- alternative sentencing options; and
- community participation and communication.

A broad-based ACT Prison Community Panel was established in May 2000. The membership, numbering 22, consisted of groups or individuals with particular cultural, social, religious and environmental interests in the prison project together with organisations that have specific interests in justice administration.

The Panel met frequently from May 2000 and considered a wide range of correctional issues covering the need for a prison in the ACT, prison programs, community involvement and governance.

In its report, *An ACT Prison - Getting it Right*, the Panel supported the early establishment of a prison in the Territory and was unanimous in its view that the ACT should have its own prison for persons sentenced in the ACT, noting that:

"A community has a responsibility to all its citizens, including those sentenced for crime and indirectly to their families. There is also a responsibility to the community to minimise crime. Therefore, prisoners should be given every opportunity to rehabilitate so that, on release, the likelihood of committing further crime is minimised." (page 12)

A further report *Proposals for Future ACT Correctional Facilities* prepared by the AMC Project office and its consultants in April 2003 presents the business case for an ACT prison, as well as compelling social and economic arguments for the establishment of a prison in the ACT.

HOW WILL THE PRISON OPERATE?

Operating Context

The Operating Philosophy and the Operating Model of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) is consistent with letter and spirit of the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*.

The Operating Philosophy and the Operating Model of the AMC sits within the framework provided by the *Canberra Plan* and its constituent documents, the *Social Plan*, the *Spatial Plan* and the *Economic White Paper*.

Operating Philosophy

The AMC is to be a secure and safe place that will have a positive effect on the lives of prisoners held there and on staff who work there. Its management and operations will give substance to the dictum of Sir Alexander Paterson that offenders are sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment.

The facility will reflect the “Healthy Prison” concept. A Healthy Prison is one in which:

- everyone is and feels safe;
- everyone is treated with respect as a fellow human being;
- everyone is encouraged to improve himself or herself and is given the opportunity to do so through the provision of purposeful activity; and
- everyone is enabled to maintain contact with their families and is prepared for release.

The AMC’s Operating Philosophy is the major factor influencing the design of the Centre. The Operating Philosophy for the AMC can be summarised as follows:

- it will provide protection from those who present as a risk to the community;
- it will provide a safe environment for prisoners and staff through design features, the use of technology, appropriate classification and separation of prisoners and the appropriate categories and numbers of well trained staff;
- it will have regard to the recommendations of the *Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody (RCIADIC)*;
- its operating systems will be developed from the base of a thorough risk analysis carried out to Standard AS/NZ 4360 and which satisfies the requirements of the ACT *Enterprise-wide Risk Management (ERM)* framework;
- the AMC will aim to set a new standard of sustainability in design, construction and operation especially in, but not confined to energy, water and waste;
- the AMC will satisfy AS 1428 and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services checklist for building and facility access;
 - its programs and activities for prisoners will be based on the following:
 - individual assessment of each prisoner as the foundation of individual Case and Sentence Plans;
 - the menu of programs and activities offered to each prisoner to be targeted towards positive change in the prisoner’s habits, beliefs, attitudes and expectations, that is, a cognitive change approach; and
 - recognition that most prisoners will return to society and that maintenance of positive changes in behaviour will be greatly influenced by relationships with family and close associates. The menu of programs and the design of individual programs will be based on a “Throughcare” model that engages family and close associates in the behavioural

change process while the prisoner is in prison and ensures support to the prisoner as he or she re-enters society;

- the menu of programs will cover:
 - family and other relationships;
 - health education and promotion;
 - remedial education;
 - cognitive skills;
 - substance abuse treatment and education;
 - sex offender's treatment;
 - vocational education and training;
 - positive recreational skills and habits;
 - skills and habits for living and working; and
 - victim awareness.
- a multi-discipline approach to program delivery and Case Management. This will include involvement of other government and community agencies, where appropriate, in the provision of services, such as family and individual counselling, health, education and vocational training;
- particular attention will be paid to the needs of women and Indigenous prisoners;
- the needs of short-term offenders will be specifically targeted. Corrections staff and appropriate professionals from other government and community agencies will work with the prisoner and the prisoner's family and close associates; and
- there will be a commitment to transparency and accountability with the AMC's performance outcomes being measured against the national average of other jurisdictions and published by the Productivity Commission in the *Report on Government Services* series.

Emphasis will be directed at "Throughcare", which is aimed at ensuring an integrated and seamless approach to the delivery of services for offenders as they move between prison, community corrections and the community and to provide continuity of knowledge of the offender, programs and other services. This aspect of the Operating Philosophy for the ACT correctional facility will contribute to the achievement of whole of government objectives for crime prevention and community safety and to the principles of Restorative Justice.

The 'Throughcare' approach will focus on providing:

- an appropriate continuum of health care, in particular addressing substance abuse and mental health issues;
- individual Case and Sentence Plans based on individual prisoners' needs and presenting risk factors;
- common prisoner and offender programs based on assessment of risk and need and a menu of programs targeting those attitudes and behaviours linked to the risks of re-offending;
- opportunities for self-development, improved quality of life and social integration;
- linkages with community-based programs and services;
- support for re-settlement; and
- the engagement of family and the community in the prisoner's correctional experience.

The Operating Philosophy is given operational substance by the Operating Model which is described below.

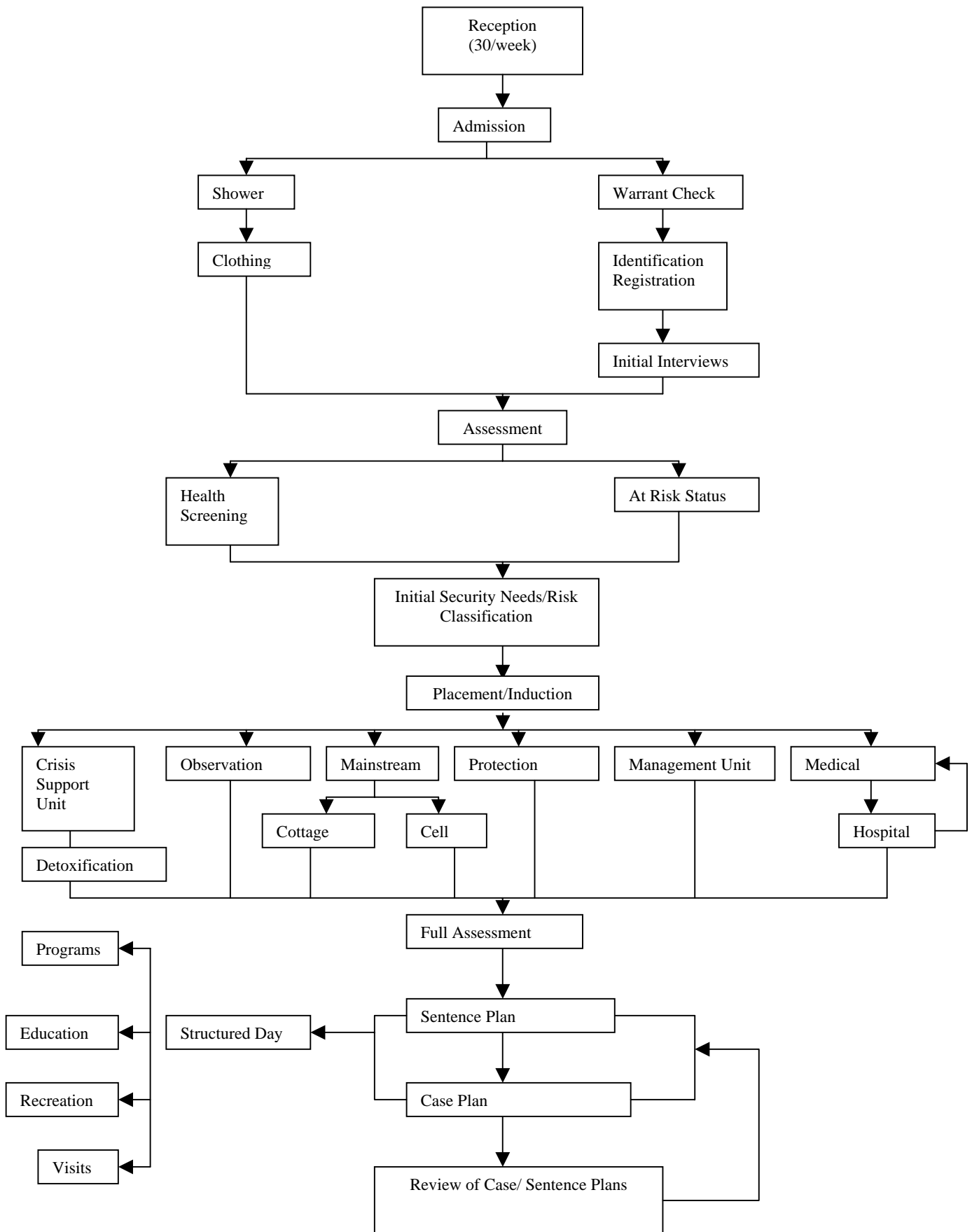
Operating Model

The Operating Model of the AMC will reflect a Human Rights-based approach. Operating Procedures are being developed in consultation with the ACT Human Rights Commissioner and the Ombudsman. The development of Rules for the management of the AMC and for the care and custody of prisoners will

be guided by decisions of the European Court of Human rights, by Coyle, A. *A Human Rights Approach to Prison Management*. International Centre for Prison Study. Kings College London 2002 and by developments in other correctional jurisdictions operating under human rights legislation, such as Canada and New Zealand.

The Operating Model of the AMC will be located on a continuum from indirect supervision to direct supervision. The major features of the former are a heavy reliance on distant electronic surveillance and the confinement of officers to secure stations. In contrast, the direct supervision model of the AMC is based on extensive staff (as role models) and prisoner contact, the development of positive relationships with attendant improved surveillance and security and institutional “climate”.

The Operating Model, shown below, describes the range of activities, which will take place within the AMC, with a particular focus on how these activities will impact on the individual prisoner.



WHY WILL THE ACT HAVE ITS OWN PRISON?

A prison is needed in the ACT to:

- replace the BRC and STRC which routinely operate beyond their design capacity and which are unfit-for-purpose; and
- bring to an end the system of transporting ACT sentenced prisoners to NSW prisons to serve their sentences, a system that is costly and provides little scope for the ACT influencing the management of those prisoners and their rehabilitation through proper case management, “Throughcare” and family contact.

A prison in the ACT will reflect a Human Rights-based approach to prison management with a focus on rehabilitation within the context provided by the “Healthy Prison” model. This will be evident in the development of a productive institutional culture and the delivery of a range of evidenced-based health management, vocational training and other programs. These programs will be provided within a Case Management regime that will have particular regard to the special needs of women prisoners, Indigenous people, those who are aged and those with particular disabilities.

To meet the Territory’s custodial needs to the year 2040, the life of the facility, it has been assessed that the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) would need a 374-bed capacity, with flexibility in design to meet changing custodial needs and for future expansion. The initial capacity will be 300 beds. The design would also need to take account of the security, segregation and program requirements associated with a facility housing remandees and sentenced prisoners of both genders and all security level classifications.

With NSW charges of \$203 (2006 dollars) per prisoner per day for ACT prisoners held by that State, the AMC represents value for money.

The AMC will demonstrate high levels of accountability and transparency in all aspects of its operations to provide maximum opportunity for independent scrutiny, oversight and evaluation. Contracts governing the prison’s design, construction, financing and operations would be public documents, and the AMC’s operation would be assessed against national benchmarks recorded by the Productivity Commission in the *Report on Government Services* series.

WHY WILL THE PRISON BE LOCATED AT HUME?

An earlier ACT government proposed to establish a prison on a site at Symonston. Following the election in 2001, the Symonston site was rejected by the new government and a review of all work previously undertaken by the ACT Prison Project office and its consultants was directed.

The site for the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) is Hume (Block 14, Section 8). The site is approximately 65 hectares located to the north of the Southcare Helicopter base and is bounded in the west by the Monaro Highway and in the east by Jerrabomberra Creek. Final allocation of the site for this purpose was the subject of a Preliminary Assessment under the *Land Planning and Environment Act 1991*.

The Hume site was chosen as it meets with the following guidelines provided by ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) and the Department of Justice and Community Safety selection criteria.

ACTPLA guidance on siting considerations for correctional facilities is as follows:

High Priority

- Proximity to a major population centre with a full range of support facilities and services (particularly health and education) and opportunities for community involvement (eg CIT) in prison programs.
- Separated from residential areas, schools and shopping centres, and generally unlikely to cause concern to residents.
- Good private and public transport access for family and professional visits to detainees.
- Within 20 minutes drive of the Civic courts complex.

Desirable

- Compatible adjoining land uses.
- ACT Government owned site, or land tenure (eg short term rural lease) to minimise acquisition arrangements.
- Proximity to arterial road system.
- Siting guidelines determined by ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Based on the 2003 version of the Draft Functional / Operating Brief for the AMC.

The ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety has established the following siting requirements to supplement ACTPLA's more generic requirements:

High Priority

- Fully cleared site of 12 hectares (total site around 55 hectares) to accommodate a staged co-located correctional facilities design with adequate areas for building complexes surrounded by internal fencing and a cleared buffer zone surrounded by effective perimeter fencing.
- Buffer around external perimeter should be clear to enable visual surveillance.
- Limited development constraints on site (eg flooding, bushfire risk, environmental).
- Full range of infrastructure services readily available to site.

Desirable

- Relatively flat site.
- Site visually contained to minimise intrusion into neighbouring areas.
- Attractive existing landscaping setting, features and form to offer good visual amenity and quality of life to occupants.

- Existing features capable of providing, or being readily adapted to provide buffers for security and screening.
- Potential for agricultural activity on site.

Assessment criteria

- Fundamental criteria used to generate a short list of sites are:
- Consistency with the National Capital Plan (NCP).
- Proximity to utilities.
- Site capability for a secure compound footprint of 12ha and minimum 70m cleared buffer zone around the secure perimeter to make a site area of about 50ha.

Evaluation of individual sites considered a finer grain of issues that included:

- Environment;
- Tenure;
- Clearance zone requirements;
- Heritage;
- Aircraft noise;
- Affected neighbours;
- Consistency with the NCP;
- Implications for the Territory Plan;
- Ease of site works;
- Opportunity costs;
- Other issues; and
- Overall risk summary.

WHEN WILL THE PRISON BE BUILT?

From commencement of a Preliminary Assessment on the proposed site, it is estimated that the total project could be delivered within 36 months, provided there are no delays arising from the site planning and approval processes. Allowing for political, economic and environmental hurdles facing the construction of the AMC, current planning is based on a commissioning period from mid 2008.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL THE PRISON EMPLOY?

Planning for AMC staff numbers is based on the AMC accommodating up to 300 prisoners and on actual working models of contemporary prisons around Australia.

The total number of AMC personnel is estimated at 187. This includes

- prison management
- correctional managers
- correctional supervisors
- custodial officers
- catering staff
- maintenance
- nursing staff
- medical officers
- intelligence officers
- psychologists
- counsellors
- librarian
- recreation officers
- education officers
- sentence management
- finance, administration and stores officers
- training officer

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Within the framework provided by the Operating Philosophy it is considered appropriate to express particular principles for the management of women prisoners. The reason for this is that, in simple terms, the profile of the female prisoner population is marked by more damage, disadvantage, disease and disaffection than is the male prisoner population.

It is widely recognised and documented that women in custody have different needs to those of male prisoners which cannot be addressed by simply making marginal changes to the details of male service provision. In addition to the trauma of being a woman serving a sentence or a period of remand, some women will have special needs. These would include the special needs of Indigenous women, women with children, women with a history of being victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse, non-English speaking backgrounds, ethnic and cultural considerations and women with intellectual, physical disabilities or mental illness. Accordingly, four principles, which reflect those adopted in Canada, Western Australia and New South Wales at its new facility at Dillwynia, will underpin the management of women prisoners. They are:

Personal responsibility and empowerment of the individual. Many women in custody are marginalised and alienated with no experience of making decisions that affect their lives. AMC staff will give women in their care the power to make such decisions and accept that as their personal responsibility.

Family Responsibility. The objective of this principle is ensure that prisoners who are mothers and primary cares are provided with maximum contact with their families and children and to buttress this by providing programs and support directed at improving relationship and parenting skills.

Community Responsibility. Many women are alienated from their communities and lack supports within them. Prisoners will be encouraged to become engaged with members of the community, develop a sense of community responsibility and to set in place post release support arrangements.

Respect and Integrity. Services provided within the prison will be gender and culturally appropriate and will respect the dignity of people and the differences between them. A key element in this is honesty and truthfulness. Prisoners will be encouraged to develop similar attitudes with regard to themselves and to others.

The NSW Parliament Select Committee on the Increase in the Prisoner Population *Interim Report: Issues Relating to Women* of July 2000 states that “women make up only a small proportion of the prison population although their rise in numbers has been dramatic – 40 per cent over the last five years”. It continues to highlight that “women inmates are generally in prison for non – violent offences and that their criminal activity is largely related to drug addiction.” Improving outcomes for women prisoners will required the establishment of strong community links enabling interventions to be implemented during a custodial sentence and continued upon release to the community to assist successful re-integration.

Women's Intersectoral Reference Group

The ACT Government's Women's Action Plan 2000 recommended the establishment of a women's intersectoral expert reference group to research and develop specific recommendations and initiatives for women in the design and development of an ACT prison, from remand to prison and release, including:

- alcohol and other drug abuse;
- gambling and other patterns of offending, including the increasing role of addictions related to crime;
- health issues generally, particularly support for survivors of violence/abuse, sexual and reproductive health issues;
- issues for women with children;
- rate of recidivism;
- culturally appropriate support and programs;
- availability and accessibility of programs;
- women with intellectual disabilities;
- issues for women with mental illness;
- rehabilitation during detention – work and other support programs. Level of contact with a client; and
- release and follow-up, community programs and the transition between prison and final return to the community.

The Group comprises representatives from a number of government departments and agencies and community-based organisations. The Group met regularly since its first meeting in September 2000 to inform planning, design and operations of the prison. The group is no longer in existence.

Communications

The Group has met to consider the issues referred to in its Terms of Reference and reports to the ACT Government through the ACT Corrective Services. Through its membership it has the opportunity to seek the views of various interested community groups and has made contributions to the design and operation of the AMC.

The AMC Project office has drafted a plan for the management of women incarcerated in the ACT. This plan is currently (April 2007) under revision to take account of new material from various sources, such as the Sisters Inside 2005 submissions to the Anti Discrimination Commissioner of Queensland and the 2006 report of the Commission. When the plan when completed, it will be placed on the AMC Project website as a consultation document and referred to appropriate groups for comment.

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

The *Australian Capital Territory Population Projections 2002-2032 and Beyond* Chief Minister's Department, June 2003 reports that the Indigenous population in Canberra, currently approximately 1.2% of the total population, is expected to continue to increase both in number and as a proportion of the total population, due to the higher levels of fertility (nationally 2.2:1.75), high migration into the ACT and an increasing propensity for people with some Indigenous ancestors to identify themselves as Indigenous.

Indigenous prisoners presently constitute approximately 9% of the ACT prison population. While this is lower than the national average, it stills represents a level of Indigenous over-representation in prison which shames the ACT community. The demographic factors outlined above indicate that there are prospects that this over-representation could increase, with attendant risks to the well-being of Indigenous prisoners because their accumulated adverse life experiences heightens their vulnerability in general, but particularly in the correctional setting.

To address these issues, the Operating Philosophy of the AMC will have regard to not only the recommendations of the *Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, but also to more recent and relevant documents including:

Waller, K. *Suicide and Other Self Harm in Correctional Centres* 1993.

Aboriginal Environments Research Centre, *Indigenous Cultures and the Design of Custodial Environments*. National Workshop Alice Springs 1998.

Ombudsman, Western Australia *Report on an investigation into deaths in prisons*. December 2000.

Ombudsman, Tasmania *Report on an Inquiry into Risdon Prison*. June 2001.

The AMC will provide an opportunity for ACT Corrective Services to collaborate with other government agencies and community groups in responding to issues arising from the relationship between Indigenous offending and imprisonment. In addition, the staff of the AMC will seek to expand the engagement with Indigenous groups and Indigenous leadership in the management of Indigenous people placed in the care and custody of ACT Corrective Services.

Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

The AMC Project office has engaged with the ACT Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee(AJAC) and its successor, the Aboriginal Justice Centre (AJC), which advises the Attorney General on:

- the development and implementation of fair and equitable law and justice programs and services that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT; and
- the development and coordination of efforts by Government and the local community to reduce the number of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system.

The Committee has a number of functions including:

- overseeing the implementation within the ACT of the recommendations of *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*; and
- establishing and maintaining mechanisms for effective communication and collaboration by government and non-government agencies with ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Committee will be the focus of communication with other Indigenous groups and the AMC Project office will assist with the coordination of this communication, as required.

Ngunnawal Elder's Group

There will be ongoing consultation with the Ngunnawal Elder's Group to ensure the interests of local Indigenous people are represented in prison planning, design and operation.

Communication with the Committee and the Elders Group will continue on all aspects of the planning and development of the AMC.

Communications

AJAC/AJC and the Elder's Group has been, and will continue to be, provided with regular briefings on the status of the AMC project.

Communications will be undertaken on all aspects of special interest to AJAC and the Elders including, but not limited to:

- education and training including, accredited vocational training, technical and further education and university education;
- feedback from, and experience of, people within the system;
- community links;
- suicide and self harm;
- substance abuse;
- reception arrangements and support mechanisms;
- transfer arrangements;
- accommodation and other design issues;
- staff training in cultural awareness;
- post-release support programs including health, substance abuse and employment;
- special programs for members of the indigenous community within the new prison system; transitional programs;
- access to Commonwealth or programs such as Aboriginal Tertiary Assistance Scheme (ATAS) and Vocational Guidance (VEGAS); and
- Sacred space/healing centre.

HEALTH ISSUES

In his *1999 Annual Report*, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, remarked

“I have long contended that prisons are a Public Health issue, because all except a very few prisoners are going to come out and resume their place in society.”

98% of prisoners will return to their communities, thus confirming that prison health issues are not contained within an isolated group, but are whole of community issues. In the community and for many health care professionals a key issue is to ensure that prisons do not compromise public health by becoming a pool of contamination.

Health issues associated with the prison population are well documented. In the absence of an epidemiological data base on ACT prisoners reference is made to the 1997 and 2001 NSW Corrections Health Services inmate health surveys which showed that:

- approximately 80% of inmates are incarcerated for offences relating to alcohol and other drug use;
- some 60% of males and 70% of female inmates have a history of illicit drug use;
- approximately one third of males and two thirds of female inmates are hepatitis C positive; and
- around one third of males and half of females report having been assessed or treated for a mental illness by a psychiatrist or psychologist at some time.

In addition, the rates of suicide and self-harm are higher among prison populations than in the wider community.

A prisoners profile, based on studies in NSW, South Australia and other jurisdictions in Australia, may be expected to exhibit the following features:

- 45% had been unemployed for 6 months at the time of incarceration;
- 5–10% are illiterate/innumerate;
- 60% are below functional levels in literacy and numeracy;
- 50 to 60% have not completed Year 10;
- 4% are intellectually disabled;
- 37% have a personality disorder;
- 50% consume alcohol at dangerous levels;
- 30% are problem gamblers;
- 70% are smokers;
- 75% have alcohol and other drug problems;
- 21% have previously attempted suicide;
- 37% are Hep C antibody positive;
- 31% are Hep B positive;
- 16% are obese; and/or
- 25% have attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.

Health services will be delivered to prisoners in a correctional environment, which will fulfil the requirements of the “Healthy Prison” concept. A “Healthy Prison” is one in which:

- Everyone is and feels safe;
- Everyone is treated with respect as a fellow human being;
- Everyone is encouraged to improve him or herself and is given the opportunity to do so through the provision of purposeful activity; and
- Everyone is enabled to maintain contact with their families and is prepared for release.

The establishment and maintenance of a “Healthy Prison” is primarily a joint responsibility of ACT Corrective Services and the selected health service provider, but it is also a responsibility of the ACT community.

The deprivation of liberty does have an adverse impact on the physical and mental well being of prisoners and the autonomy of health services are necessarily limited by the prison setting. However, this same setting provides a unique and potentially powerful environment within which to address health needs of a damaged, disadvantaged and disaffected group within the community and, at the same time, to ensure that the prison does not compromise public health by becoming an epicentre of infection.

Human Rights Guidance

Article 12 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 1976 provides for “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”

Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* 1948 – 1998 goes further to note that “Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.”

Guidance on the organisational and ethical aspects of health care in prisons is provided in a range of instruments, including the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 1976; the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 1976; UN *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, 1955 - 1977; the *Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia* 2002, the Council of Europe *European Prison Rules* 12 February 1987 and the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers 8 April 1998 recommendation No R(98)7 *Health and Quality of Life*.

The *Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion* 1986 reaffirms the need for health to be viewed in an holistic way underpinned by social justice and equity principles. It identifies 5 key areas of health promotion as follows:

- Building a healthy public policy;
- Creating supportive environments;
- Developing personal skills;
- Strengthening community actions; and
- Reorienting health services.

The Australian Medical Association reinforces the above sentiments in its policy statement, 1995 - 2003: “Prisoners and detainees have the same right to access, equity and quality of health care as the general population.”

The AMC project office meets regularly with the ombudsman and the Human Rights Commissioner on Human Rights aspects of the project.

Health Working Group

A Health Working Group has been established comprising representatives from ACTCS and ACT Health with the aim of developing a comprehensive plan for the delivery of health services within the AMC. The Working Group will research initiatives in health service delivery, health centre design and operation, integration with programs and other correctional staff and establish clinical and other standards and accountability mechanisms. The outcome sought is the delivery of health services to ACT prisoners comparable to services available in the community.

Communications

Communications will be undertaken jointly with the ACT Health and the AMC Project office. Issues covered by the communications will include:

- philosophy and policies relating to health issues;
- health programs;
- health facilities;
- occupational health and safety;
- preventative health and medical care;
- drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation;
- needle exchange programs (not presently planned);
- medical confidentiality;
- clinical standards;
- data collection and reporting; and
- methadone and alternative pharmacotherapies.

Corrections Health Board

The ACT Corrections Health Board's function is to:

- endorse and monitor standards of health care to juvenile and adult people in custody in the ACT; and
- monitor coordination between government departments and agencies to ensure the delivery of health care to people in custody in the ACT is comparable to that in the community.

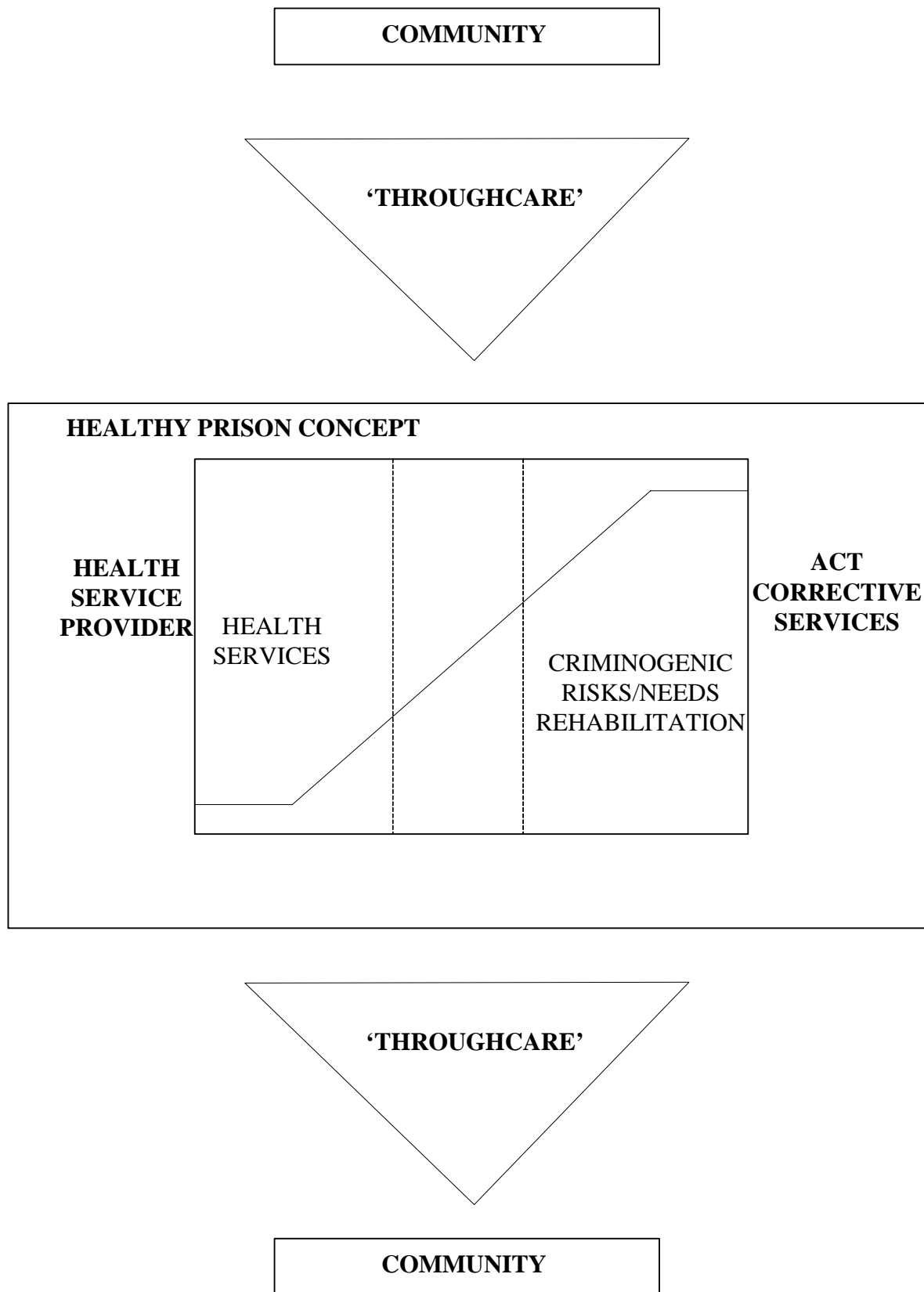
Note: The future of the Corrections Health Board is yet to be determined by the ACT Government.

Health Plan

In 2003 the AMC Project office drafted a plan for the provision of health services in the new prison which is currently under further development by ACT Health. The draft health plan advocates the "Healthy Prison" model and shared responsibility for health outcomes. See diagram below.

A final health plan is expected mid 2007.

HEALTHY PRISON CONCEPT: DIAGRAMATIC REPRESENTATION



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)³ *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia* - March 2001 provides the following prisoner profile.

“Statistical data for offenders varies between State and Territories. The categories and time frames for collection of data also vary. However, the general profile is consistent. The figures below represent averages drawn across all States and Territories and are included to provide an indication of the level of offender disadvantage:

- the largest age cohort of adult offenders is young (18 - 29) and is increasing despite the decline in this group in the general population;
- most prisoners are likely to have been in prison more than once, and over half will have breached community corrections orders;
- less than one quarter have completed secondary school;
- a large number have limited literacy and/or numeracy, in both native English speaking and NESB populations;
- prior to their current sentence approximately 70% are likely to have been unemployed;
- over 75% are likely to have a drug (or other substance abuse) problem;
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is greatly over-represented; this is of especial concern in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia;
- men comprise the great majority of offenders (over 90%), whilst the proportion of female offenders has increased in recent years (eg. in Victoria by 58% between 1996 and 2000), and the accumulated disadvantages of female offenders are generally more severe than for males;
- intellectual disability is also noticeable especially amongst male offenders;
- at least one quarter of prisoners are likely to be recorded as 'protection' prisoners;
- non-British migrants or visitors and illegal entrants to Australia are in particularly high proportions in most jurisdictions - almost 20% of Northern Territory prisoners are foreign nationals. (Note: illegal entrant detention centres are administered separately from the corrections systems and illegal entrant detainees are not covered by this Strategy).

Offenders therefore are likely to be at great risk of failure across a wide spectrum of economic and social activities. Their low skill level is a significant barrier to successful reintegration into the community. In addition there are structural barriers to their participation in vocational education and training and their access to the labour market. The offender population is increasing in all jurisdictions, placing increased pressure on facilities and services.”

Vocational and Educational Programs Working Group.

This Group was established to develop a plan for the delivery of appropriate programs within the new prison in consultation with experts from VOCED and funding bodies. The Plan for the Delivery of Vocational Education and Training and Rehabilitation Programs within the AMC is now published on the AMC website. The Group continues to meet regularly to refine the Case Management operating model and procedures for the AMC.

Rehabilitative Programs - Objectives and Desired Policy Outcomes

A range of rehabilitative prison programs, based on assessed risk and need, would be provided to improve prisoners' opportunities for self-development and reduce their risk of re-offending. These programs would

³ ANTA was abolished in 2005

also increase prisoners' opportunities for employment and for successful integration into the ACT community upon release. The provision of programs based on a comprehensive analysis of risk and need, will also ensure that finite resources are targeted to where they are most required and potentially most effective.

The menu of programs to be delivered in the AMC are as follows:

Visits will be integrated with all treatment programs in accordance with best practice in Case Management.

Treatment (Criminogenic) Programs

Alcohol and Other Drug

Cognitive skills.

Violent Behaviour.

Sex Offender.

Health & Life Skills Programs

Parenting.

Healthy Living.

Health Promotion.

Mental Health Support.

Self-Harming/Suicide Support.

Stress Management.

Spiritual/religious services.

Victim Awareness.

Education includes vocational training

Financial counselling/budgeting/gambling

Delivery Model

The AMC Project office, in consultation with Training and Adult Education, has developed the model for the delivery of education and vocational training to adult prisoners in the AMC. The aim is to ensure that education and vocational training within the prison is at least equivalent to that which is available in the community. The focus will be on prisoner rehabilitation and successful re-integration with the ACT community, upholding the spirit of the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

The proposed AMC Operating Model will ensure that all work and education by prisoners is undertaken in the context of gaining an accreditation. Prisoners will be assessed regarding their literacy/numeracy and vocational training needs and these needs will form part of the prisoner's individual case plan to address factors contributing to offending behaviour.

Programs will be delivered by ACT Corrective Services and appropriate service providers. Indigenous (culturally appropriate) programs will be developed and delivered in consultation with the local Indigenous community.

With regard to drug abuse, programs will be available and include the use of alternative pharmacotherapies as appropriate. The Health Service Provider will play a primary role in the diagnosis and treatment of substance abuse issues (see *ACTCS Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Strategic Plan* on this website).

Communications

Communications will be undertaken in all aspects of the activities of the Working Group.

Communications issues will include:

- education and training accredited vocational training, technical and further education ranging to tertiary level study at university;
- education and support to adult people in custody in the ACT;
- coordination between government departments and agencies and the private sector providers to ensure that delivery of vocational training and education to people in custody is comparable to that in the community;
- alcohol and other drug or substance abuse;
- integration with health services;
- integration with criminogenic program delivery;
- behaviour and anger management;
- targeting and promoting healthy lifestyle choices, including sexual health and domestic violence issues;
- support mechanisms;
- links to tertiary education and qualifications;
- skills which can assist reintegration for the future;
- employment upon release;
- employment and/or training to generate work ethic; and
- community links.

COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

Agencies

ACT Housing
The Mental Health Foundation ACT
The Mental Health Foundation Queanbeyan
Prisoners Aid ACT
ACTCOSS
Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
Centrelink ACT and Queanbeyan
The ACT Multi Cultural Council

Communications

Communication is required to coordinate efforts to manage reintegration and resettlement of prisoners. Prisoners and their families need to have access to agencies which have capacities to assist the resettlement of prisoners and the establishment of support networks in the community.

The process will comprise regular briefings on the status of the AMC Project, liaison and consultation to establish partnerships between prison staff, community corrections, community groups and other agencies to integrate efforts to address the reintegration needs of people back to the community and to encourage family resilience.

Communication issues will include:

- community links;
- housing
- CENTRELINK;
- recidivism;
- spirituality / sacred space;
- relationships;
- forensic mental health;
- crisis support unit;
- health services;
- specialist support;
- visits;
- facilities for volunteers;
- impacts on family and friends;
- secure and supportive living arrangements;
- alcohol and substance abuse;
- acquiring financial security and support;
- crisis support;
- post-release support programs;

DISABILITY AND AGED CARE

At present 1 in 8 Australians are over the age of 65. By 2051 this figure will have changed to 1 in 4. NSW already has almost 1 million men and women over 65 years of age. To the potential implications of this ageing population is added the reality that many Australians, especially the “baby boomers” have inadequate superannuation and retirement savings to fund their retirement and health care needs. In 1999 there were 10,000 Australian divorced women aged 59; by 2004 this figure was expected to grow by 50% and by 100% by 2009. This group, in particular, faces a bleak future in retirement. Poverty and isolation in old age, possibly in a setting of intergenerational hostility, may well add to the incidence of depression in the community, which is already expected to be the major health threat by 2020. As the nexus between poverty and crime is well established, there are prospects of increasing numbers of aged people being incarcerated, if only as they seek to be cared for. The AMC design will have to take this into consideration, seeking design inspiration from aged care facilities and hospitals. The Functional Brief also refers to AS 1428 with respect to design for people with disabilities and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services checklist for building and facility access.

Agencies

ACT Department of Disability
Housing and Community Services
ACT Health Department
ACT Office for Ageing
Chief Minister’s Department
Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing
Council on the Ageing (COTA).

The prospects of increasing numbers of older prisoners in custody poses particular design and correctional management issues, as well as a requirement for specific services, including an increased range of health services.

Communications

Engagement with the above agencies and stakeholders will take place to ensure appropriate level of service provision, particularly ‘Throughcare’ and resettlement services on release. Communications issues will include:

- centre design and operation;
- accommodation;
- visits;
- health services
- mental health services;
- community reintegration and resettlement;
- disability support services;
- vocational rehabilitation;
- crisis care;
- drug and alcohol services;
- rehabilitation during detention;
- community-based support programs and links;
- suicide and self-harm;
- transfer arrangements;
- palliative care; and
- transitional programs.

COMPLAINTS AND ADVOCACY

Agencies

The Community Advocate
Human Rights Commissioner
ACT Council of Social Services
Ombudsman
Council of Civil Liberties
Civil Liberties Australia
Prisoners Aid ACT
Victims of Crime
ACT Multi-Cultural Council

Communications

The above agencies will be consulted in the development and implementation of fair and equitable law and justice programs and services that affect prisoners, remand detainees, families and victims of crime.

Communication issues will include:

- Human Rights and advocacy;
- victims of crime representation/rights;
centre design and operation;
- services;
- communications with prisoners;
- security systems and procedures;
- visits;
- Operating Philosophy;
- Operating Model;
- programs and interventions;
- complaints system and investigations;
- discipline system;
- regulations and rules;
- Indigenous and cross-cultural issues; and
- privacy.

COMMUNICATION REGARDING SITE – Preliminary Assessment

Under the provisions of the *Land Planning and Environment Act 1991* a Preliminary Assessment (PA) was required to be undertaken in relation to the preferred site for the AMC at Hume. In preparing the PA there was communication with a wide range of groups having an interest in site issues including:

- adjoining and neighbouring leaseholders and residents;
- cultural and heritage groups;
- Indigenous organisations under Part 3 of the Land Act; and
- environmental interests, including but not limited to the South East Region Conservation Council; ACT Trees Inc and Friends of Native Grasslands Inc.

The completed PA was subject also to statutory communication requirements administered by the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) including public notification by Government Gazette and newspaper advertisement. The PA was subject to a statutory notification period of 21 days and written comments were formally received and assessed by ACTPLA as part of the statutory process. The PA was then determined by the Minister for Urban Services.

The PA is available on the AMC website.

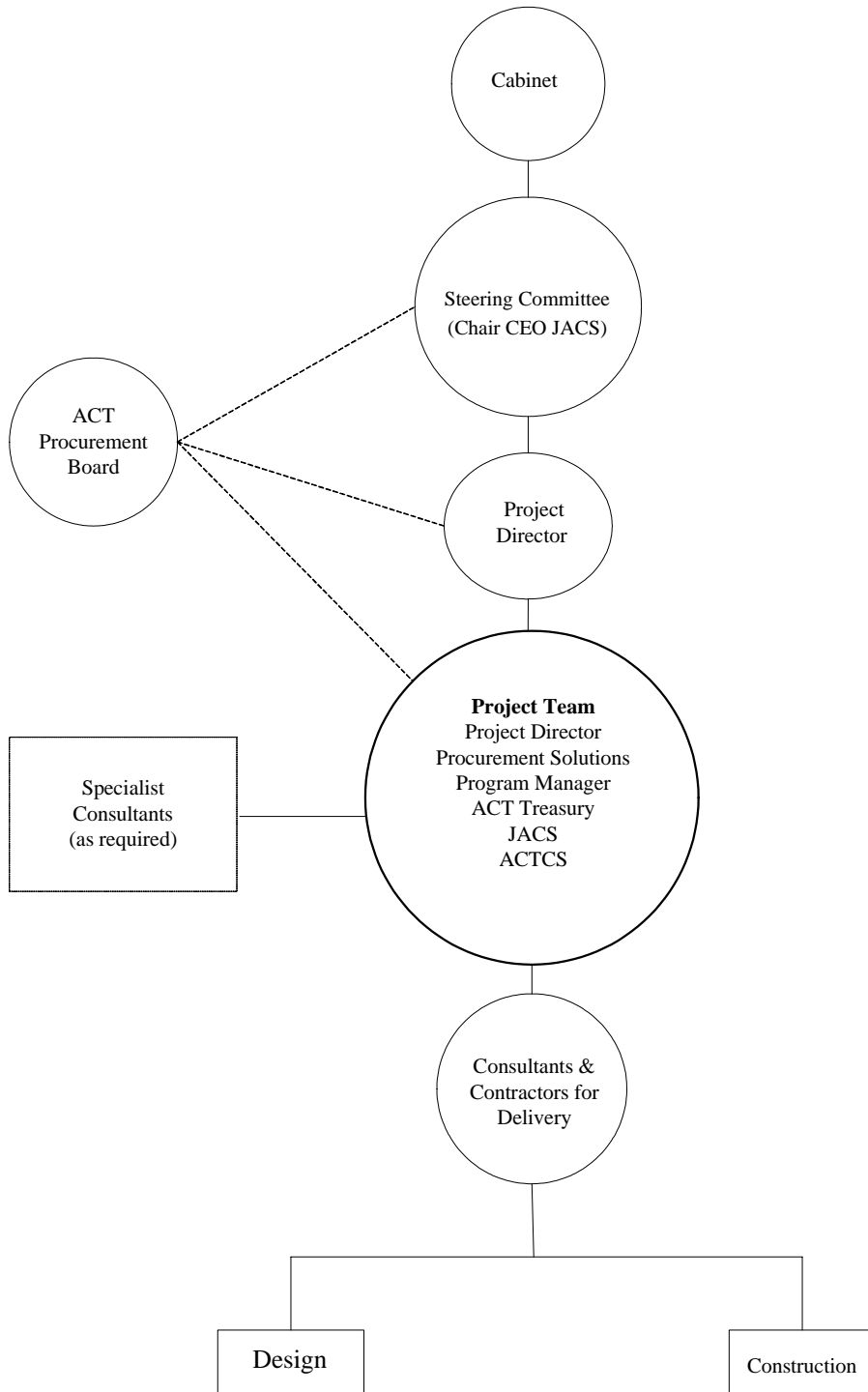
OTHER STATUTORY APPROVALS - Development Application

The development and construction of the AMC was be subject to normal statutory approval processes including the Development Application (DA) process, in accordance with the *Land Planning and Environment Act 1991*.

The DA was advertised for 28 days and was publicly notified by Government Gazette, newspaper advertisement and signage on the site.

Written comments were formally received and assessed by ACTPLA as part of the statutory process. The DA was determined by the Minister for Planning. Details of the DA approval are available on the AMC website.

PRISON PROJECT GOVERNANCE



In developing the Governance Structure, the following important factors were embraced :

- a single point of communication “upwards” from the project and project team and that is the Project Director;
- a single point of decision-making and direction for the project team and that is the Project Director;
- a project team consisting of the Project Director, Program Manager and Procurement Solutions (ACT Treasury);
- attendance at project team meetings with Treasury, JACS and ACTCS Officers;
- specialist consultants providing advice and services to the Project Director and Project Team. These would include the Program Manager, Designer and Construction Manager.

A number of Working Groups have been established to deal with specific issues covering site, communications, design, programs policy, procedures, legislation and human rights and workforce planning. These Working Groups report to the Executive Director, ACT Corrective Services. As the project progresses, a number of these Working Groups will be disbanded (for instance, following the securing of the site and necessary approvals, the Site Working Group was disbanded). The draft structure will also evolve as the project progresses from pre-design through to design, construction and commissioning.

SUSTAINABILITY

The objective is to build and operate a correctional facility which meets the correctional outcomes detailed in the Functional Brief and which, in its design, construction and operation is at forefront of sustainability in design, construction and operation.

As detailed previously, the AMC will conform to the “Healthy Prison” concept and will have a positive impact on the lives of prisoners, staff and visitors.

The operation of the AMC will satisfy the requirements for accreditation under ISO 14001 international standards.

The AMC will require minimal energy to meet demands, maximise the use of renewable energy sources, minimise demand for potable water, maximise the re-use of water, minimise demolition, construction and operational waste, minimise pollution, and avoid or minimise impacts on local biodiversity.

The whole of life costs of the AMC will represent value for money to the people of the ACT.

Particular attention will be paid to the achievement of an appropriate level of Thermal Comfort, high Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) and the minimisation of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions.

The achievement of the sustainability objectives will be assisted by:

- the application of the Green Star Rating Tool. The development must be rated as achieving a minimum 4 stars standard on the Green Building Council’s 6 Star rating (modified for prisons); and
- implementing ACT policies and targets including those detailed in the ACT Government’s *No Waste by 2010 strategy*, *the Sustainable Transport Plan 2004*; *People, Place, Prosperity sand Sustainability Policy for the ACT 2003*; *Think Water* and *the ACT Greenhouse Strategy*.

Sustainability initiatives which are considered in the AMC design include:

Distributed energy solutions.

Waste to energy technologies.

Energy efficient lighting.

High energy star ratings.

Standby generators.

Solar hot water.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Building orientation.

Insulation.

Passive solar design.

Landscaping for energy conservation.

Programmable thermostats.

Smart card power use (eg in cells).

Energy efficient motors.

Variable speed drives for variable air movement and exhaust systems.

Direct and/or indirect evaporative cooling.

Solar chimneys.

Double roof structures.

Night purging system.
Natural ventilation and lighting.
Shading.
Occupancy sensing.
Energy management systems.
Donkey units with shorter pipe runs to minimise transfer heat loss.

Water conservation

Diversions of flows for irrigation.
Capture and reuse of stormwater.
Swales or bioretention strips in car parking areas.
High efficiency irrigation.
Harvested rainwater.
Grey water irrigation.
Xeriscape land care.
Flow restrictors and pressure reducing valves.
Tap & shower timers.

Lighting

Automatic dimming ballasts.
Movement activated lighting in bedrooms, ablutions and common areas.
Maximising natural lighting.
Energy efficient lighting.
Orient floors on East-West axis.
Internal courtyards for daylighting.

Building materials

Good sealing practices.
Light coloured internal finishes to minimise lighting power density.
Glazing options that reduce cooling, heating and lighting loads.
Thermal mass.
Low-e multi-glazing.
Local sourcing.
Earth berms.
Selection of materials and finishes for their durability, low and easy maintenance, resistance to marking or staining and ease of cleaning.
Environmentally friendly materials.
Renewable and natural materials.
Sensitive acoustic treatment.
Insulated water pipes.

Waste minimisation

Recycling.
Construction waste management.
Compost and vermiculture systems.
Waste conversion.
Easy access for maintenance.

Environmental sensitivity

Use of indigenous species.

Windows that frame views.

Ecosystem restoration.

Landscaped parking areas.

Protection of native habitat.

Protect and reuse of topsoil.

Low maintenance buildings and landscaping.

Maximum of two storeys.

Vermin and bird proofed buildings, including plant rooms, providing no opportunities for birds to perch/roost under eaves and verandas etc.

Establishment of gradients around building plateaus and cuttings to minimise the possibility of erosion and prevent pooling of storm water.

The sustainability report “*Sustainable Design Strategy – Beyond Compliance*” is available on the AMC website.

MEDIA CONTACT

All contact with the media will be in accordance with ACT Government Guidelines.

Contact will be made with the Chief Minister's office for further advice on the content and direction of the material to be released.

Draft media releases and briefs will be directed to the Chief Minister's Office as required for approval.

APPENDICES

- 1. Media Release – Engagement of WP Brown and Partners Pty Ltd.**
- 2. Media Release – Approval of Site and Preliminary Assessment.**
- 3. Media Release – Budget Confirms funding for ACT Prison.**
- 4. Media Release - Prison Communications with ACT Community.**
- 5. a- Media Release – EOI Sought for ACT Prison Program Manager.**
b- Media Release - Selection of ACT Prison Program Manager.
- 6. Media Release – New Prison Legislation Tabled before Assembly.**
- 7. Media Release – Prison Project Rehabilitation Facilities and Programs.**
- 8. Media Release – Engagement of Design Consultant.**
- 9. Media Release – Sustainability in Prison Design.**
- 10. Media Release – Our New Prison – How it Will Look.**
- 11. Media Release – Approval of Development Application.**
- 12. Media Release – Early Site Works.**
- 13. Media Release – Bulk Earth Works.**
- 14. Media Release – ANU Students to Prepare Environment Management System for the AMC.**
- 15. Media Release – Engagement of Builder.**
- 16. Media Release – Construction Commenced on Prison.**
- 17. Media Release – Prison General Manager Appointed.**
- 18. Media Release – Prison Security System.**
- 19. Media Release – Prison Dogs in Training.**
- 20. Media Release – New Prison Recruits.**
- 21. Media Release - New Prison Staff Commence Training.**
- 22. Media Release – Community Advisory Committee Appointed to Prison.**
- 23. Media Release - Local Contracts Logistic Support for Prison.**
- 24. Media Release – Thumbs Up for ACT Prison by State Correctional Administrators.**
- 25. Media Release – Prison Open Day.**
- 26. Media Release – ACT Prison Open for Business.**
- 27. Media Release – First ACT Prisoners Return to ACT.**
- 28. Media Release – Symonston Temporary Remand Centre Closed.**
- 29. Media Release – BRC Finally Closed for Good.**
- 30. Stakeholder Agenda Analysis.**
- 31. Communication Schedule.**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ACT PRISON PROJECT

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Presented by the
Attorney General
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
August 2004

Mr Speaker, the subject of an ACT prison was first mooted as early as 1955. In November 2003, almost 50 years later, my government is turning the vision of a prison for the ACT into a reality.

The ACT prison will include a new 139-bed remand centre to replace the Belconnen Remand Centre, which I might add, shames us all. It will also replace the Symonston Temporary Remand Centre. It will

include a 175-bed facility for sentenced prisoners and a 60-bed Transitional Release Centre for low risk prisoners who are in the final stages of their sentences and being prepared for their return to our community.

Mr Speaker, we have a responsibility to the ACT community, to our prisoners as well as to their families to provide opportunities for persons sentenced to imprisonment to turn their lives around. As noted by Justice Stephen Tumin, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisoners for England and Wales 1978–1995:

Criminal behaviour emerges as a result of joint failures of the individual and the society of which he or she is part. As a result, society must take some responsibility for crime, and at least make an attempt to rehabilitate offenders.

In establishing a prison, the ACT will be taking responsibility for managing its own prisoners rather than sending them away to be managed by NSW. This is particularly important as the majority of ACT prisoners come from, and will return to live in the ACT amongst us. What ever we might think about prisoners, possibly as the undeserving, we cannot escape the reality that they are our prisoners and they are our responsibility. We do not exercise that responsibility by shunting our prisoners to NSW where they are out of sight and out of mind, to all except their families.

The transportation of ACT prisoners to NSW's correctional facilities also leaves our justice system fractured and incomplete. It does not promote positive and appropriate criminal justice system outcomes. In this regard, Lord Justice Woolf noted in 1991:

If the experience of imprisonment results in a deterioration in the ability of a prisoner to operate effectively and lawfully within society or if prisoners are treated in a way which is likely to leave them in an embittered or disaffected state on release, then the overall purpose of the criminal justice system will have been prejudiced.

Building a prison in the ACT also makes financial sense. Detailed financial analyses were completed comparing the costs of continuing with the Belconnen Remand Centre / Symonston Temporary Remand Centre and the current arrangement with NSW with building and operating a prison over 40 years. These analyses indicated that it is preferable to build an ACT prison than to continue with the current arrangements. This becomes even more so when the risks of NSW raising its charges to the ACT are considered.

The establishment of a prison in the ACT will achieve a number of policy outcomes which no one in this Assembly will contest.

More secure, humane and safer accommodation for ACT remandees and sentenced prisoners will be provided.

The prospects for the rehabilitation of ACT sentenced prisoners will be improved through the provision of a wide range of programs addressing the reasons why people offend. While many of these programs are currently available in the NSW system, access to them by ACT prisoners is determined by the classification and the location of a prisoner. In the ACT, all our prisoners will have much greater access to the programs and interventions which they need and which the community expects they will receive.

As a result, the possibilities for reducing rates of recidivism will be improved.

Prisoners will have greater accessibility to, and interaction with, family and other supports to assist in their rehabilitation and to maintain family unity.

The health and well being of the ACT prisoner population will be improved through the application of integrated health management services which will be provided by ACT Health and ACT Corrective Services. These services will be directed to the general health needs of prisoners with programs targeted at reducing drug and alcohol addictions, making improvements in mental health, minimising self-harm, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and addressing the particular health and well-being of special needs and minority groups.

With the establishment of a modern, medium-sized facility in the ACT, the exposure of ACT prisoners to the negative impacts of a large correctional system will be avoided. Currently, ACT prisoners are often subject to isolation from their local community, frequently housed in aged and aesthetically unpleasant accommodation, subject to frequent transfers, and accommodated with a significantly larger population where violence, assault and power are features of the dominant culture.

Reductions in offending behaviour will be achieved through the application of a broad range of therapeutic and behaviour management prison programs which offer choice, flexibility, are research-based, well-managed, appropriately resourced, and evaluated to determine their effectiveness. The local community and families will, where appropriate, be involved in prisoner rehabilitation programs.

Greater and more focused involvement in prisoner health and well-being and rehabilitation through the application of effective Case Management and “Throughcare” strategies from the community to the prison and back to the community will be encouraged.

Improvements in prisoner educational attainments will be targeted, in recognition that offenders are frequently long term unemployed and have poor records of educational attainment. Without a minimum level of education, escape from the margins of our society will forever be difficult.

Vocational training, and employment opportunities will be provided to aid rehabilitation, develop prisoners’ work ethics and reduce prison costs. It will also provide a source of prisoner income, benefit the community and provide improved training and work skills that are appropriate and transferable to the workforce in the Canberra region.

A healthy, positive operational culture will be established through the size and design of the prison, its Operating Philosophy, coupled with the introduction of rigorous staff selection and training, clear competency standards, performance-based management and the imposition of sanctions for poor performance.

The recruitment and training of staff in custodial services and programs, industrial, education, training and health services will target and develop officers who are qualified, focused, skilled, sensitive and communicative.

Effective Throughcare arrangements will ensure the smooth reintegration of prisoners back into the ACT community on release.

Community engagement in the management of its prisoners and in the support of prison management in this contentious area of public policy will be fostered.

The design, construction and operation of the prison will reflect sustainability objectives drawn from, but not limited by, the ACT Government’s No Waste by 2010 strategy, the Sustainable Transport Plan 2004; People, Place, Prosperity and Sustainability Policy for the ACT 2003; Think Water and the ACT Greenhouse Strategy.

By repatriating ACT prisoners, risk factors confronting families with children coming into contact with the criminal justice system will be reduced. This will address the issues outlined by the Standing Committee on Community Services and Social Equity in their report *The Forgotten Victims of Crime: Families of Offenders and their Silent Sentence*.

Mr Speaker, the ACT prison will comprise 175 beds for sentenced prisoners and 139 beds for remandees in separate remand facilities inside the 'Secure Perimeter'.

Outside the 'Secure Perimeter' but within the security zone of the prison, up to 60 low-security prisoners will be accommodated in a Transitional Release Centre in preparation for release.

Typically, negative psychological impacts for both staff and prisoners occur with large prisons to the extent that staff and prisoners may feel overwhelmed by both the scale and size of the facility. The ACT prison's planned capacity of 374 places it within a range which should not give rise to this problem.

There will be open space reserved inside the main prison for an additional 120 places to cater for possible future expansion (assuming an operational life of 40 plus years). The design will ensure that locations reserved for this purpose are readily accessible for the delivery of materials and by construction workers but can be secured during future construction and will not unduly interrupt prison operations. Even with the additional places, the capacity of the prison will not carry negative impacts for staff, prisoners or visitors.

Mr Speaker, the design concept for the prison has been given considerable consideration. The ACT prison will accommodate men and women remandees and sentenced prisoners. Prisons holding this mix of prisoners are not uncommon in Australia now, especially in regional areas (for example, at Townsville, Queensland; Port Augusta, South Australia and Kempsey, NSW).

Inside the main facility, low, medium and high-security accommodation will be constructed in the form of single cells, dual occupancy cells and cottage units.

The concept of dual occupancy cells should not be confused with "doubling up", which is a practice in response to prisoner numbers increasing beyond the capacity of a correctional facility. "Doubling up" is where cells originally designed to hold only one prisoner are fitted with an additional bed to accommodate two prisoners. Dual occupancy cells are purpose-designed with space and facilities to accommodate two prisoners. As well as being, in some cases, a culturally appropriate response to specific accommodation needs, dual occupancy accommodation is recognised as offering significant benefits, such as reducing risks of suicide and self harm. This has been recognised by the nation's Correctional Administrators and has been incorporated into amendments to the Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia.

Because the centre will be the only prison in the ACT, it will be important for there to be a variety in accommodation design and prisoner management regimes to encourage and recognise a prisoner's progress through his or her sentence.

While the facility will provide for total physical and visual separation of males from females and the separation of remandees from sentenced prisoners, it will also take into account, within bounds, the concept of normalisation in contemporary prisoner management.

The facility will be a campus-style design, incorporating separate accommodation units around a central facilities area (including rehabilitation program spaces, education areas, and health and logistic areas) with open spaces between buildings and groups of buildings.

The Design Brief for the prison has benefited from the contributions of various community groups in the ACT. It also incorporates the considerable expertise resident in ACT Corrective Services and the advice of numerous experts around Australia to whom the Design Brief was referred for comment.

Mr Speaker, the prison will incorporate sustainability in its design principles and its Operating Model. To this end, it will require minimal energy to meet demands, maximise the use of renewable energy sources, minimise demand for potable water, maximise the re-use of water, minimise demolition, construction and operational waste, minimise pollution, and avoid or minimise impacts on local biodiversity.

Particular attention will be paid to the achievement of an appropriate level of thermal comfort, high indoor environmental quality and the minimisation of volatile organic compound emissions.

The achievement of the sustainability objectives will be assisted by the application of the Green Building Council's Green Star Rating Tool. The development aims to achieve minimum four star rating on the six Star Rating Tool.

ACT sustainability policies and outcomes will be applied to the prison, including those detailed in the ACT Government's No Waste by 2010 strategy, the Sustainable Transport Plan 2004; People, Place, Prosperity and Sustainability Policy for the ACT 2003; Think Water and the ACT Greenhouse Strategy.

Mr Speaker, local industry involvement in the design and construction of the ACT prison will be maximised. Recently, the Commonwealth, in response to an ACT Corrective Services and Business ACT submission, agreed to provide Supplier Access to Major Projects (SAMP) funding to allow the provision of supplier research. This will ensure that Australian industry is offered opportunities to contribute to the development of the ACT Prison Project. To this end, an officer contracted by Business ACT commenced work with the ACT Prison Project office in May 2004.

Mr Speaker, estimated capital costs for the prison are \$103.45m, with the operation of the facility expected to cost approximately \$19.635m. I want to emphasis to the Assembly that these costs are in May 2003 dollars and will be subject to normal cost escalation over the life of the project.

My government has fully funded the development and construction of an ACT prison – a first for an ACT Government. Funding was included in the 2004-2005 Budget.

I am surprised the Opposition has alleged I have rejected the Liberal Government's plan for a prison/remand facility - when the previous government never funded the project. I am also surprised the Opposition has alleged that 'After nearly a whole term of government we are no closer to having our own prison' – when after seven years the previous government achieved nothing and in that time would have transferred vast numbers of prisoners interstate.

My government has moved beyond the empty rhetoric of the Opposition on this matter.

Mr Speaker, the Operating Philosophy and the Operating Model of the ACT prison is founded on the ACT Human Rights Act 2004 and also sits within the framework provided by the Canberra Plan and its constituent documents, the Social Plan, the Spatial Plan and the Economic White Paper.

The prison's Operating Philosophy will be the major factor influencing the design of the centre.

The ACT prison will be a secure and safe place that will have a positive effect on the lives of prisoners held there and on staff who work there. Its management and operations will give substance to the dictum of Sir Alexander Paterson that offenders are sent to prison “as punishment, not for punishment”.

I appreciate that the “Laura Norder” lobby may have some difficulty with this fundamental correctional concept.

Mr Speaker, the prison will reflect the “Healthy Prison” concept. A Healthy Prison is one in which everyone is and feels safe and is treated with respect as a fellow human being. It is a place that encourages a prisoner to improve himself or herself and is given the opportunity to do so through the provision of purposeful activity, is enabled to maintain contact with their families and is prepared for release.

The prison would provide protection from those who present as a risk to the community and a safe environment for prisoners and staff through design features, the use of technology, appropriate classification and separation of prisoners and the appropriate categories and numbers of well-trained staff.

Programs and activities for prisoners will be based on individual assessment of each prisoner as the foundation of individual Case Plans. A multi-disciplinary and indeed multi-agency approach to program delivery and Case Management will be adopted. This will include involvement of other government and community agencies, where appropriate, in the provision of services, such as family and individual counseling, health, education and vocational training.

The menu of programs and activities offered to each prisoner will be targeted towards achieving positive changes in prisoners’ habits, beliefs, attitudes and expectations.

The Operating Philosophy of the prison recognises that most prisoners will return to our community and that the prospects of bringing about positive changes in behavior will be greatly influenced by the development and maintenance of relationships with family and close associates. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of women and Indigenous prisoners.

The menu of programs and the design of individual programs will be based on a “Throughcare” model that engages family and close associates in the behavioral change process while the prisoner is incarcerated and ensures support to the prisoner as he or she re-enters society.

Mr Speaker, in conjunction with Case Management, emphasis will be directed at “Throughcare” in prisoner management. This is aimed at ensuring an integrated and seamless approach to the delivery of services for offenders as they move between prison, community corrections and back to the community. Throughcare is also concerned with continuity of knowledge of the offender and continuity of care, program and other service delivery. This aspect of the Operating Philosophy for the ACT prison will contribute to the achievement of whole of government objectives for crime prevention and community safety and to the principles of Restorative Justice.

The “Throughcare” approach will also focus on providing an appropriate continuum of health care, in particular addressing substance abuse and mental health issues. It will also involve the development, monitoring of individual Case and Sentence Plans and their integration with individual health planning by ACT Health.

Linkages with community-based and appropriately accredited programs and services will also be fostered as these will provide support for re-settlement and the engagement of family and the community in the prisoner’s correctional experience and community future.

Mr Speaker, boredom and inactivity in the correctional setting encourages drug use, undermines rehabilitation objectives and threatens security and safety. It is therefore important that the prisoner's day be marked by the prisoner's continuous engagement in purposeful activity. Over time, the prisoner will, through incentive-based regimes, exercise increasing levels of decision-making, assume greater levels of responsibility and will be placed in accommodation which reflects this. The means to achieve the integration of the prisoner's Case and Sentence Plans and health planning will be a Structured Day of meaningful work, programs (including visits) and recreation.

Mr Speaker, initially, work will primarily be in domestic industries such as grounds and facilities maintenance, cooking, and cleaning. Space within the prison has been identified to permit the possible development of limited horticultural activity, facilities maintenance, waste management and recycling and to provide other work opportunities for prisoners. To this end, the prison Design Brief has included provision for a 300m² workshop.

Mr Speaker, visits will be available seven days a week with specific periods being set aside for family visits and for professional visits. The importance accorded to visits reflects their acknowledged value in the rehabilitative endeavour. Visits areas will be designed specifically to be non-threatening and child-friendly. The prison Design Brief has included some unique design features to ensure that even where adult visitors have been restricted as a result of breaching prison rules, children will not be penalised for the transgressions of their parents.

Program staff will assist prisoners to gain the most from their visits, which may take place in relatively private family rooms in addition to the normal visits area.

Mr Speaker, recreation in the correctional centre is to be both formal, as a planned activity and integrated into the prisoner's Case Plan. It will also be informal, giving the prisoner the opportunity to make decisions and assume responsibility for the use of his or her time.

Recreation will also include sport, painting (including Indigenous art) and hobbies.

Mr Speaker, a staffing model and Workforce Plan for the operation of the prison has been developed. The Workforce Plan was developed to ensure that staff required to meet future needs are being, or will be recruited and developed at the appropriate time. The Plan also establishes the gender balance in the staffing profile, noting the complexity of the prisoner population to be managed. Staffing costs will be minimised through efficient staff to prisoner ratios and skill levels and the application of selected technologies integrated into the facility design. Staff development, career management, productivity and employee relations will be enhanced and skill shortages and labour turnover minimised.

Mr Speaker, poor health, including a high incidence of mental health and substance abuse problems is prevalent among prisoners. Prisoners, particularly women prisoners, exhibit backgrounds of physical, mental and sexual abuse. Historically, health care in prisons has not received the level of attention that it requires. It is therefore essential that the ACT embraces best practice correctional health models in the delivery of health services.

The provision of health services in the new facility will be based on the principle of equivalence, that is, that prisoners should be able to access health services comparable to those accessible to the rest of the community. The goals of health services in the correctional setting include those of minimising self-harm, to reducing dependency on drugs, addressing mental health issues and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Given the poor state of physical and mental health of prisoners as a cohort, a primary concern in the delivery of health services in the correctional context is to ensure that the prison does not become a crucible of contamination and thereby potentially compromise community health.

In recognition that health is an holistic concept, the health care model will be integrated with correctional responsibilities, not just added on as a discrete service provided by ACT Health.

Mental health care to prisoners will also be provided. This includes the provision of both acute and long-term mental health care services and their integration with community-based services.

A high proportion of persons in prison suffer from mental illness or behavioural disorders. Many persons admitted to a prison may either have a history of mental illness or display symptoms of mental illness or behavioural disorder. Mental illness may be linked to substance abuse. Symptoms may only become evident after arrival at prison as individuals, in some cases, for the first time are assessed and identified as having a mental health problem.

ACT Corrections and ACT Health Services staff will collectively provide an effective joint health/corrections response to these issues within the ACT correctional centre. This response will not include securing in the correctional facility persons with mental illnesses who are not prisoners.

Prisoners requiring mental health treatment in a secure environment would be accommodated away from the centre in a separate forensic mental health facility in NSW or in the ACT (when and if such a facility is available) in accordance with the Draft National Principles for Forensic Mental Health.

Prisoners undergoing acute episodes of behavioural disorder are susceptible to self-harm. A Crisis Support Unit has been included in the prison design to provide a safe environment where prisoners can be assessed, treated and stabilised before returning to the mainstream environment.

Illicit drugs pose one of the most serious problems in prisons. Drug use can cause death or serious illness (through overdosing), spread blood borne viruses and diseases such as AIDS/HIV and Hepatitis B and C, react badly with prescribed drugs, cause violent behaviour, jeopardise rehabilitation, and impact negatively on families.

The ACT prison will have in place policies and procedures to deal specifically with drugs in prison. Prison drug and alcohol policies and practices will be an integral part of prison management, addressing health care, rehabilitation and reintegration, and administration and discipline. Drug use, particularly injecting drug use behaviour, presents as an Occupational Health and Safety risk to staff, other prisoners and visitors.

Australia's National Drug Strategy has recognised that some illicit drugs will get into prisons and the appropriate response is to adopt the policy of harm minimisation.

The main objectives of the prison's application of harm minimisation would be to ensure the security and safety of prisoners, staff and visitors. Safe withdrawal and rehabilitative treatment will be provided and health issues related to alcohol and drugs addressed.

Drug and alcohol education programs dealing with the safe use of alcohol, controlled drinking strategies, safe injecting practices, safe sexual behaviour, drink-drive programs and quit smoking programs will be provided in the prison.

A variety of treatment programs are essential in catering for the differing risks and needs presented by prisoners. Treatment programs would be provided to address the reasons why prisoners are motivated to take drugs or abuse alcohol; they will include counselling, psychological therapy and behaviour modification.

Drug detection measures will be set and will include drug detection dogs as well as appropriate technology and services provided by the Australian Federal Police.

The ACT has a duty of care to protect prisoners at risk, particularly from self-harm, violent assault and blood borne diseases. All reasonable steps must be taken to prevent risk of self-harm, injury and ill-health.

A medical centre will be provided in the prison, equipped for assessment, treatment, consultation and clinical support to meet the primary health needs of prisoners. Assessments and consultations will take place within the secure perimeter to minimise movement costs and preserve security. All surgery would require that prisoners be escorted to and from hospital as well as during any period of hospitalisation as is done at present.

The design of the medical centre will reflect a community health centre, rather than an institutional design.

Mr Speaker, correctional literature is replete with references to the prison environment and the damage a dysfunctional environment can have on staff, prisoners and the community. With the establishment of a new prison in the ACT an opportunity exists to establish and sustain a healthy, positive organisational culture within the prison. This will be achieved by the integration of the features of the site, the design, the Operating Philosophy and the staff who will bring these features together. The staff of the prison will be the key to its success; they will be screened, recruited, trained and supported to meet the diverse demands required of them. Rehabilitative efforts have a greater chance of changing an offender's behaviour and improving opportunities following release, when custodial and other professional staff work together in delivering effective treatment programs, are responsive to the needs of prisoners and model pro-social behaviour. A positive prison culture will lower the institutional "temperature", reduce prisoner stress, frustration, boredom, violence and minimise the risks of harm to prisoners and staff.

The prison environment that will be established will reflect the integration of design solutions with operational policies. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of Indigenous and female prisoners, which must be met objectively and not simply by striving for parity with male, non-Indigenous prisoners.

The prison design will avoid that design harshness which encourages aggressive behaviour, but rather will seek a softer institutional presentation, which will foster socially acceptable behaviour. It will avoid dowdy colours, dim lighting and the use of excessively harsh materials.

Prisoner accommodation will provide extensive vista to open areas to provide physical and psychological orientation.

Landscaping will be designed to contribute to a mood of calm and repose in a setting not usually associated with either.

A sacred space embracing Indigenous and non-Indigenous elements will be an important feature of the centre setting.

Mr Speaker, in simple terms, the profile of the female prisoner population is marked by more damage, disadvantage, disease and disaffection than is the male prisoner population.

Accordingly, four principles, which reflect those adopted in Canada, Western Australia and NSW at its new facility at Dillwynia, will underpin the management of women prisoners.

The first principle is personal responsibility and empowerment of the individual. Many women in custody are marginalised and alienated with no experience of making positive decisions that affect their lives. Prison staff will give women in their care the power to make such decisions and accept that as their personal responsibility.

The second principle is family responsibility. The objective of this principle is to ensure that prisoners who are mothers and primary carers are provided with maximum contact with their families and children and to buttress this by providing programs and support directed at improving relationship and parenting skills.

The third principle is community responsibility. Many women are alienated from their communities and lack supports within them. Prisoners will be encouraged to become engaged with members of the community, develop a sense of community responsibility and to set in place post release support arrangements.

The fourth principle is respect and integrity. Services provided within the prison will be gender and culturally appropriate and will respect the dignity of people and the differences between them. A key element in this is honesty and truthfulness. Prisoners will be encouraged to develop similar attitudes with regard to themselves and to others.

Where it is determined to be in the best interests of a child, provision will be made for the child up to the age of three to reside with the mother in custody. Of necessity, the safety and well being of the child would always be the priority.

Mr Speaker, the Australian Capital Territory Population Projections 2002-2032 and Beyond reports that the Indigenous population in Canberra, currently approximately 1.2% of the total population, is expected to continue to increase both in number and as a proportion of the total population, due to the higher levels of fertility, high migration into the ACT and an increasing propensity for people of Indigenous descent to identify themselves as Indigenous.

Indigenous prisoners presently constitute approximately 9% of the ACT prison population. While this is lower than the national average, it stills represents a level of Indigenous over-representation in prison which shames the ACT community. The demographic factors outlined above indicate that there are prospects that this over-representation could increase, with attendant risks to the well-being of Indigenous prisoners because their accumulated adverse life experiences heightens their vulnerability in general, but particularly in the correctional setting.

The new ACT prison will provide an opportunity for ACT Corrective Services to collaborate with other government agencies in responding to issues arising from the relationship between Indigenous offending and imprisonment. The management of the correctional centre will seek to engage with Indigenous groups and Indigenous leadership in the management of Indigenous people placed in the care and custody of ACT Corrective Services.

Mr Speaker, the selected site for the ACT prison is located at Hume (Blocks 6 Section 18 and Block 12, Section 24). The site is approximately 75 hectares located to the north of the Southcare Helicopter base and is bounded in the west by the Monaro Highway and in the east by Jerrabomberra Creek. A Preliminary Assessment under the Land Planning and Environment Act 1991 has recently been submitted to my colleague, the Minister for Planning, for determination.

On 30 June 2004 Mr Nairn MP announced that the Commonwealth had agreed to make available excess Defence land surrounding the Canberra International Airport to the ACT for establishment of the ACT prison. On 3 August 2004 I received a letter from Senator Hill advising that "...a portion of the land to the north east of the airport, identified as Block 102 is surplus to Australian Government requirements". Senator Hill then invites the ACT to submit a priority sale proposal for the site.

I formally applied for a priority sale of this land for the purpose of building the prison more than 12 months ago and made repeated efforts to secure this land.

The Canberra International Airport has also expressed concern, as Block 102 had been identified as land required for the future expansion of the Airport.

A change of site at this late stage would clearly put the project back substantially; 12 to 18 months and possibly longer as terms, conditions and limitations attached to the land in question would inevitably have to be negotiated with Departments of Transport and Regional Services, Defence and Finance, as well as Canberra International Airport and the National Capital Authority.

Should planning revert to the site in the Majura Valley, the cost of the current Preliminary Assessment would be wasted. New contracts would be required. The ACT Prison Project office would also clearly have to be maintained for a longer period with attendant costs. Additional project costs would be incurred as a result of the normal escalation costs over what would be an extended period. Earlier estimates of costs for services and utilities for Majura sites for the prison included a base cost estimate of \$2.626m with other Majura sites attracting further costs ranging between \$2.75m and \$4.85m. These infrastructure and access costs are significantly more than for the Hume site.

There are also significant environmental issues associated with the sites around the Canberra International Airport. These include grassland and earless dragons to the west and woodlands to the east. Resolution of these issues would require detailed consultation with Environment ACT and a referral to Environment Australia under the Environment (Protection of Biodiversity and Conservation) Act 1999. Aircraft noise would also be an ongoing concern at block 102, which is not the case for the Hume site.

Following the completion of the detailed impact assessments on the site at Hume as part of the Preliminary Assessment, I am convinced that the Hume site presents the best available options for the establishment of the ACT prison.

Mr Speaker, a number of tender processes will commence in the coming months. A Program Manager will be engaged to assist with the management of the design and construction process. Shortly thereafter, a designer to develop a detailed design and the associated documentation and a builder to commence construction of the prison will be engaged. All tender processes will involve the Government Procurement Board, which has already approved the overall Prison Project Procurement Strategy which had been developed by ACT Corrective Services and ACT Treasury's Procurement Solutions. The Procurement Strategy also included detailed project governance arrangements to ensure that the range of outcomes required to meet the objective of designing, building and operating the prison on time and within budget are met.

Mr Speaker, after almost 50 years of debate, speculation, deliberation, analysis and procrastination, my government has not only substantially progressed work toward the establishment of an ACT prison; we have fully funded the project to the tune of \$110 million. What is more, my government is ensuring that the ACT prison will be a model of sustainable design, and its operations will promote a safe healthy environment for all associated with the prison; prisoners, staff and visitors alike.

The ACT prison, through careful planning and community involvement will offer prisoners opportunities inviting them to rehabilitate and re-integrate with the ACT community, of which they are a part, and where they belong.
