Port Phillip Prison is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Unit. This includes security and custodial functions, clinical interventions for individual well-being, delivering part of the offending behaviour program, as well as coordinating the daily schedule of activities, including education, drug and alcohol support, and prison industries.

Statewide Forensic Service co-facilitates a range of offending behaviour programs, provides expert advice, case coordination, and is the link between the disability and correctional systems.

A Structured Program

The Joint Treatment Program is a structured program, based on assessment, that will seek to address offending behaviour:

- Offending behaviour programs – cognitive skills, sex offender, violence, and drug and alcohol-related offending
- Skills deficits programs

Key Program features

The Joint Treatment Program is an evidence based approach to working with prisoners with a cognitive impairment. Some of the features of the Program include:

- Adapted offending behaviour programs that are accessible for people with a cognitive impairment.
- Dedicated Unit Supervisor, leading the multi-agency JTP.
- Mixing prisoners with a range of offence types.

Eligibility

Sentenced prisoners with a cognitive impairment (acquired brain injury or intellectual disability) who have agreed to undertake treatment and have been assessed as being suitable for adapted offending behaviour programs are eligible for the JTP. These prisoners are drawn from across the Victorian prison system.

For further Information

Port Phillip Prison: phone: 61 3 9217 7200

Offender Management Services, Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice: phone: 61 3 8684 6600

Email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au

Statewide Forensic Service, Department of Human Services phone: 61 3 9280 2730

Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice

www.justice.vic.gov.au

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The Joint Treatment Program

The Way Forward for Prisoners with a Cognitive Impairment

The Joint Treatment Program (JTP) is a 35 bed unit located at the maximum security Port Phillip Prison in Victoria which provides programs that address offending behaviour and social skills deficits for male prisoners with a cognitive impairment. The Program utilises a therapeutic approach, promoting the pro-social behaviour of offenders through the use of positive peer culture.

Introduction

Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice has adopted a differentiated approach to managing prisoners and offenders, including those with a disability.

The Corrections Victoria Disability Framework articulates a three year plan that reflects the commitment of the Department of Justice and Corrections Victoria to addressing the needs of prisoners and offenders with a disability. This includes those with a cognitive impairment, sensory and physical disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities. Corrections Victoria’s specialised response to prisoners with a cognitive impairment (acquired brain injury or intellectual disability) takes several forms.

One of these is the Joint Treatment Program at Port Phillip Prison. This Program is delivered in partnership by the Statewide Forensic Service (Department of Human Services), Port Phillip Prison (GSL (Australia) Pty Ltd), and Corrections Victoria (Department of Justice). It is a key initiative of the new integrated approach to reduce re-offending and focuses on male prisoners with a cognitive impairment.

What is the Joint Treatment Program?

The Joint Treatment Program (JTP) has been developed in recognition of the fact that prisoners with a cognitive impairment have complex needs that will affect their ability to successfully reintegrate into the community and that will require long term intervention.

Within the confines of a prison and recognising the primacy of security, the JTP is based on the principles of treatment communities and the Corrections Victoria Offender Management Framework. Through treatment, supported by a multi-disciplinary staff team, prisoners address their offending behaviour and assume some responsibility for the management of the JTP.

There are a range of practice principles which guide the JTP, including:

- ‘voluntariness’ – which requires prisoners agreeing to treatment as a criteria for entry into the JTP.
- ‘empowerment’ – within the limitations of the prison environment, prisoners participate in the day-to-day management of the JTP.

Why adopt this approach?

Local and international research shows that people with a cognitive impairment are more likely to re-offend upon being released from prison, than those who do not have a cognitive impairment. The needs of these offenders require attention to both their offending behaviours and skills deficits, something that differentiates them from prisoners who do not present with a disability.

The Joint Treatment Program offers prisoners the opportunity to turn their lives around, thereby enhancing community safety, through reducing recidivism and harm minimisation. Available evidence points to the effectiveness of a therapeutic environment, with positive improvements being realised in institutional conduct and recidivism rates.

Management of the Program

The three equal partners in the Joint Treatment Program have all participated in setting the long-term direction of the Marlborough Unit at Port Phillip Prison where the Joint Treatment Program is located:

Corrections Victoria co-facilitates the offending behaviour programs and provides both expert advice and behaviour management consultations.