



PAROLE BOARD

OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

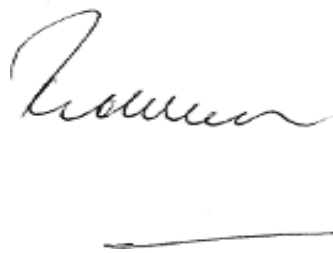
Acknowledgment of Country

The Parole Board of the Northern Territory acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout the Northern Territory and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to the Elders – past, present and emerging – for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the Territory.

The Hon. Chansey Paech, MLA

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

I am pleased to provide this report on the activities of the Parole Board of the Northern Territory during the year ending 31 December 2023, in compliance with section 3H of the *Parole Act 1971*.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rex Wild', with a horizontal line drawn below it.

Rex Wild AO KC

Chairperson

31 May 2024

Purpose of the Annual Report

The purpose of this report is twofold: first, to meet the statutory reporting requirements of section 3H of the *Parole Act 1971*; and second, to increase public awareness of the Parole Board's role in the criminal justice system.

The Parole Board of the Northern Territory makes important decisions that affect the freedom of individuals and impact upon victims, their families and the communities into which offenders are released.

Members of the Parole Board take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to affording the public every opportunity to understand the process by which the Board arrives at its decisions.



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INTRODUCTION

I was appointed by the Administrator as Chairperson of the Parole Board of the Northern Territory for a period of 5 years commencing on 8 October 2022. This report for the year ending 31 December 2023 is for the first full year during which the position has been filled by a lawyer who is not at the same time a sitting Supreme Court Justice, and who holds a permanent position.

This is the third Annual Report presented by me. During the 12 month period from 8 October 2021 I was the Acting Chairperson. I prepared the reports for both 2021 and 2022.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD

I said last year that the position of the Chairperson is an important and responsible one. It has until very recently in this, and other jurisdictions, been conducted by a Supreme Court Judge, or equivalent. It has a great number of duties and tasks inherent in the role that do not immediately reveal themselves. Although I believe the role can be carried out without a full-time incumbent, nevertheless there is the necessity for the Chairperson to be on-call on a daily basis to deal with urgent matters as they arise.

During the later part of 2022, a referral was made to the Remuneration Tribunal to consider the terms and conditions of the Chairperson. This was completed and effect given to it in early 2023, but to be operative as from 8 October 2022. The result is that the Chairperson's remuneration has been determined at 60% of the salary of the Chief Judge

of the Local Court, but without any provisions for leave or holiday pay.

In the early part of 2023, concerns in respect of the future independence of the Parole Board were addressed. These are still being worked through, with a future with the Board properly funded and resourced. It is obvious enough that funds across the whole of government are always limited. I said in last year's report there had not been a budget to date allocated to the Parole Board, except as an output under the Correctional Services output group. It had been necessary to beg – sometimes ineffectively – for funding for quite minor projects from Correctional Services. This was not meant as a personal criticism of the Commissioner or any of his staff. This Office then had excellent support from senior, and other, members of the Correctional Services staff, and the hitherto good relationships between the Board Secretariat and Corrections have been maintained throughout 2023. The same may be said in respect of the Department's Chief Executive Officer, Gemma Lake.

I am pleased to report that we are now well on the way to establish and consolidate the financial and other resources necessary to implement the practical and legal implications of the changes required by the legislative amendments to the position of the Chairperson and the Board. The support administratively from the Department and the encouragement from the Attorney-General, the Honourable Chansey Paech, has been welcome.



THE BOARD MEMBERS

The contribution made to the Northern Territory by the individual Board Members is quite outstanding. Without exception, they are dedicated and committed people. They are aware of the Board's responsibility for the interests and safety of the victims and the community, and the prisoners' prospects of rehabilitation. They do not lightly make decisions about the release of prisoners to parole. During the year, a number of Board Members extended their terms, some new appointments were made and two members retired. They were Mr Matthew Bonson and Dr Curtis Roman.

The continuing members of the Board as at 31 December 2023 are listed later in the report. The Board's composition includes the Commissioner of Correctional Services [or his nominees] and two members nominated by the Commissioner of Police. The former has attended Board Meetings regularly. His two nominees, from time to time, have been Deputy Commissioner David Thompson and Ms Rosanne Lague, both of whom have made strong contributions to Board discussions. The two Police representatives have been Superintendents David Moore and Gavin Kennedy. David has been an almost permanent member, providing valuable input. The new appointments during the year were Ms Diane Hood, Mr Peter Panquee and Mr Nigel Browne (as Community Members). Messrs Peter Panquee and Nigel Browne identified as Aboriginal members of the Board, as provided for in s 3B(1)(f) of the Parole Act 1971. We had struggled to formally appoint a new Victim's representative for various reasons, but were fortunate to have Ms Melinda Fleming appointed during the year to this category. The Board has been at full strength from early in 2023, with a total of 18 members.

As indicated above, there are presently only two members of the Board who identify as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It is intended in 2024, to request a legislative change to the Parole Act 1971 to increase Board numbers from 18 to 20. This will enable two extra appointments to be made, to persons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders background, without losing any of the present outstanding Board Members. No additional expense will be involved if such an increase is approved.

Recommendations made by the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the

Northern Territory that there be a separate Parole Board for youth offenders has not been implemented by Government. My Board continues to deal with such matters as they arise. There are not many such cases, but in any event the membership of the Board is well-placed to deal with them. They require very sensitive consideration and fortunately there are members of the Board with specific expertise in respect of youth needs.

THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretary of the Parole Board is a statutory position, providing administrative and strategic advice to the Chairperson and the Board. Josephine (Jo) Down has filled this important position since 2022. Jo has legal qualifications and experience with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and in other investigatory roles. Jo brings sound common sense and a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. She deals easily at all levels and presents a friendly face for the organisation.

The Secretariat comprises the Secretary, the Manager of the Parole Board Secretariat and two Parole Board Administrators. They are Brooke Harris and Trevor Riddle who are each first class contributors. The Manager, Michaela Beattie, is an outstanding team leader and under her, the team provides wonderful support to the Secretary and Chair, and thus to the Board. Early in the year, Michaela was recognised in the Commissioner's Annual Awards with a Commendation for Distinctive Devotion to Duty. Michaela took maternity leave from October 2023, and Firdiana Zulkifli has been appointed to fill the position on a temporary basis. She is already displaying sound and effective skills in this position and fitting in to the Team's pleasant working environment.

During the year, for the first time for some years, each member of the team held their position on a permanent basis.

CORRECTIONS STAFF

The relationship existing between the Board staff and the staff of Correctional Services has been very good. I particularly mention Tracy Luke, the Assistant Commissioner, in this regard. Her responses to the Board's needs have always been sympathetic and helpful. Her leadership and contributions to the work of Corrections was recognised during the year by the award of the Chief Minister's Public Sector Medal for Excellence.

Louise Ogden, General Manager has also been a strong supporter of the Parole Board, making presentations to the Board, and arranging and participating in visits to regional offices and the like.

The Board, and me as its Chair, have been very well served by the Probation and Parole Officers [PPO's]. We have met many of them, in actual visits to the Casuarina and Palmerston offices, and by meetings with the offices in Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Our Secretariat provides training for the PPOs. They are invited, from time to time, to attend Board Meetings at which they can see the manner and the care with which their reports and recommendations are considered.

BOARD'S WORKSHOP

In August, a one-day workshop was held in Darwin to discuss operational and other matters concerning the Board's activities. These days were attended by most Board Members and the Secretariat staff. Members from the Board who reside in Alice Springs were able to attend this meeting. The dates chosen was to coincide with the month's Board Meetings, which enabled members to meet face-to-face. A further day of Cultural Capacity building was also held, presented by Juanita Jones (Director Aboriginal Strategy and Coordination) and EVP members from Tiwi Islands and Yuendumu. This was very successful. Perhaps more time would have made it even more beneficial.

Although the modern style seems to be to use Microsoft Teams and other media for some conferences, it is my firm view – shared by the Board – that matters requiring close and frank personal sharing of views are best conducted face-to-face.

Excellent presentations were made to the Board during the day by senior officers and clinicians from the Department and from external service providers. The presentations are listed at the foot of this Introduction.



BOARD MEETINGS

Commencing from October, the first item on the Agenda for each meeting has been a short Acknowledgement of Country, which now appears in the following form: -

We acknowledge the Larrakia people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

The Parole Board meets as often as the Chairperson thinks necessary (s 3F(1) of the Act). The number of meetings each month is usually three. This has been discussed at Board level and the Members expressed a preference to continue that programming, to ensure consistency of Member attendance and participation and management of the individual workloads. From time to time, it has not been necessary to hold three meetings, however, and the Secretariat handles that flexibly. For the years 2020 and 2021, no meeting was held in December. In each of 2022 and 2023, a meeting was held in December to deal with any urgent pre-Christmas parole issues. This was at the specific request of the Commissioner of Correctional Services and his senior management. In addition to the general monthly Board meetings, each quarter a meeting is devoted to applications, or other issues, relating to Lifers.

In applications in respect of Lifers, a quorum is required of the Chairperson and seven other members. Decisions require a unanimous vote. All other matters need a quorum of the Chairperson and at least three other members. The decision may be by majority. As a matter of record, no decision made during the 2023 necessitated a formal vote. Board decisions were always reached, after discussion, unanimously.

For each meeting, Members are asked to present to the Board one or more of the parole applications then before it which contain a recommendation for release. In this way, Members become involved in that matter and highlight the issues of concern and interest. Without intending to be patronising, it helps each Member of the Board to have ownership of the applications before the Board. The Members are asked to provide a succinct overview and summary of the allocated matter, and whether they endorse or not the recommendation made by the PPO.

From time to time, the Board has received specific presentations from senior clinicians within Corrections and from rehabilitation residential agencies as to matters of interest. As indicated earlier, PPOs and other Corrections management



have been invited to attend Board Meetings to see how they are conducted.

The Board was also able to conduct its November Meetings in Alice Springs. This enabled members to visit the Alice Springs Correctional Centre and a number of the providers operating in the Centre. Once again, the Corrections staff made the Chair and Board Members welcome, and provided transport during the days' visits. The Members were particularly impressed with the metal work within the Industry area operated by the prisoners.

GAOL VISITS

The Chair and Secretary have visited the Correctional Facility at Holtze on a number of occasions, to inspect the facilities in both the men's and women's sections, and to see some of the programmes in action.

Specifically, we attended a regular meeting of the 100hour *Sex Offender Treatment Programme* [SOTP] and the subsequent Graduation by that group, and a session of *RAGE – Recognising Anger, Gaining Empowerment*. We thought the quality of the presentation in the course was very high, and the response of the participants generally demonstrated an awareness of the issues and a determination to get the benefits from the programme. We intend to continue to visit the Holtze facility and experience other programmes.

As already mentioned, Board members were able to visit the Alice Springs Correction Centre in November. The Elders programme is a very valuable one, and we have been invited to attend one or more of the regular visits by Elders to meet with prisoners. During 2022, and again in 2023, efforts to take advantage of these offers were thwarted by COVID and some administrative hiccups. As a related initiative, it was also intended during 2023 that the Chair would visit the Prison on a regular basis and encourage prisoners to apply for (and, thereafter, comply with the terms of) parole. It was hoped thereby to raise the awareness of the Parole Board and its interest in advancing prisoners' release and successful rehabilitation. That proposal was not unfortunately given effect to as contemplated, but remains as an initiative to be pursued.

REHABILITATION CENTRES

The Chair and/or Secretary visited a number of the centres providing rehabilitation accommodation and facilities during the year. This is very helpful in providing insight into what those providers can offer and the conditions pursuant to

which the parolees are housed and the nature of the providers' expectations as to behavioural standards, curfews and the like. Visits had already been made to a number of the Darwin providers in 2022. The centres visited were:-

- Mission Australia Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Service [MARRTS], Berrimah
- Salvation Army Sunrise Centre, Berrimah
- Foundation of Rehabilitation with Aboriginal Alcohol Related Difficulties [FORWAARD], Stuart Park.

During 2023, we have been able to visit other providers, including those operating in the regional centres. The various centres and Work Camps visited were:-

- Don Dale Youth Detention Centre [DDYDC]
- Datjala Work Camp, Nhulunbuy
- Barkly Work Camp, Tennant Creek
- Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group [BRADAAG], Tennant Creek
- Bail Open House, Darwin City
- Darwin Police Precinct Watch House
- Alice Springs Correctional Centre
- BushMob Aboriginal Corporation, Alice Springs
- Drug and Alcohol Services Australia [DASA], Alice Springs
- Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit Inc. [CAAAPU], Alice Springs
- CatholicCareNT, Wurrumiyanga
- Wurrumiyanga Police Station
- Venndale Residential Rehabilitation, Katherine



CONSULTATIONS

As I said earlier, some of the activities of the Board, the Chair and the Secretariat go beyond what might be expected. The Parole Board is regularly asked to comment on legislative changes and to express informed views about the best practices that should be adopted by the Corrections Service in respect of Indigenous and

other prisoners. Meetings have been held during the year with, amongst others, the following organisation and persons to discuss issues of common or similar interest.

- ARDS Research in relation to legislative review of the *Parole Act 1971*
- Code of Conduct seminar
- Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Workshop
- Closing the Gap training
- Meeting with CEO of NDIA
- Chairperson's Presentation at NAAJA Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (NTLAC) Conference
- Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)
- Secretariat delivery of training to YORETs and PPOs
- Elders Visiting Program Meeting at Head Office
- Level of Service / Risk, Need, Responsivity (LS/RNR) Training
- Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) at the Complex Behaviour Unit (CBU)
- RAGE Program

FUTURE PROJECTS

A steering committee had been established with the Chairperson of the Parole Board chairing it to review the Commit process and the sanctions matrix. This process did not progress meaningfully in 2023, but it is hoped now that the permanence of the Chairperson's position has been finalised, that this and other projects will proceed.

Similarly, a process to determine new and improved, but simplified, parole conditions is to be finalised in 2024, with further consultation with stakeholders having been undertaken in 2023.

It is hoped that further consideration will be given by those advising Government to amending the Parole Act 1971 to make the loss of street time discretionary and, hopefully, this might see fruition in 2024. This is discussed in detail later in this Introduction.

It was recommended in the 2021 Annual report that the Preparation of Prisoners for Parole Steering Committee should be revitalised. It hasn't been found necessary to reconvene this Committee. The work envisaged for it partly arose because the previous Chairperson of the Board was a Justice of the Court and removed from the day-to-day operations of Corrections. This is no longer the case with the incumbent and the Secretariat having offices within the Corrections establishment. There is almost daily contact between the relevant stakeholders with de facto

and impromptu committee meetings being conducted as required.

SOME GENERAL COMMENTS

Some of the comments below appeared in last year's report.

The prison system is entirely overburdened in the NT. By the end of the year, prisoners' numbers were reaching new highs almost every week. Prisoners were sleeping on mattresses on the floor. Prisoners were located in station cells.

There continued to be a record number, and proportion, of prisoners on remand. Lawyers do not appear to be able to settle issues quickly enough. Corrections ask the Defenders to expedite cases, but they say that the Prosecutors are slow to provide briefs and slow to respond to offers to resolve matters. These are not matters on which the Parole Board can assist, but the problem is palpable.

Bail is difficult to obtain where offenders have long histories and Courts are reluctant to allow them free, pending hearings, where they have violent records and no guaranteed accommodation while on bail. Many of them are long-grassers and or highly mobile with limited safe or secure accommodation options. It has been suggested that if there were supported bail accommodation, then bail might be a reasonable option. An expensive alternative, perhaps, but still cheaper than remand gaol. It should be remembered that prisoners cannot start any rehabilitation programmes or schemes while they remain unsentenced. Open House facilities have since been funded to provide accommodation for bailed persons.

It is suggested that some better form of repatriation of prisoners, at the completion of their time in custody, would reduce the recidivism rates. Prisoners are released - in increasing numbers without having any rehabilitation - without any prospects, accommodation or cash. They are highly likely to land at or return to insecure and high risk living environments. They will almost immediately be back in trouble. Although it is recognised that it is the responsibility of the parolee to comply with his conditions of release, it would be enormously beneficial at a time when they are most vulnerable to temptation or pressure, for the repatriation to be seamless.

We have had examples where prisoners are released from Holtze and driven by prison officers to, say, the Palmerston Bus Exchange. Here they are left to catch their bus to say, Katherine. Correction Officers are on standby in Katherine to



greet the parolees on arrival. But they don't make it. They never get on the bus! A more efficient method of releasing prisoners, who have become parolees and are starting with their ongoing rehabilitation, needs to be established. If a plane or bus journey is necessary, it would appear to be crucial to have the parolee actually put on the bus or plane, and not just left at the stop or airport.

Some scheme to return these people to their home country speedily and effectively should be developed or re-introduced.

Safe sleeping places for at risk people - particularly women - should be provided. This is an obvious corollary to the last paragraph. Currently there is a proposal in Alice Springs for 24 hour accommodation to which young itinerants can be referred. Getting the naughty kids off the street and providing shelter and a meal should be a priority. Many of these children are escaping threatening situations at their principal home, and of course are creating havoc.

STREET TIME

Street time is the term given to the period spent by a parolee on parole in the community. It is a significant issue and justifies separate and close analysis.

It was discussed in the Report of the Australian Law Reform Commission delivered in December 2017, *Pathways to Justice – An Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

In submissions to the Inquiry, reference was made to the operation of some parole revocation schemes in Australian jurisdictions that required time served on parole to be served again in prison if parole is revoked. At that time, the Northern Territory was said to be one of these, along with the ACT, Tasmania and Victoria.

The ALRC concluded:-

Statutory provisions that stipulate that time spent on parole does not count as time served if the parolee returns to prison due to a breach can greatly increase a person's time under sentence. Accordingly, it can act as a disincentive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people – who can find compliance with standard conditions difficult – to apply for parole. The ALRC recommends the immediate abolition of the relevant provisions, and the adoption of regimes that count time on parole as time served if parole is revoked. [Para 123]

The Northern Territory *Parole Act 1971* provides, vide s 13B and s 14, that time spent in the community on parole is not counted as part of the served sentence if the parole is subsequently revoked. The prisoner returns to prison and must serve the whole of the original term of imprisonment. The effect is that the prisoner may remain under sentence for many months, even a year or more, beyond the original full time date of the sentence. This result is one of the reasons given for prisoners not applying for and taking parole if and when it is otherwise available.

The NT had introduced the COMMIT protocol during the course of the ALRC Inquiry, by amendments to the Parole Act passed in August 2017. Although the COMMIT scheme, with its use of Sanctions rather than outright revocation, sought to decrease the severity of the existing scheme, it did not credit street time as against the total sentence to be served.

Every Australian jurisdiction, with the exception of the NT, now has some form of credit for street time (by whatever name it is described).

The Victorian legislation has an inbuilt flexibility. The *Corrections Act 1986* (Vic) s 77B(2)(b) provides:-

Any period during which the parole order was in force is not to be regarded as time served in respect of the prison sentence unless a direction under section 77C applies.

Section 77C provides:-

The Board may direct that some or all of the period during which a parole order that is cancelled or taken to be cancelled was in force is to be regarded as time served in respect of the prison sentence.

The Annual Report of the Victorian Adult Parole Board (2021-22) describes the manner in which this direction is determined.

Time to Count

The Board may direct that some or all of the period during which a parole order that is cancelled or taken to be cancelled was in force is to be regarded as time served in respect of the prison sentence.

When a prisoner's parole is cancelled, none of the time that the prisoner spent in the community on parole is counted towards their sentence unless the Board directs that some or all of it should be counted.

For every parole cancellation, the Board will consider whether to direct any time to count after the prisoner has returned to custody.

In making this decision, the Board will consider the prisoner's performance over the whole time they were on parole. For example, a prisoner may have made progress while on parole, but relapsed into drug use, resulting in cancellation.

If a prisoner becomes concerned that their parole may be cancelled, the prospect of time to count can motivate the prisoner to comply with parole conditions, knowing that the effort they have put in and the progress that they have made over an extended period will be recognised and will not be lost even if their parole is eventually cancelled.

Clearly enough, because of the Board's discretion, street time in Victoria was not an automatic allowance. However, as the legislation and protocol has an inbuilt discretion, it may be more palatable to law and order proponents – on both sides of politics – for introduction in the NT.

There is no doubt the NT position on street time exacerbates the problem with gaol numbers. Significantly, of course, the NT has the greatest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders offenders of all Australian jurisdictions.

No doubt, the advantages of legislating for discretionary loss of street time will be confronted with political issues. However, the Northern Territory is now the only jurisdiction with a street time regime of a kind regarded by the ALRC as inappropriate.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF STREET TIME

The following statistics calculated over the last 19 months illustrate the actual additional time spent in custody by those Territory prisoners who have lost street time. It assumes, for the sake of argument, that none of them would lose the benefit of that time by reason of a negative exercise of Board discretion.

- In 2022, 98 Parole Orders were revoked after commencement;
- For those 98 parolees, the total street time not credited totals 33 years, 4 months and 5 days [12,172 days].

If the average cost to the community of imprisoning a prisoner for one day is, say \$330, then the cost to the community of the non-credited street time in 2022 was \$4,016,760.

Actually, double expenditure was incurred in respect of these parolees. For each day they were on parole, a cost of \$62.35 was already outlaid by Corrections in providing appropriate monitoring, etc.

- In 2023, 116 Parole Orders were revoked after commencement.
- For those 116 parolees, the street time not credited totals 36 years, 10 months and 15 days [13,469 days]. Using the same daily cost, as above, that amounts to \$4,444,770.

The cost to the community of not allowing street time on returning prisoners to gaol in the years 2022 and 2023 is remarkably consistent.

2022...\$4,016,760

2023...\$4,444,770

Apart from the obvious cost in providing the necessary infrastructure and services for the returned prisoners, there is the actual number itself. That is, approximately 100 extra prisoners in each year, inflating the problems presently being experienced in the Corrections space.

From the perspective of the NT Parole Board, it is also important to consider the methods by which any applications for the discretionary allowance might be administered. Should the decisions be made by the Board's Chairperson or by the Board itself? Should the ex-parolee be entitled to a hearing of some kind? Are any structural changes needed to the Board's establishment?

For the reasons discussed above, the Parole Board recommends that early consideration be given to amending the *Parole Act* to remove the strictures imposed by s 13B and s 14.

AN OFFENDER'S BACKGROUND AND THE PAROLE REPORT

A long-serving, now retired Member of the Parole Board, John Flynn, suggested that he could write – or at least anticipate – 90% of what would appear in an individual's Parole Report. That is, without knowing anything beforehand of the offender's residence, family or the nature of the offending. All these characteristics would be, he said, very similar for all those applicants for parole whom were to be considered by the Board each month. John had served on the Board for 45 years or so. I have been involved for less than 3 years, but on my observations to date completely agree with him.

With this in mind, the Secretariat (through Manager, Firdiana Zulkifli) will interrogate the Parole Reports for, say, a period of 12 months and provide a statistical analysis of the material contained in them. I have observed, from the outset, the wealth of material contained in these reports –which can be up to 12 pages long. This material should be of assistance to those seeking



to understand the nature of criminal behaviour in the Northern Territory. This, in turn, would better inform those hoping to stem the tide of crime and ensure the billions of dollars earmarked for crime and punishment is not allocated completely to catch-up or band aid solutions or incarceration.

The pro-forma or template for Parole Reports, as used by PPOs in preparing these for the Board, is comprehensive. As well as containing instructions as to the sources of information to be accessed, it contains specific headings (with examples in some cases) under which material is to be included. In a first application, those matters which might be described as detailing the applicant's background will be:-

- social history
- schooling and education
- language
- culture/religious
- relationships/family/victims
- employment
- finances/support
- medical/mental health
- substance abuse
- offending history
- response to supervision
- programmes/counselling

Other matters, dealing with the present and proposed future circumstances are also considered in the Reports to assist the Board in deciding whether to release the offender to parole. But it is an analysis of the background features of each applicant which will assist in identifying where the emphasis needs to be given in crime prevention. The revolving gate syndrome is not working in 2023; nor has it ever!

We have called in professional assistance from the Criminal Justice Research Unit of the Department in order that we can best analyse the information contained in the Reports and reduce them to meaningful assessments of the individual sources of criminal behaviour.

It is hoped that in 2024 some useful statements can be made.

APPLICATIONS AND/OR DEFERRALS

New sentencing provisions were expected to come into operation on 22 January 2024 (subsequently postponed to 25 March 2024). They will clearly impact on the operations and decisions of the Parole Board. One of the issues they will confront is the present problem of high percentages of remand prisoners in the prisons. This artificially exaggerates the numbers of

persons in incarceration. By the end of the year, it was running at about 43% of prisoners as unconvicted/on remand.

There have been pressures on the numbers of prisoners being made the subject of completed applications before the Board. Arguably, too many matters are being deferred at Meetings. Often, the explanation given is that assessments for Residential Rehabilitation have not been completed. Separately, because remanded prisoners, when sentenced, have starting dates for their sentences back-dated, the non-parole period has expired by or shortly after the date of sentence. This gives PPOs little time to work with them towards a successful release date. These cases get deferred. Nor is there the opportunity to complete necessary programmes before release.

The trend was seen for example in the Board meetings for November; over the three nights, 72 cases were listed for application or supplementary application. Of these, 25 were granted (a small percentage) and 25 were deferred (much too high), 16 were refused parole and 6 declined the opportunity of parole. The trend, which has been growing in recent months, may be expected to continue with the new regime starting in 2024.

If the essence of the Parole Board's work is to get prisoners released successfully, before the expiration of their full sentence, then it is failing to reach a satisfactory pass-mark in that endeavour.

Hopefully, the new provisions might improve the ratio of convicted prisoners to those on remand.

STATISTICS

An analysis of parole applications, grants of parole, revocations and the like appears in the body of the Report. The table below confirms that numbers in NT prisons have indeed increased significantly during the last year. This table does not discriminate between sentenced prisoners and those on remand awaiting disposition in the courts. Those figures will be available in other reports, but it seems clear that remand prisoners take up an inordinately large percentage of the total. This suggests some urgent attention needs to be given to bringing matters to completion in the courts. On the other hand, it may well be that pressures on the courts – by legislation or otherwise – to refuse bail in more cases will exacerbate the problem.

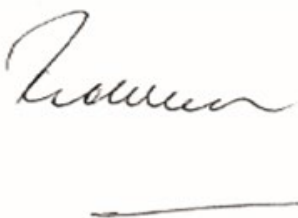
There is a significant increase in the numbers of male prisoners – in particular - but the female increase is also striking.

Prison numbers as at 31 December	2022	2023	% Change
Total	2037	2238	9.4%
Adult Male	1882	2114	11.6%
Adult Female	115	24	7.5%
Youth	40	46	13.9%

CONCLUSION

I look forward to working with the Members of the Board and its Secretariat in 2024. It is a dedicated group of individuals, and the administrative support provided to the Board is really first class. We are a happy team, enjoying good comradeship and working well together.

Hopefully, we will continue the excellent contributions made by our predecessors and assist in the development of strategies that will promote the successful release of prisoners.



Rex Wild AO KC
Chairperson





PRESENTATIONS TO PAROLE BOARD WORKSHOP AUGUST 2023

- Welcome to Country – Nigel Browne and Introduction to Workshop – Rex Wild, Chair.
- Community Corrections overview including understanding the role of PPOs, the challenges and barriers in preparing a parole application - Louise Ogden, General Manager of Community Corrections.
- Sentencing Reform – Tracy Luke, Assistant Commissioner of Community Corrections and Erin McAuley, Senior Policy Lawyer.
- Level of Service/Risk Need Responsivity (LS/RNR) - Alana Wood, Senior Clinician (Forensic Psychologist) and Rachael McCallum, Senior Training Officer.
- COMMIT Protocol / Sanctions Matrix – Rex Wild
 - General discussion on members' observations of COMMIT parole.
 - Board considered it may be useful for formal evaluation of the regime, further to the internal evaluation completed in 2021.
 - Board agreed that the current matrix is convoluted and difficult to interpret; however, it is preference to have an alternative action as opposed to only a warning letter or revocation of parole, especially noting there is no recognition of 'street time'.
 - Chairperson acknowledged some flexibility in the duration and application of sanctions is his preference; though acknowledges this is in contrast to the essential factors of the program noting it is based on swift, certain, fair principles. CC have also recently been reminded of their obligation to report all breaches within 72 hours due to observed of practice slip.
 - Chairperson to continue his consideration of the COMMIT program and protocol and provide an update to members in due course.
- Responsibility of members – Jayne Fairington, Board Remuneration and Projects Officer.
- FASD Offenders, Youth Programs in custody and community, including education - Julianne Davis, Executive Director Clinical Practice and Professional Services TFHC, Amanda Hubber, Senior Director Student Wellbeing, Inclusion Programs and Services, DoE, Sasha Dennis, General Manager,

Youth Justice TFHC, Rob Steer, Executive Director Youth Justice Operations TFHC.

- Parole Board Member Discussion.



AT MONTHLY MEETINGS

- March 2023 – Rebecca Dunbar, Coordinator Serious Sex Offenders

PROFILE

The Parole Board of the Northern Territory (the Board) is an independent statutory body established under section 3A of the *Parole Act 1971*. The Board consists of 18 members who act independently of political and bureaucratic influence to make decisions about the parole of prisoners in the best interests of the community as a whole, including the offender and the victim.

Parole is an important element of the criminal justice system as it allows prisoners to serve the balance of their sentence of imprisonment in the community, under supervision and on very strict conditions. The purpose of parole is to release prisoners into the community in a manner that provides support and increases their chances of becoming members of the community who are free of a criminal lifestyle.

The Board may:

1. grant a prisoner release on parole;
2. deny a prisoner release on parole;
3. defer consideration of a prisoner's application for parole until a later date;
4. amend or vary a parole order;

The Chairperson may:

1. amend or vary a parole order;
2. order a prisoner serve a prison sanction for non-compliance with their order;
3. revoke a parole order.

The Board makes decisions in relation to both adult and youth offenders and its jurisdiction extends to prisoners serving a sentence of life imprisonment for the crime of murder.

In addition to the standard conditions of parole, the Board has the power to impose conditions which it believes are necessary to support the offender and prevent reoffending. It may also make recommendations to the Chairperson about the revocation of parole for either:

- a breach of a condition of parole; or
- offending committed by the parolee while on parole.

Decisions of the Board by their very nature have the capacity to impact not only on individuals but on the broader community. Members of the Board are aware of the trust that is placed in them and take their responsibilities seriously.

Board members are supported by the Parole Board Secretariat and operational and administrative staff within Northern Territory Correctional Services (NTCS).

Parole Board Members

Section 3B(1) of the Parole Act 1971 stipulates that the Board must have 18 members who are to be:

- (a) a lawyer who has been admitted to the legal profession for at least 10 years; and
- (b) the Commissioner of Correctional Services; and
- (c) 2 police officers nominated by the Commissioner of Police; and
- (d) 2 persons, each of whom is –
 - (i) a medical practitioner; or
 - (ii) a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law to practise in the psychology profession (other than as a student); and
- (e) 2 persons, each of whom represents the interests of victims of crime; and
- (f) 10 persons who reflect, as closely as possible, the composition of the community at large and include women and Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.

Members described in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) are appointed by the Administrator for three year terms, are eligible for reappointment, and may resign their membership in writing to the Minister.

In the absence of a member appointed under subsections (a), (d), (e) or (f), the Minister may appoint a person to act as a member of the Board. In 2022, the Minister did not appoint any acting members to the Board.

The Chairperson of the Board has:

- responsibility for resolving questions of law; and
- a casting vote where votes are equal on questions to be determined by a majority of votes.

In 2022, the Board was chaired by Mr Rex Wild AO KC. Mr Wild had been Acting Chairperson from October 2021, until his permanent appointment for a five year term on 8 October 2022.

The NT Police was represented by:

Member Name and Rank	No. of Meetings
Superintendent David Moore	31
Superintendent Gavin Kennedy	7



As at 31 December 2023, membership of the Board comprised:

Name	Position	Ministerial Appointment
Mr Rex Wild AO KC	Chairperson	8/10/2022
Mr Matthew Varley	Commissioner	Ex officio
Mr David Moore	Police Representative	Ex officio
Mr Gavin Kennedy	Police Representative	Ex officio
Ms Susan Lowry	Victim Representative	11/02/2022
Ms Melinda Jane Fleming	Victim Representative	02/03/2023
Dr Leonard George Notaras	Community Member	29/06/2022
Mr Ross Coburn	Community Member	29/11/2023
Ms Jo-Anne Sivyer	Community Member	15/10/2022
Ms Patricia Jane Lloyd	Community Member	14/05/2023
Mr Mark Anthony Coffey	Community Member	14/05/2023
Ms Frances Mary Kilgariff	Community Member	16/07/2023
Ms Carole Margaret Taylor	Community Member	03/08/2022
Ms Diane Hood	Community Member	02/03/2023
Mr Nigel James Browne	Community Member	02/03/2023
Mr Peter Panquee	Community Member	27/07/2023
Professor Mitchell Byrne	Psychologist Member	04/04/2022
Ms Rowena Jane Friend	Psychologist Member	04/04/2022

The following members resigned in 2023:

Mr Matthew Bonson – effective 2 March 2023

Dr Curtis Roman – effective 19 May 2023

Statistics at a Glance

	2021*	2022	2023
Number of matters before the Parole Board	1326	1281	1437
Number of distinct prisoners before the Parole Board	644	663	725
Number of initial parole applications	405	464	480
Number of parole applications granted	228	242	254
Number of parole applications refused	180	152	163
Number of parole applications where prisoners declined parole	33	53	45
Number of parole orders revoked	100	109	129

Secretary

The Secretary of the Parole Board is a statutory role providing administrative support and strategic advice to the Board. The Secretary is not a member of the Board.

In July 2022, Ms Josephine Down was appointed as Secretary of the Parole Board. Ms Down has a strong legal background with over 20 years' experience working in the legal profession. Ms Down holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) and was admitted to practice as a legal practitioner of the Supreme Court of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. She has held roles including Senior Client Services Manager with the division of Licensing (AGD); Lecturer and Tutor in School of Law, Charles Darwin University; Practice Manager / Crown Prosecutor / Prosecutor, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; and Solicitor.



Parole Board Secretariat

The Parole Board Secretariat is comprised of the Manager of the Parole Board Secretariat (the Manager) and two Parole Board Administrators.

The Manager provides high level assistance, advice, strategic support and quality control to the Secretary, Chairperson and the Board. The Manager also oversees the Parole Board Administrator positions.

The Parole Board Administrators have the primary responsibility for coordinating and providing all administrative support for the monthly meetings of the Board.

The work of the Parole Board Secretariat continues to increase as a result of:

- new practices designed to enhance the provision of procedural fairness and improve the decision making of the Board especially with regard to higher needs offenders;
- initiatives being developed to encourage and support prisoners apply for parole;
- the increasing emphasis on the continuing education of Board members; and
- the COMMIT sanctions regime.

Probation and Parole Officers

The functions of probation and parole officers under section 3R of the *Parole Act 1971* are to:

- supervise persons released on parole as assigned by the Parole Board;
- prepare reports as required by the Parole Board;
- maintain case records and statistics as required by the Parole Board;



- carry out the directions of the Parole Board in relation to a parole order;
- investigate and make reports to the Parole Board on the employment and place of living available to each person applying for release on parole; and
- perform such other duties as directed by the Parole Board or the Chairperson.

Probation and parole officers commence working with a prisoner 8 months before they become eligible for parole. Probation and parole officers commence working with lifers 24 months before they become eligible for parole.

During this time the probation and parole officer works closely with the prisoners, their family, communities, service providers and victims to ensure that Board members are provided with comprehensive, timely and reliable information.

UNDERSTANDING PAROLE

Authority to release

The *Sentencing Act 1995* provides that a sentencing court may fix a non-parole period (NPP) for an offender who is sentenced to a term of imprisonment of at least 12 months.

The NPP set by the sentencing court stipulates the minimum time a prisoner must serve in custody before being eligible for release on parole. Contrary to other Australian jurisdictions, a prisoner does not have a right to be released on parole and is not automatically granted parole on the expiry of their NPP.

The Board has full authority to decide if and when a prisoner is to be released on parole after the expiry of the NPP. The Board may decide a prisoner is not to be granted parole and should serve the whole of their sentence in prison.

Community Supervision

Unless parole is revoked prior to release, a prisoner who is released on parole is supervised in the community by a probation and parole officer for the balance of the term of the prisoner's sentence of imprisonment. The prisoner is supervised in accordance with conditions fixed by the Board. The purpose of parole is to support and assist the prisoner re-integrate into the community and live a lawful life.

Variation of parole conditions

Section 5B of the *Parole Act 1971* provides the Chairperson with the authority to amend a parole order by varying, adding or revoking one or more

conditions at any time before the expiration of the order.

Under section 5B(2) the variation does not take effect until the notice of the variation is given to the parolee.

Parole conditions may be varied or revoked due to the extent to which the parolee has succeeded in rehabilitating themselves in the community.

Ordering of sanctions – COMMIT Parole

In 2017, the *Parole Act 1971* was amended to allow for swift, certain and proportionate sanctions to be imposed for acts of non-compliance with parole conditions while supporting a parolee through their order and transition into the community. The scheme is referred to as COMMIT parole and is Compliance Management or Incarceration in the Territory. The aims of COMMIT parole are to:

- reduce prisoner numbers by increasing the number of community based offenders;
- reduce the time offenders spend in prison and in the corrections system;
- reduce the rate of reoffending;
- change the behaviour of offenders so they are capable and willing to make appropriate life choices and lead a lawful life;
- help parolees through their orders rather than see a revocation of parole and the loss of street time;
- improve offender compliance; and
- reduce drug and alcohol misuse.

Generally speaking, COMMIT parole is considered for higher risk offenders who:

1. have a history of non-compliance with conditions of supervision in the community;
2. substance misuse; and
3. been convicted of a violent offence.

The effect of COMMIT parole is to impose a short yet certain sanction (2 to 30 days in custody) for a breach (or 'poor choice') immediately after the violation is detected.¹

A parolee cannot ignore the cost of a parole order breach today if he or she is in prison tomorrow, particularly if that is going to happen every time there is a breach of parole. However, once the sanction is served the parolee is released to continue working with his or her probation and parole officer.

Delivering relatively modest sanctions in a certain, swift and consistent manner is likely to be more effective than unexpectedly 'lowering the boom' and revoking parole after numerous warnings.

It is now widely recognised that in order for a sanction to have a deterrent effect on breach behaviour, an offender must:

- realise there is a sanction for the act being contemplated;
- know the sanction that is to be imposed;
- take into account the risk of incurring the sanction when choosing to engage in breach behaviour/s;
- believe there is a real likelihood of being caught;
- believe the sanction will be applied; and
- be willing (and able) to alter their choice to offend in light of the sanction.

For deterrence to work effectively, the conditions above must be satisfied.

Knowledge of penalties logically precedes perceptions of certainty and severity of penalties. For deterrence to influence the decision-making process, the offender must have knowledge of the punishment for the breach and the likelihood of it being imposed so an informed choice is made about whether or not to engage in that behaviour.

COMMIT parole is solution focussed. It involves the cooperation of the parolee, probation and parole officers, through-care workers, the police, prosecutions and the Local Court to ensure that any parole violation is dealt with swiftly.

The COMMIT Sanction Matrix is published in the Government Gazette and can also be accessed from the Parole Board website:

<https://paroleboard.nt.gov.au/>

In 2021, the COMMIT parole program underwent an evaluation by the Criminal Justice Research and Statistics Unit. The evaluation looked at a cohort of 108 individuals who entered into the COMMIT program between October 2017 to October 2019. The evaluation analysed revocation data relating to the 108 COMMIT parolees noting the aim of COMMIT parole was to assist high-risk offender's successfully complete parole without being revoked. The report focused on whether COMMIT is more effective at assisting community based offenders to complete their parole order without being revoked than non-COMMIT supervision.

Exactly half of the 108 COMMIT participants from October 2017 to October 2019 had their parole revoked, with a median time to revocation of 428 days. At present, it does not appear that the

COMMIT program is more successful at assisting offenders to successfully complete their parole orders without being revoked and returning to custody. For this to occur, the likelihood of COMMIT parolees being revoked for conditional breaches would need to be substantially reduced.

It is possible that if COMMIT participants are subject to more intense monitoring, for example in the form of more frequent drug testing, then their frequency of breaches is simply a consequence of this. However, it is also possible that COMMIT participants have a higher frequency and/or seriousness of breaches under a similar intensity of supervision to non-COMMIT parole, or that authorities are responding more harshly to breaches by COMMIT parolees.

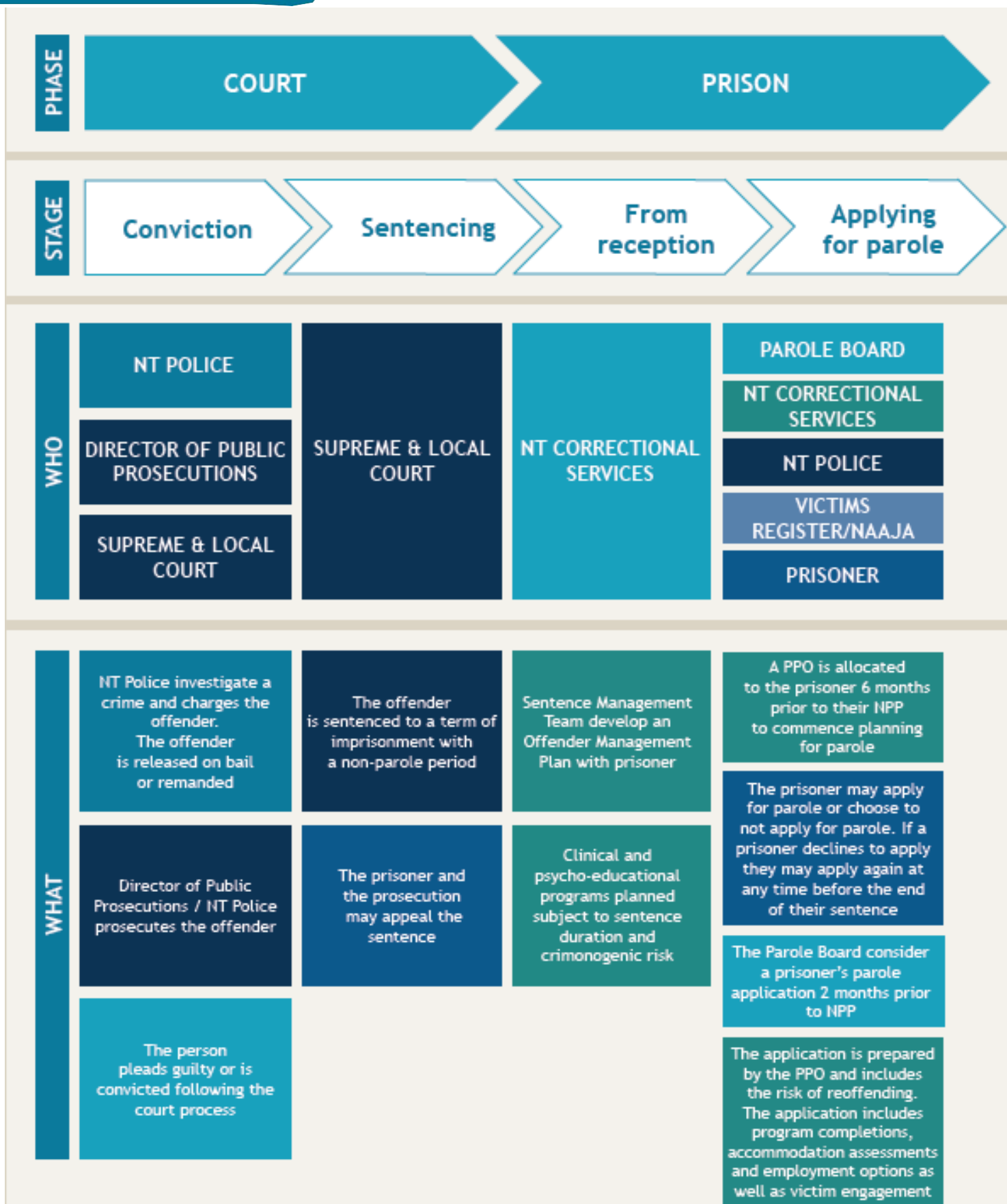
Further research is required to determine the cause of revocations due to conditional breaches among COMMIT participants, and appropriate policy responses developed on this basis.

The full version of the evaluation can be found here:

https://justice.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1009733/COMMIT-Parole-An-analysis-of-program-effectiveness-in-assisting-offender-parole-completion-PDF.PDF

A steering committee had been established with the Chairperson of the Parole Board chairing the committee to review the COMMIT process and the sanctions matrix. This review has not been progressed to date; however it is planned for 2024.

Noting that the Chairperson retains the authority to revoke parole.



PAROLE

Deciding to grant, deny
or defer parole

Parole Outcome

PAROLE BOARD

PAROLE BOARD

NT CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

NT POLICE

VICTIMS REGISTER/NAAJA

PRISONER

The Parole Board considers the prisoner's parole application or notes that the prisoner declined to be considered. Community safety is the paramount consideration for the Parole Board

The prisoner is supervised by PPO

PPO provides progress reports to the Board on a scheduled and adhoc basis to keep the Board informed on prisoner's reintegration and progress on parole

Generally speaking, the Board assesses the application on the papers. To assist with its decision for higher risk offenders the Board may interview the prisoner or PPO. The Board also takes into account victim submissions

Through case management and compliance checks PPO notifies the Board about a prisoner's breach of conditions or escalating risk

The Board decides to grant or deny parole to the prisoner or defer consideration for additional information. The Board may impose the sanction regime (COMMIT parole) as a condition of the parole order

If police have reasonable belief that a prisoner has breached certain conditions they can arrest the prisoner and bring the prisoner before the Court

The Chairperson may issue a warning or issue a sanction (if subject to COMMIT parole), vary the conditions, or revoke parole and return to prison

The Board sets targeted parole conditions to manage the prisoner's ongoing needs in the community

The Chairperson considers all breaches of parole and risk escalation

The prisoner completes their parole

If a prisoner's parole is revoked the prisoner can re-apply for parole. The prisoner does not get any credit for 'street time'



WHAT PRISONERS SAY TO THE PAROLE BOARD WHEN APPLYING FOR PAROLE

No to drugs
Trust Enough
Play sport is enough
Achieve for my kids
Take full responsibility
Will come together
Health
See the error of my ways
Friends
You will not see me again
Stable routine
Very sorry
Play sport
Keep away from people
Job
Family
Be with my kids
Support my family
Learn to say no
No to violence
Job
Trust
Do the right thing
Residential rehabilitation
Self-worth
Strong minded
Family
Be with my kids
Support my family
Values
Learn to say no
Stay out of trouble
No to drugs
Health
Persistence
Support my family
My mum will be my support
Job
Will come together
Work towards positives
Get employment
Do some study
Want to get back to family and community
No to violence
Persistence
Trust
Connections can break down

WHY PRISONERS DECLINE PAROLE

Will do my full time
Too many conditions
No humbug
Just want to be free
Breach
Too hard
Got a job and money

PAROLE PROCESS

Preparing for parole takes time and careful consideration over many months, if not years, by many people, including:

- The prisoner seeking to apply for parole
- Prison officers and the Sentence Management Team
- Treatment and Programs staff and clinicians
- Community Corrections Probation and Parole Officers
- The prisoner's family and community support networks

A parole application to the Parole Board requires input from all of the people above.

Sentence Management Team and Offender Management Plan

Planning for parole commences once a prisoner has been sentenced. Prisoners will have an Offender Management Plan (OMP) that outlines their plan for skills development and pre-release job planning. The OMP is developed when the prisoner first commences their sentence, and is regularly reviewed and monitored throughout the period of their sentence.

The OMP includes a plan for education and training which will support work readiness, and a plan for an employment pathway prior to their release (whether that be on parole or at the end of their full time sentence). Post-release support including job opportunities, accommodation and other support will trigger the discussion for pre-release planning with the prisoners, family members, Aboriginal Elders and Community Corrections.

Offender Management Framework and parole applications

A prisoner with a non-parole period is scheduled for a parole application two months prior to the expiration of the non-parole period. A probation and parole officer will engage with a prisoner 6 months prior to the application going before the Parole Board to work with the prisoner to develop the prisoner's plan. The probation and parole officer will also provide information to the Board with regard to the prisoner's level of risk, needs and responsivity.

Board meetings

The table below sets out the frequency of meetings of the Board for 2022, the quorums that are required to constitute a meeting of the Board,

and the number of votes required for the Board to make a decision about parole for prisoners serving a life sentence for the crime of murder and for all other sentences of imprisonment with a NPP.

LIFE IMPRISONMENT

Meetings held quarterly

Quorum requires the Chairperson and seven other members

Decisions require a unanimous vote

ALL OTHER SENTENCES

Three meetings held monthly

Quorum requires the Chairperson and three other members

Decisions require a majority vote

The Board had previously made the decision to not hold monthly meetings in December. At the request of the Commissioner of Correctional Services, one meeting for the month of December has been re- instated.

Matters considered at Board meetings

Parole is a complex administrative process. The Board may hear a number of different types of matters at each meeting. Some of the types of matters considered by the Board are:

- applications for parole;
- reports about breaches of parole (revocation reports or advice);
- notifications that a parolee has completed their parole order;
- reports providing updates on current parolees and their progress;
- matters about prisoners declining parole;
- applications for variations of parole conditions; and
- notification of a formal transfer to another jurisdiction.

Attendance of prisoners at Board meetings

Generally speaking, it is the practice of the Board to decide parole matters on the relevant documents without the prisoner being present. The Board is of the view that the materials received or obtained by the Board provide a fair and comprehensive basis to decide whether a prisoner should or should not be granted parole.



The Chairperson may; however, require a prisoner to be brought before the Board pursuant to section 3G of the *Parole Act 1971*.

Either the prisoner or their legal representative may write to the Secretary of the Board requesting the prisoner be required to attend their parole hearing.

Applications are determined by the Chairperson after consultation with members of the Board.

Probation and parole officers and team leaders attended several meetings of the Board when higher risk matters were considered to provide advice and answer questions of the Board.

Considerations for the Parole Board

When considering whether to release a prisoner on parole, the Board considers:

- the interests and safety of the community;
- the rights of the victim, including their families;
- the intentions of the sentencing judge;
- the needs of the prisoner; and
- whether the prisoner has recognised the error of their ways and is prepared to change their behaviour for the better and live a lawful life.

In making their decision the Board takes into consideration a number of factors:

- the nature and circumstances of the offence(s);
- comments made by the sentencing judge when imposing sentence;
- the prisoner's criminal history and patterns of offending;
- the possibility of the prisoner reoffending while on parole and the likely nature of the reoffending;
- the risk of harm to the community and the victim;
- release plans, including accommodation and employment;
- reports, assessments and recommendations made by a variety of professionals, including medical practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, custodial staff and/or community corrections officers;
- rehabilitation courses undertaken by the prisoner;
- education courses undertaken by the prisoner;
- institutional reports in relation to the prisoner's behaviour while in prison;

- the security rating of the prisoner within the prison;
- victim's safety, welfare and whereabouts;
- representations made by the victim or by persons related to the victim;
- submissions made by the prisoner, the prisoner's family, friends and any
- potential employers or any other relevant individuals;
- submissions made by the legal representatives of the prisoner; and
- whether the prisoner can be adequately supervised in the community under the standard conditions of parole or whether additional parole conditions should be imposed.

The Board has an unfettered discretion and considers each case on its own merits.

The Board considers a range of material when deciding whether or not to release a prisoner to parole.

The material provided to the Board will always include:

- a parole report prepared by the assigned probation and parole officer;
- an institutional report prepared by staff of the correctional centre or detention centre where the prisoner or detainee is held;
- the facts of the prisoner's offending;
- a record of the prisoner's prior convictions; and
- the remarks of the sentencing judge if the prisoner was sentenced in the Supreme Court.

The Board may also consider such other reports as are relevant for the individual case, including:

- pre-sentence reports;
- psychological/psychiatric assessments and reports;
- rehabilitation course assessments and reports including assessments and exit reports about violent offender programs, sexual offender programs, alcohol and other drug programs and family violence programs;
- medical assessments and reports;
- assessments and reports from substance misuse programs and treatment facilities;
- legal submissions made on behalf of the prisoner;
- letters and/or reports from interstate services;
- letters from the prisoner or written on behalf of the prisoner; and
- letters from the victim or victim's representative.



Review of Subsequent Applications for Parole - 6 month rule

Applications for parole can be made by prisoners (1) whose first or subsequent applications have been refused, notwithstanding they have completed their non-parole periods [NPP], or (2) those whose parole has been granted but subsequently revoked.

There is an obvious starting point in all parole applications. That is, the NPP as fixed by the courts is the minimum time, in the opinion of the sentencer, that an offender should be imprisoned before becoming eligible for parole. That is, it is not an automatic right to parole, but rather a conditional one - an opportunity to be released before the outer limit of the sentence. The sentencer will often discuss an offender's chances of satisfactory rehabilitation in terms of the Parole Board's control of this aspect of the sentencing regime; with the latter being in the best position to weigh the various considerations relevant at the time of the expiry of the NPP. These will obviously include progress made towards rehabilitation, expressions of remorse, victim and community safety, likely success in completing a period of parole and assessments generally of risk together with the other matters referred to above.

There will be one plain difference between those first applying for parole, at the completion of their NPP, and those who are applying after revocation. The latter will already have shown they are bad risks!

There has been said to be a six months rule applicable to revoked prisoners on their re-applications. It was said to arise in this way. Section 9 of the Parole Board's Policy and Procedures Manual* deals with Subsequent Applications for Parole. It correctly states that offenders whose parole has been revoked or cancelled are entitled to reapply for parole under section 13 of the Parole Act 1971. No restriction is purported to limit that right. However, under the sub-heading **Convictions for violent offending**, the following appears:

In recognition of the prevalence of violent offending in the Northern Territory and the social and community impacts of this violence, the

Parole Board has established the following guidelines that shall apply to:

- A parolee who has a history of **violent offending**;
- Whose current release on parole relates to offences that include a sentence for **violent offending**; and
- Whose parole has been revoked for further **violent offending**.

The Parole Board will not consider an application for parole from the prisoner for a minimum of six months after the prisoner resumes the sentence for which they were originally released on parole.

[*Significantly, the Manual itself was issued in 2013 and is in need of revision; this commenced in 2023 and will be completed in 2024]

It is interesting to note that the original protocol was developed in relation to **violent offending**. This limitation seems to have fallen-off further references to the topic.

This policy, coupled with that which provided that a prisoner's parole would not be reconsidered, after revocation, if there was less than 6 months remaining on their full sentence, was the subject of an information email distributed on 5 November 2020. This was from the Secretariat and addressed to Community Corrections Regional Managers, et al. It referred to an item in the October 2020 Board Meeting minutes regarding re-application after revocation, and continued:

On 9 August 2020 the Board agreed to adopt a general policy that:

- ***Where a parole order has been revoked, the prisoner will not be re-considered for parole for a period of at least 6 months after he / she is committed; and***
- ***A prisoner will not be reconsidered for parole if there is less than 6 months remaining on their sentence at the time the order is revoked; however***
- ***Each matter is to be consider on its merits and that there may be occasional exceptions to the above policy.***

This is a Parole Board policy – not an NTCS policy.

The Board have agreed that the starting positions for re-consideration is 6 months from the time the person is returned to custody following revocation. However, importantly, the Board will consider each case on its merits and a prisoner should not be prevented from writing to the Board at any time to request to be considered for parole. The Board



will make the determination as to whether a parole applications is to be scheduled for a meeting.

The intention of the policy is to ensure that prisoners take responsibility for their parole. The Board seeks to support prisoners who take the parole process seriously and make a genuine attempt at successfully completing parole – parole is not to be considered as a revolving door.

The 6 month re-application policy does not prevent a prisoner from continuing to work with his or her PPO / SMT to develop a new / more robust plan for another parole application. In practice, the prisoner could submit an 'offender request' to the Board at the 3 – 5 month mark after the parole revocation seeking to be considered at the next appropriate meeting and setting out what has changed and the new / proposed plan etc.

The paramount consideration of the Parole Board is the safety of the community and the Board is of the opinion that to facilitate this parolees are to be held responsible for the decisions they make.

This general position was reaffirmed by the Board at its 2022 Annual Workshop. The minutes of that meeting record:

Discussion about the effect of postponing further parole considerations for 6 months following a previous parole revocation(s), and how that affects timing of future applications. Board agreed flexibility can be provided on a case-by-case basis and the 6 month limit may be re-considered from time to time.

As a matter of information, I note that the prison system has been under increasing pressure in recent months with numbers reaching over-maximum levels. On 21 November 2022, the Commissioner of NT Correctional Services, as part of a concerted effort to reduce prison numbers, wrote to the Board Chair requesting, inter alia, that the policy be withdrawn, notwithstanding his acknowledgement that each matter is determined on a case-by-case basis.

The request was discussed at each of the three regular Board meetings held in November. The Minutes from each record:

Discussion on 6 month policy for parole revocations – proposed review to be distributed for consideration.

Part of the difficulty with the policy, it appeared, was that Parole Officers regarded it as more inflexible than it was. That is, they have not prepared the prisoners – and the necessary planning and reports – when it was thought there

was little prospect of the Board approving parole within the 6 month timeframe. But, as noted earlier, although a prisoner is not entitled as of right to parole, he is entitled to make an application. Time can be wasted when the prisoner's request to be considered is not activated or encouraged in a timely fashion.

After a consideration of the history of this policy, its creation in respect of violent offending, and the flexibility now observed by the Board in its deliberations, there seemed little point in maintaining the 6 month policy. The *Parole Act 1971* provides for parole in cases where previous parole is revoked, and the Board has expressly stated that it will deal with matters on a case-by-case basis. In those circumstances, it might be said that the policy – as stated - unduly and unfairly restricted prisoners from making applications. The Board accepted this position and formally approved its withdrawal.

The mechanics of giving effect to this decision are still a work-in-progress. Clearly, sooner rather than later, the Manual will require revision. In the meantime, however, relevant stakeholders have been advised of the Board's position.

Prisoners serving a life sentence for the crime of murder

When considering applications for parole by prisoners serving a term of imprisonment for life for the crime of murder, the Board must have regard to the principle that the public interest is of primary importance and, in doing so, must give substantial weight to the following matters:

- the protection of the community as the paramount consideration;
- the likely effect of the prisoner's release on the victim's family; and
- if the prisoner is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, the likely effect of the prisoner's release on the prisoner's community.

Furthermore, where relevant, the Board must not release a life sentenced prisoner to parole unless the Board considers that the prisoner has cooperated satisfactorily in the investigation to identify the location, or last known location, of the remains of the victim(s) of the offence. This is often referred to as the 'no body, no parole' policy. The Board considers a report from the Commissioner of Police outlining the level of cooperation when making this assessment.

Reasons for parole where prisoner serving life imprisonment

Section 4B(8) of the *Parole Act 1971* stipulates that the Board must give reasons for any decision

or direction of the Board on a matter concerning a prisoner who is serving a term of imprisonment for murder. The Board must record the reasons in the record of its proceedings; however, the publication of information concerning parolees and parole decision-making is prohibited by the *Information Act 2002*.

Victims of Crime

The Board takes the view that victims and the community are entitled to be kept safe. Therefore a prisoner should not be granted parole if they cannot be managed in the community in a manner which keeps the victim safe throughout any period that the prisoner is on parole.

The Board is cognisant of the rights of victims of crime contained in the Northern Territory Charter for Victims of Crime (the Charter) and ensures the guiding principles of the Charter are incorporated into the practice and procedure of the Board.

Under the Charter the victim may apply in writing to the Secretary of the Board requesting:

- a direction be given to a prisoner not to approach them whilst on parole; and
- for advice about the outcome of any parole proceedings concerning the prisoner.

Probation and parole officers liaise with the victims, the Crime Victims Services Unit, Witness Assistance Service and the general community to ensure victim's concerns are taken into consideration throughout the parole process and that the victim is kept informed of any developments. Victim issues and concerns are identified in reports prepared for the Board's consideration and may result in special conditions being added to a parole order to ensure the safety of the victim.

Additionally, where a matter has a registered victim, the Secretary of the Board provides timely written updates to the Director of the Crime Victims Services Unit as stipulated by the *Victims of Crime Rights and Services Act 2006*.

Parole Conditions

The standard parole conditions attached to a Northern Territory parole order are:

1. The parolee shall be of good behaviour and must not commit another offence during the period of the order;
2. the parolee shall be subject to supervision on parole of a probation and parole officer, appointed in accordance with this parole order, and shall obey all reasonable directions of the probation and parole officer appointed;

3. the parolee shall report to the probation and parole officer, or other person nominated by the probation and parole officer, in the manner and at the places and times directed by the officer and shall be available for interview at such times and places as a probation and parole officer or nominee may from time to time direct;
4. the parolee shall not leave the Northern Territory without the written permission of the supervising probation and parole officer;
5. the parolee shall enter into employment arranged or agreed upon by the probation and parole officer and shall notify the probation and parole officer of any intention to change employment before such change occurs or, if this is impracticable, then within such period after the change as may have been directed by the probation and parole officer;
6. the parolee shall reside at an address arranged or agreed upon by the probation and parole officer and shall notify the probation and parole officer of any intention to change address before such change occurs or, if this is impracticable, then within such period after the change as may have been directed by the probation and parole officer;
7. the parolee shall not associate with any person specified in a direction by the probation and parole officer to the parolee;
8. the parolee shall not frequent or visit any place or district specified in a direction by the probation and parole officer to the parolee;

The Board frequently places additional conditions upon the release of a prisoner. These conditions are tailored to maximise protection of the community, facilitate the prisoner's successful reintegration and reduce the risk of reoffending.

The primary purpose of placing conditions on parole is to address and manage risk factors that underlie the prisoner's offending behaviour. Additional conditions often include:

9. to not consume, possess or purchase alcohol or drugs;
10. breath testing, oral drug testing and urinalysis;
11. no contact, directly or indirectly, with a victim or other specified person;
12. to reside at a specified community or outstation;
13. participation in and completion of an assessment/treatment/counselling regime (residential or sessional attendance) e.g. alcohol programs, domestic violence



programs, sex offender programs, psychiatric treatment;

14. not to engage in conduct that might lead to a domestic violence order being made;
15. be subject to curfew;
16. be subject to electronic monitoring;
17. be subject to the COMMIT program.

It has been conceded that the standard parole conditions are unnecessary lengthy in number and complicated in language. Plain English parole conditions have been prepared but their use has not yet commenced. It is intended during 2023 to proceed with the simpler conditions as drafted subject to some slight modifications.

Transfer of Parole Orders

The *Parole Orders (Transfer) Act 1981* was enacted as part of a national scheme under which a parolee can transfer to another jurisdiction and have their parole order registered under the corresponding act in that jurisdiction.

Upon registration of the parole order with the receiving jurisdiction the parolee ceases to have any connection with the originating jurisdiction. The parole order and original sentence are treated as though they were imposed in the receiving jurisdiction. National Guidelines have been introduced to streamline the process of transferring offenders on community based supervision orders between Australian jurisdictions.

In 2023, five parolees were transferred out of the Northern Territory. Eight parolees transferred their period of parole to the Northern Territory.

Extradition

Extradition involves the return of an offender from another jurisdiction back to the NT, this may happen in number of instances, including:

- when a parolee has left the Northern Territory without permission; or
- when a parolee on authorised travel has:
 - failed to comply with parole conditions whilst interstate; or
 - committed further offences.

In 2023 no parolees were extradited to the Northern Territory.

Youth detainees seeking parole

As previously noted, the Parole Board of the Northern Territory is also responsible for the grant of release to parole for young people. The administrative responsibility for Youth Justice

matters falls within the auspices of Territory Families. Youth Outreach and Re-engagement Officers (YOREOs) are responsible for the supervision and management of young people on parole.

The Board includes Psychologist members with expertise in relation to young people.

When considering a young person's application for parole, the Board:

1. Makes its decisions about the parole of youths in accordance with the core principles of youth justice, in particular:
 - The youth should be dealt with in a way that acknowledges his or her needs and will provide him or her with the opportunity to develop in socially responsible ways; and
 - A youth should be kept in custody for the shortest appropriate time period.
2. Requests, from time-to time, the supervising YOREO be present at Board meetings where youths are considered for parole to provide any further information the Board requests; and
3. Endeavours to release youths on parole directly upon the expiry of their non-parole period. The most frequent cause of any delay is the lack of suitable accommodation for the youth.

SUPPORTING SERVICES & INITIATIVES

Supporting Aboriginal Offenders

NTCS have formal arrangements with NAAJA to operate the Throughcare Support Program.

The program aims to support successful reintegration and prevent recidivism by:

- providing education to individuals, their families and communities about parole;
- assisting Aboriginal prisoners throughout the parole process by raising their awareness of the factors that have contributed to their offending behaviour and help them identify relevant rehabilitative programs while in custody;
- assisting Aboriginal prisoners to develop sustainable and effective post-release plans in collaboration with their families, communities and NTCS; and
- assisting Aboriginal parolees to successfully complete their parole orders and reintegrate into the community through the provision of
-

targeted interventions and supported case management post release.

Under these arrangements the following occurs when a prisoner or youth detainee is a client of NAAJA:

- the Secretary of the Board provides the relevant Throughcare case manager with a copy of the relevant minutes relating to a prisoner, informing the prisoner of the decision of the Board about whether the prisoner has been granted parole or not. The Throughcare case manager can go through the letter with the prisoner and also obtain further information from the Secretary if necessary.
- where the Board makes a decision about the parole of a prisoner contrary to the recommendation contained in the report of the probation and parole officer, a meeting may be held with the officer, the Throughcare support officer and the prisoner to discuss the Board's reasons for decision.

NAAJA has been advised that if the prisoner wishes to make an application to be present at the meeting of the Board which considers his or her application for parole, then this can be facilitated by the Throughcare case manager and any such application will be considered on its merits. Further, NAAJA have been advised the Board will consider any written submissions that are made on behalf of a prisoner about parole. The Board also regularly refers Aboriginal prisoners who would be assisted by legal representation or additional Throughcare support to NAAJA.

Unfortunately NAAJA Throughcare scheme lost funding from mid-2020. However, received renewed financial support in 2021. The NAAJA Throughcare parole specific case manager role resumed its functioning in late 2021.

Preparing Prisoners for Parole

In January 2020, a steering committee was formed which comprised of the Chairperson of the Parole Board, the Secretary of the Parole Board, the Deputy Commissioner of Corrections, the Assistant Commissioner Community Corrections, Assistant Commissioner Offender Services and Programs, Director Offender Services and Programs and Acting Director Aboriginal Strategy and Coordination to consider steps to be taken to educate prisoners about parole and improve the ways in which prisoners are being prepared for parole. The work done by this committee is most important with the aim to reduce the number of

prisoners declining parole, increase the number of prisoners being granted parole and reduce conditional breaches of parole orders.

Projects previously initiated by the steering committee included:

- Training modules for custodial based staff to ensure a consistent understanding of parole and its purpose;
- Review of Parole Order Conditions to use plain language to assist prisoners and parolees better understand their obligations when considering and subject to parole;
- Creation of 'Parole Stories', an audio-visual parole story that engages prisoners to better understand the purpose, conditions, process etc. of parole.

The committee will hopefully be reinvigorated in 2024.

Oral Drug Testing

In 2018 NTCS implemented oral drug testing in an effort to improve the management of offenders subject to drug testing conditions. The expansion of drug testing has enabled drug testing of offenders in remote locations where urinalysis was not feasible, and aims to assist offenders to remain drug free and increase community safety.

NTCC staff who hold a national certification as 'Collectors' maintain the chain of custody for collected specimens and adhere to the Australian Standards. Results are then confirmed by a laboratory to ensure a fair process is maintained.

Where necessary, a combination of both oral fluid and urine drug testing is used to manage a parolee's compliance.

Electronic Monitoring

In 2014 NTCS introduced the use of electronic monitoring. Electronic monitoring has been an effective tool for managing offenders on parole. The Board has welcomed electronic monitoring as an additional tool to enhance the ability of NT Community Corrections staff to monitor specific conditions relating to an offender's movements and location. Electronic monitoring can provide timely notifications of non-compliance and contribute to the following outcomes:

- improve community safety through enhanced surveillance and monitoring of an offender's whereabouts and movements;
- reduce the time taken to identify and respond to non-compliance;
- enhance compliance with curfew requirements and movement restrictions;



- create exclusion zones that protect the victims of crime; and
- reduce the need for intrusive surveillance methods such as late night home visits.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Community Corrections

The Board continues to foster a close working relationship with NTCS that is collaborative, respectful and effective. The Parole Board Secretariat, who support the Board on a daily basis and ensure that all matters are properly prepared and presented for Board consideration, comprise of Community Corrections staff.

The Chairperson regularly communicates with the Commissioner of Correctional Services and the Assistant Commissioner, Community Corrections. The Board relies on the information it receives from the Correctional Centres and Community Corrections, including Institutional Reports and Parole Applications, to make its decisions. The Board may be assisted by the attendance of probation and parole officers / YOREOS at Board meetings to provide information and answer questions, including when the Board interviews a prisoner about parole.

The Board will continue to work with NTCS and the Secretariat to provide opportunities for the Board to inform NTCS staff of issues that have been identified and hear directly from NTCS about the impacts of Board practices and decisions.

Victims of Crime Considerations and Victims Register

The Board has two victims representative members appointed under section 3B(1)(e) of the *Parole Act 1971* who represent the interests of victims of crime.

Furthermore, the Crime Victims Services Unit, established under section 5 of the *Victims of Crime Rights and Services Act 2006* manages the Northern Territory Victims Register.

The Crime Victims Services Unit is responsible for maintaining contact with victims of violent crime who have registered to receive information about a prisoner or detainee.

The Board and the Victims Register work closely in relation to operational and policy issues. The Board provides information to the Victims Register

about victim-related conditions, meeting dates and release information. The Victims Register is then able to provide victims of crime with timely, relevant and accurate information about the release of a prisoner on parole.

The Parole Board Secretariat aims to provide information to the CVSU not less than 14 days from a prisoner's release date to ensure that a victim has sufficient preparation notice.

The Parole Board has concerns regarding the lack of victims not registered with the Victims Register. The Chairperson and Secretary plan to undertake work in this space to help increase the number of registered victims.

Victim submissions

All victims, including those on the Victims Register have the right to send a written submission to the Board when the prisoner for whom they are registered is being considered for parole. All submissions from victims are read by the Board and the issues and concerns raised are carefully considered as part of the decision-making process. Each submission is treated with strict confidence.

Northern Territory Police

The Board and NT Police have a memorandum of understanding for the exchange of information and cooperation. The NT Police are responsible for the timely and safe arrest of prisoners who have had their parole revoked and a warrant issued for their arrest.

Parole Board Workshop

Training workshops are an essential element of the professional development of Board members.

Workshops provide an opportunity to:

- share information about current developments in the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice that impact on prisoners;
- deliver training and share information on contemporary practices and research in relation to offender management and the work of the Board; and
- receive feedback from members on the current operations of the Board and any matters that may be of concern for them.

The very successful 2022 workshop was repeated in August 2023. Another workshop will be convened similarly in August 2024.



Reducing Barriers to Parole

Parolees face many barriers to successful reintegration in the community that place them at risk of reoffending, including difficulties securing accommodation and employment.

To try and overcome the barriers to reintegration, NTCS entered into a partnership with NAAJA aimed at expanding the amount of throughcare available to prisoners and parolees. NAAJA has developed their own throughcare programs which complement and supplement the throughcare provided by NTCS.

The purpose of throughcare is to assist prisoners who are on parole to set realistic goals, identify appropriate support networks and maintain practical plans for re-integration in the community.

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

NAAJA's Indigenous Throughcare Program started in 2009. It has two prison-based case workers who provide parole related information, advice and assistance to prisoners and detainees; and case managers who provide case management support to up to 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

The role of the prison-based case workers includes:

- educating participants, their families and communities about parole;
- assisting participants to successfully obtain parole by raising their awareness of the factors that have contributed to their offending behaviours and helping them identify relevant rehabilitative programs while in custody;
- assisting participants to develop sustainable and effective post-release assisting participants to develop sustainable and effective post-release plans in collaboration

with their families, communities, and NTCS; and

- assisting participants to successfully complete their parole orders through the provision of supported case management post-release.

The role of the case workers includes:

- accepting referral of participants, including from the Darwin Correctional Centre, Territory Families, the NAAJA Prison-based case workers, external service providers or the family of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners;
- engaging participants willing to work with NAAJA on a voluntary basis six months prior to their release to assess their transitional needs including but not limited to rehabilitation, accommodation, family support and employment;
- working alongside participants to help them identify their post-release risks and goals, and develop a corresponding case management plan;
- assisting participants to identify and access relevant services and programs that can be accessed to achieve their transitional goals post-release; and
- providing participants with case management support post-release for a mutually agreed period of time that emphasises participant empowerment and individual responsibility.

Work Camps

Datjala (Nhulunbuy) and Barkly (Tennant Creek) Work Camps provide prisoners education through local agreements with providers such as Safety Training Services and Anglicare at Datjala and Charles Darwin University and Group Training NT at Barkly Work Camp.

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION

Appropriate use, management and communication of Parole Board records

There are strict rules governing the release of information by the Northern Territory Parole Board. The disclosure of 'personal information' and 'sensitive information' is governed by the *Information Act 2002 (NT)*. The Parole Board is a public sector organisation within the meaning of this Act.

It is an offence for Board members or staff to use or disclose personal or confidential information unless the disclosure is authorised: section 148 of



the *Information Act 2002* and section 76 of the Criminal Code (NT).

Information contained in an offender's file is treated as confidential and ensures that information can be provided to the Board with complete frankness by clinicians and intelligence. It also ensures that prisoners can write to and speak to the Board without reservation.

There are limited circumstances where information given to the Board may be disclosed. For example, to prevent, detect, investigate, prosecute or punish the commission of an offence against a law of the Territory or any other offence or breach of a law imposing a penalty or sanction for a breach.

The Parole Board and the Media

There is, no requirement or authorisation at law for release of information by the Parole Board to the media unless the individual consents to its release. The Board may provide information of a generic nature to the public or the media – about the nature of parole, decision making and the management of offenders on parole or where a person's identity is not reasonably identifiable.

Registered Victims

Under the Victims of *Crime Rights and Services Act 2006* the Crime Victim Services Unit must provide a registered person with the offender's earliest release date and actual release date, certain victim-related conditions as well as the revocation of the parole order, but otherwise registered victims are not provided information on an offender's file. Registered victim submissions are treated with strict confidentiality.

Due to the sensitive information contained in many Parole Board records it is important that all staff who have possession and control of these documents ensure the appropriate use, management and communication of these records. The Parole Board Policy and Procedures Manual can be found at:

https://paroleboard.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/666758/Policy-and-Procedures-manual.pdf

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

The NTCS Custodial Operations Unit coordinated FOI requests for the Parole Board during 2023. Freedom of Information requests for Parole Board records are directed to the Parole Board Secretariat and the Chairperson of the Parole Board.

PERFORMANCE

Parole Applications

No. of parole applications made in 2023	480
Outcome of the initial hearing	
Parole applications granted	162
Parole applications deferred	157
Parole applications refused	122
Prisoner declined parole	39

Subsequent Applications

No. of subsequent applications made in 2023	220
Outcome of subsequent hearing	
Subsequent applications granted	92
Subsequent applications deferred	56
Subsequent applications refused	41
Prisoner declined parole	7
Other*	24

*Amended Order, Noted, Parole Revoked

Parole Applications from Lifers

No. of initial Parole applications made in 2023	5
Outcome of the initial hearing	
Parole applications granted	1
Parole applications deferred	3
Parole applications refused	1
Prisoner declined parole	0



Subsequent Lifers Applications

No. of subsequent applications made in 2023	7
Outcome of subsequent hearing	
Subsequent applications granted	1
Subsequent applications deferred	6
Subsequent applications refused	0
Prisoner declined parole	0

Number of Parole Applications determined (Granted/Refused in 2023)

Parole Applications determined (granted or refused)	7
Subsequent Applications determined (granted or refused)	
Grand Total	414

Number of Prisoners who declined parole and why*

Reason	No.
Wants to complete full time and be released without conditions	30
Obtained employment	3
Participate in program	1
Wants to attend work camp	1
Other	10
Grand Total	45

Parole Conditions Varied

No. of parole orders varied	47.
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Revocation Reports and Outcomes

No. of reports received by Parole Board documenting non-compliance	324
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Outcomes

Parole revoked by the Board	0
Parole revoked out of session (Chairperson)	127
Revocation prior to release	2
Warning letter sent	90
No Action	29
Amend parole order	14
Deferred	1
COMMIT sanction	62

Freedom of Information Applications

No. of freedom of information applications	12.
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Parole Orders Transferred to another Jurisdiction

Parole Orders Transferred to another jurisdiction	4.
Interstate Parole Orders Transferred to the NT	6

Period on Parole prior to revocation – Conditional and Re-offending 2023

Time on parole prior to revocation	Conditional	Re-offend	Grand Total
<3 months	85	4	89
3-6 months	14	4	18
6-12 months	9	5	14
1-3 years	4	2	6
Revoked prior to release	2	2	2
Grand Total	114	15	129

Additional Parole Conditions Set

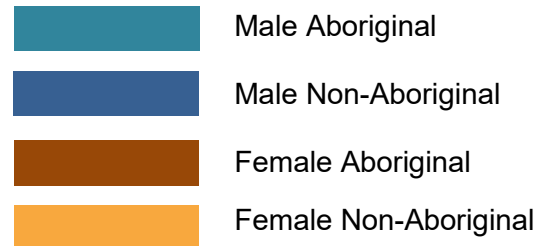
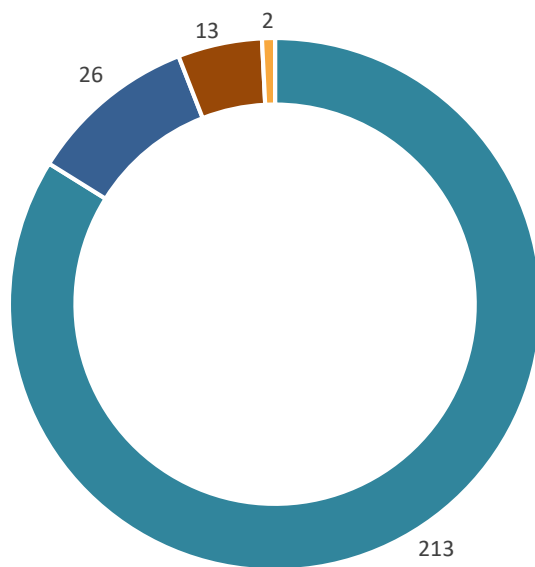
	Granted Parole	Amended Parole Order
Alcohol Abstinence	233	39
Breath Testing	233	39
Drug Abstinence	168	37
Urinalysis	149	32
Reside at particular address or community / outstation	67	8
Residential Rehabilitation attendance	183	18
General assessment, treatment and/or counselling	195	41
Specific assessment, treatment and/or counselling*	65	13
Nil Contact – Victim	82	22
Nil threats – Victim	128	19
Nil Contact – Children	8	1
Curfew	179	34
Available for checks	156	33
Nil possession of firearm	158	33
Not engage in conduct that results in DVO	169	21
Electronic Monitoring	179	39
COMMIT parole / Sanctions Regime	54	23
Other **	36	8

*** Includes:** mental health counselling, specific anger management, drug and alcohol counselling, Family Violence Program

**** Includes:** not visit specified communities; comply with medication regime; not drive a motor vehicle; maintain employment;

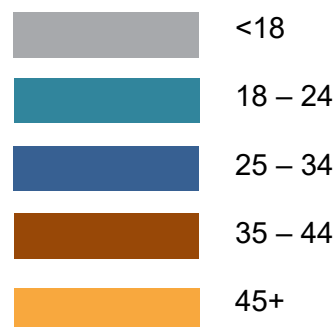
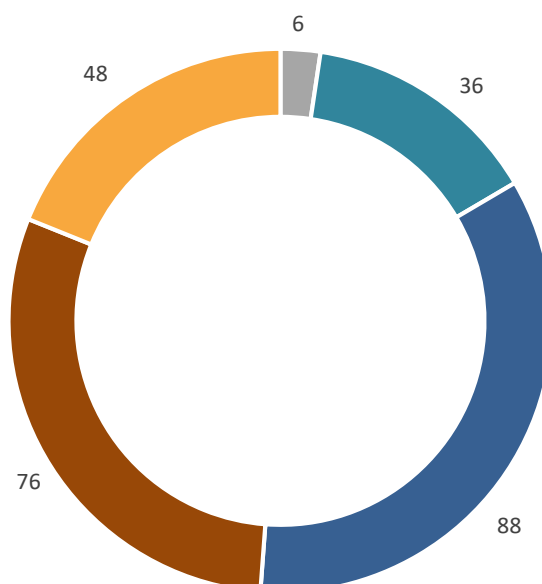


Characteristics of Prisoners release to parole during 2023 by Sex and Aboriginality



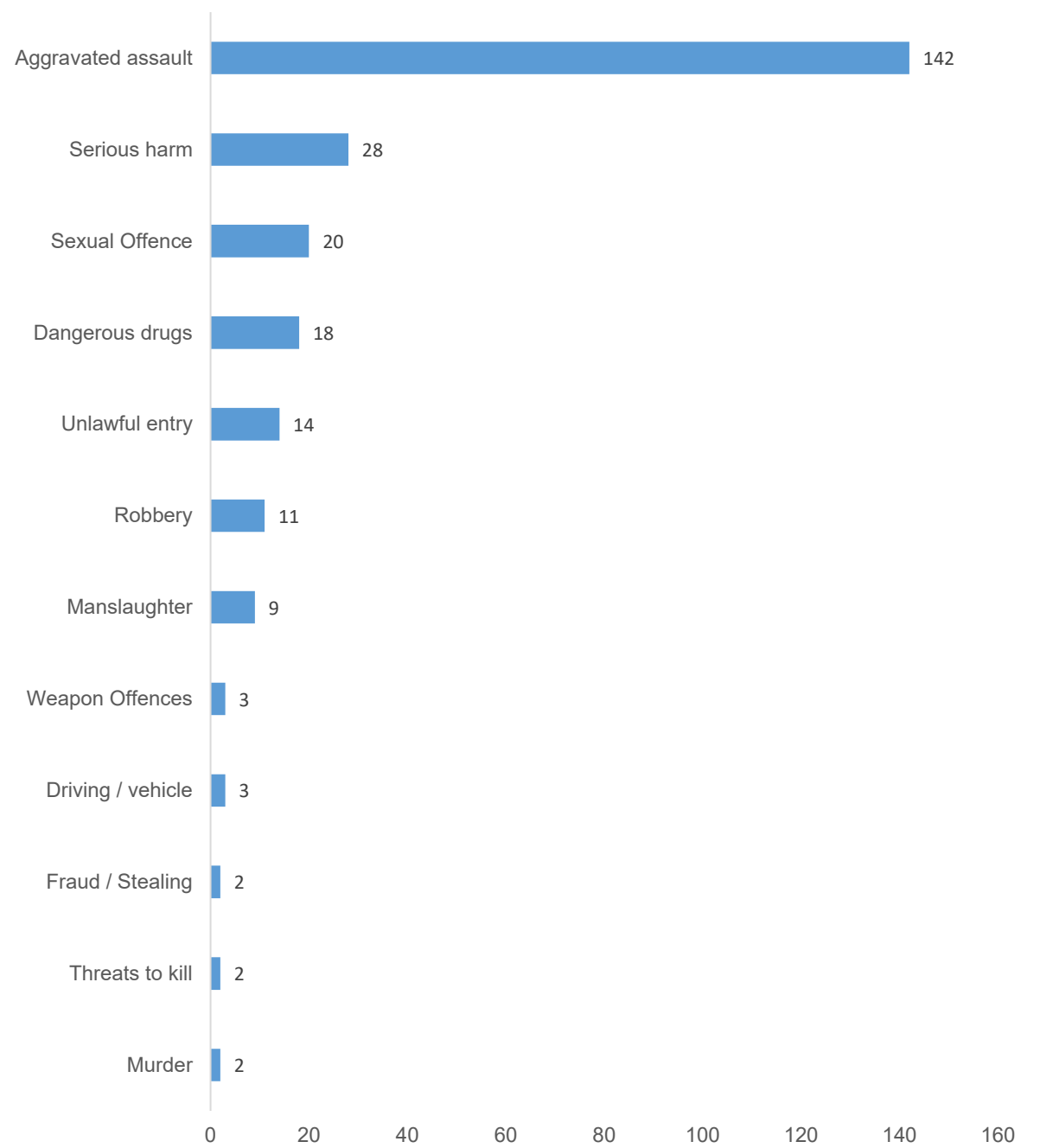
Aboriginal	226
Non-Aboriginal	28
Grand Total	254

Prisoners Release to Parole during 2023



Grand Total	254
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Prisoners releases to parole during 2023 by most serious offence category

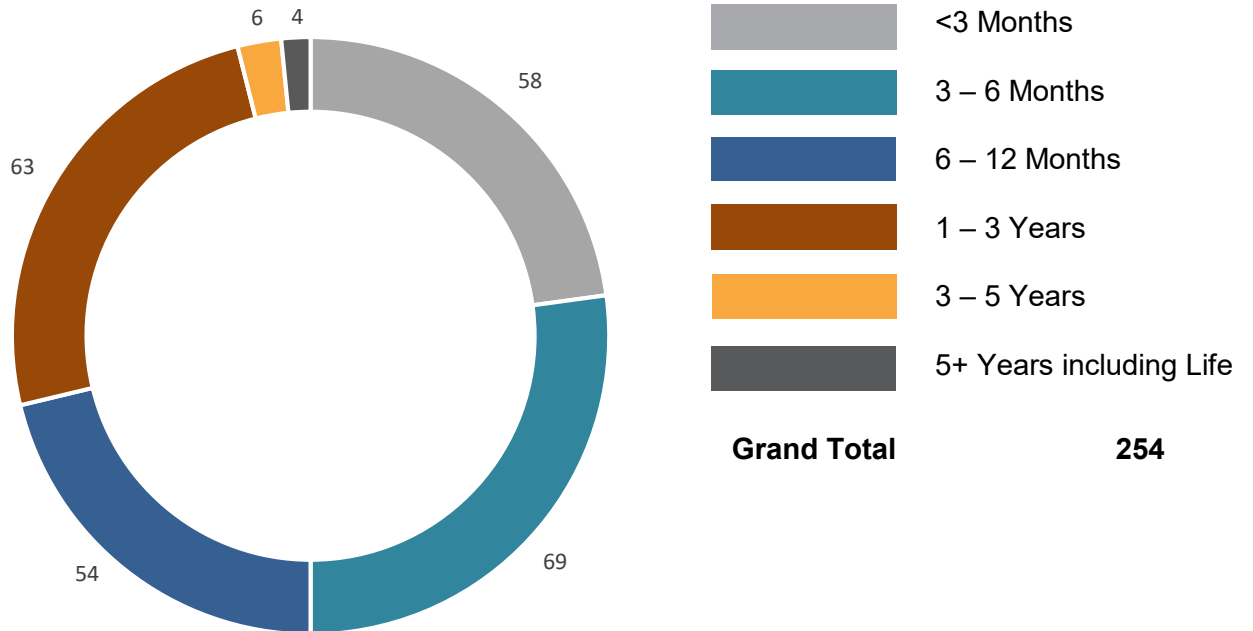


Prisoner's most serious offence

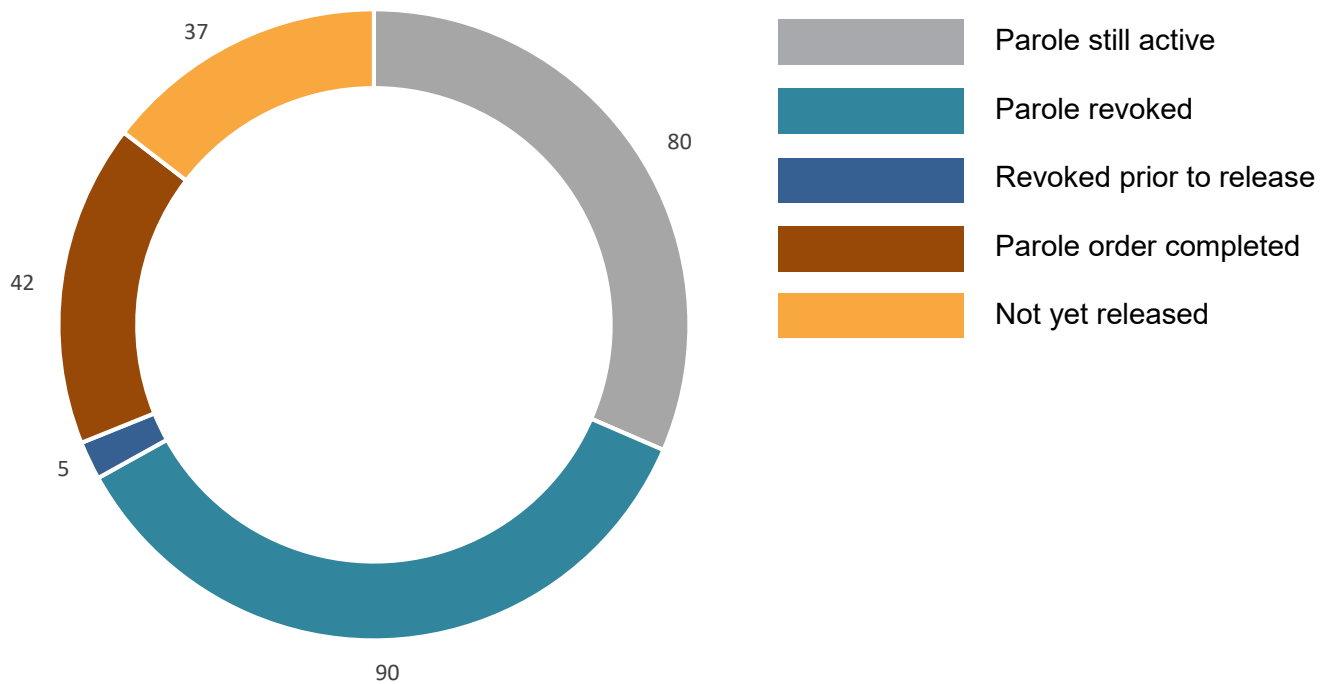
Grand Total **254**



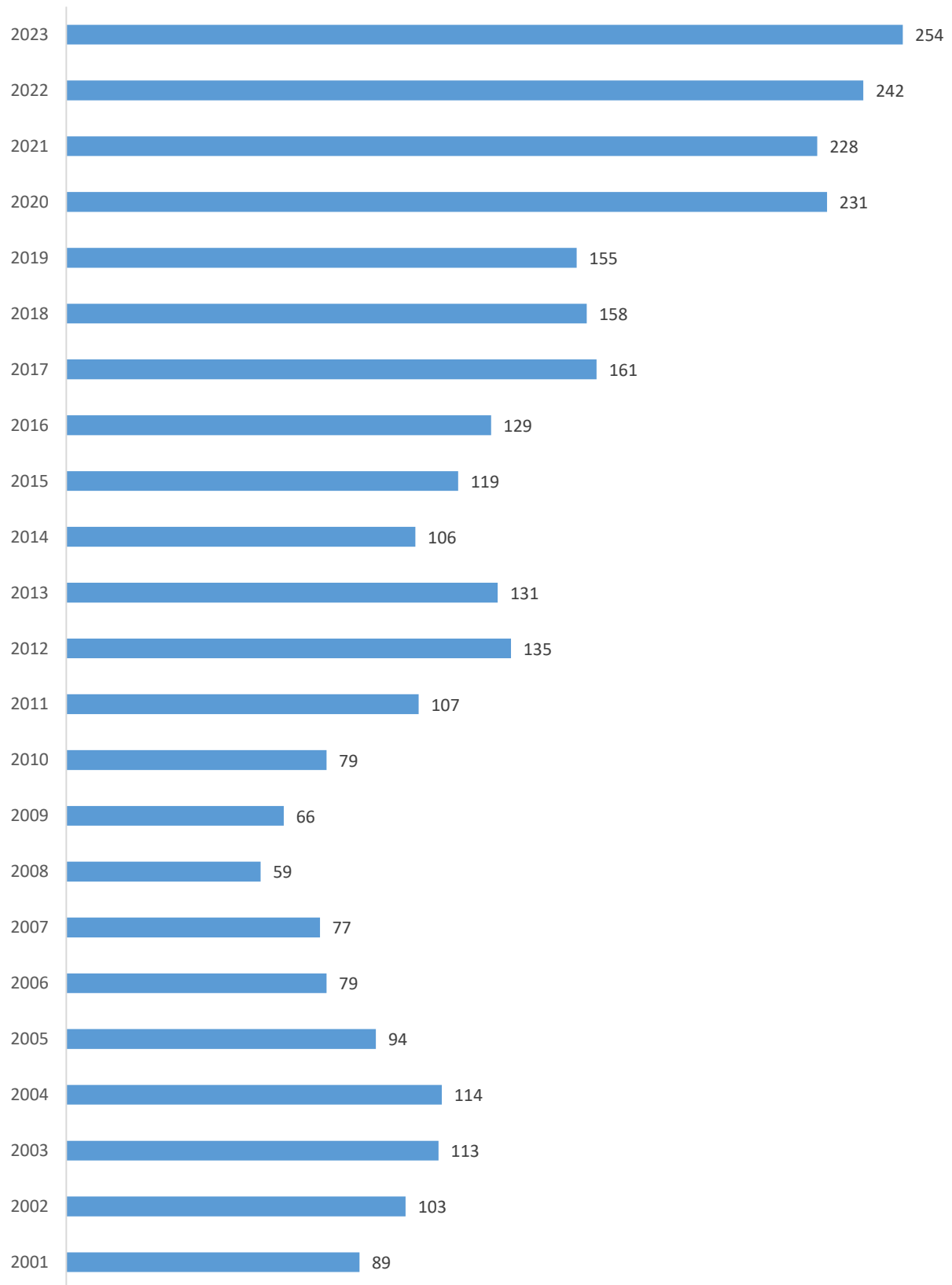
Length of parole period for prisoners release to parole during 2023



Outcomes of prisoners granted parole during 2023 as at 31 December 2023

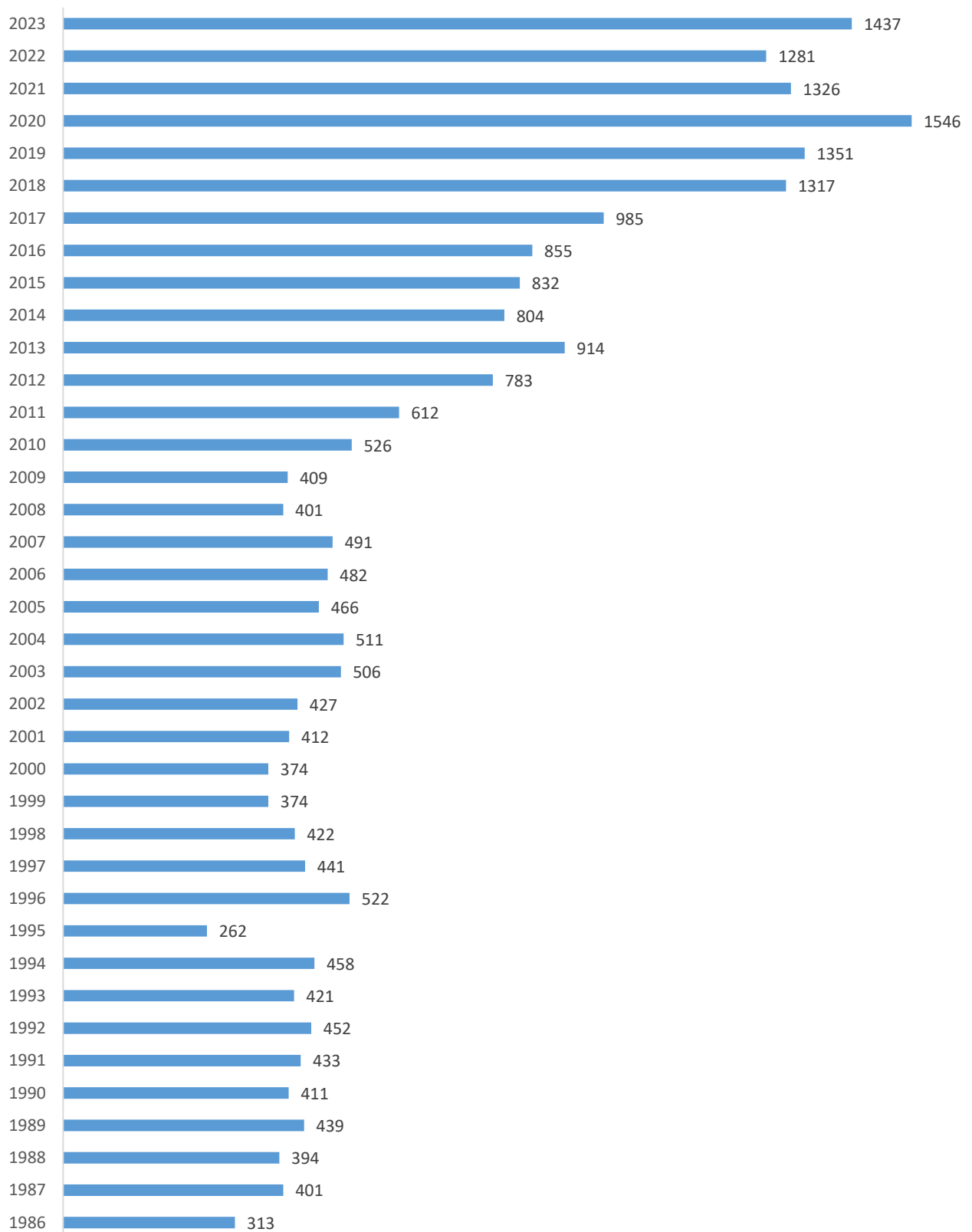


Prisoners release to Parole 2001 - 2023





Annual total of items of business 1986 – 2023





PAROLE BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information on the Parole Board please
contact the Secretary of the Parole Board:

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Phone: (08) 8935 7477

Web: www.paroleboard.nt.gov.au

Email: Parole.Board@nt.gov.au



PAROLE BOARD
OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY