

RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE

Cost of Family Violence to the corrections system – indicative estimate

The Family Violence Royal Commission has requested that the State provide information about the cost of family violence, beyond specialist family violence programs, across a number of agencies including corrections. Corrections Victoria has received further clarification that the request should cover the period 2010-11 to 2013-14.

Corrections Victoria advises that it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the cost of family violence on the corrections system due to a number of system limitations. The most significant of these limitations is that it is not possible to identify the number of prisoners and offenders who have an episode in custody or on a community order for family violence related offences.

In addition, it is not possible using existing systems to isolate the amount of time an offender serves for a specific offence(s) as part of their overall correctional episode. For example, while some offenders are in custody or on orders for offences that are exclusively family violence related, others may have several offences of which the family violence offence is only a small component of their overall sentence and therefore the overall cost of their sanction. Further, it is not possible to identify the amount of time spent as a result of dealing with a history of family violence offending.

In order to provide some information to assist the Royal Commission with its inquiry, Corrections Victoria has developed an indicative estimate of the cost of family violence on the corrections system, based on an estimate of the proportion of the average cost of incarcerating prisoners and supervising offenders for different offence types.

The data includes the following assumptions:

- Prison costs are based on total prisoners discharged (sentenced and unsentenced) in 2013-14 and 2014-15 and the average episode for specific offence cohorts
- Community corrections costs are based on the daily average supervised offender population (parole and court order, excluding community work only orders) in 2013-14 and 2014-15
- The following offence specific assumptions have been made
 - 90 per cent of prisoners/offenders with a most serious offence/charge of breach of intervention order are a family violence offender
 - 25 per cent¹ of prisoners/offenders with a most serious offence/charge of assault or homicide² are a family violence offender
 - 46 per cent of other prisoners/offenders have current or historical family violence offending, and five per cent of costs for these cohorts can be attributed to managing these issues
- The average order length for a CCS order is assumed to be 12 months³
- Costs are based on the Report on Government Services (ROGS) 2013-14 cost per prisoner and cost per offender per day (\$269.56 and \$26.97 respectively⁴)

The following caveats should also be considered:

- All assumptions regarding the proportion of prisoners/offenders/costs attributable to family violence is an estimate only

¹ Crime Statistics Agency data reports that 47 per cent (17,544 of 37,639) of assault and related offences recorded by Victoria Police in 2014 were related to family violence (<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/new-crime-statistics-highlight-family-violence-and-ice-use>). It is estimated that the proportion of family violence related offences for prisoners and community corrections offenders will be lower at 25 per cent as it will not include the more high volume, lower level assault offences captured by police.

² Assault data includes other offences against the person (threat, stalking and kidnapping) but excludes assault police. Homicide offences includes attempted homicide and manslaughter but excludes culpable driving causing death

³ This takes into account that some orders may not be completed due to breach and this will reduce the overall average order length.

⁴ 2014-15 ROGS data has not yet been published.

- Prison data relates to most serious offence or charge at the time of discharge - it is not possible to confirm whether the time in custody was solely related to this offence type or includes time served for other non-FV offences
- Data on CCS offender MSO is an estimate only based on the current most serious offence for supervised CCS orders (as at 22 October 2015).
- Data excludes capital costs, costs associated with incarceration and/or support for victims of family violence.

Table 1: Estimate of cost to the corrections system

	Prison costs (\$m)	Community corrections costs (\$m)	Total costs
2013/14	\$ 27.947	\$ 9.188	\$ 37.135
2014/15	\$ 39.527	\$ 10.453	\$ 49.980
2-Year total	\$ 67.474	\$ 19.641	\$ 87.115

As detailed above, this data is subject to a considerable number of limitations and gaps and should be interpreted with caution.