

August 1971 in Brisbane. In addition, through executive meetings and the circulation of a newsletter the Council endeavours to disseminate information of general interest. At present the Council has two committees, each headed by a Supreme Court Judge studying particular subjects: one the question of alternatives to imprisonment and the other the problems of confidentiality which arises in connection with pre-sentence and similar reports. The reports of these committees will be presented at the Brisbane conference. A similar study on parole practice and legislation was presented to the 1965 conference.

The Council does not seek to point out to Governments the present deficiencies in the prison system: its members include the Controllers of Prisons of all States who are already only too well aware of them, but it regards as of great importance its committee on alternatives to imprisonment and will in due course be presenting Governments with its findings.

I am sure you will agree that such research and the publication of findings is essential if progress is to be made - and I believe the Australian Crime Prevention, Correction and After-Care Council is playing its full part in this. Donations to further its work will be welcome'

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) E. M. Bingham,

President
Australian Crime Prevention, Correction
and After-Care Council

THE WORK RELEASE PLAN N.S.W.

On 27th February, 1970, the Hon. J. C. Maddison, B.A., LL.B., M.L.A., Minister of Justice, officially opened Silverwater House, a Work Release Centre at Silverwater, on the site of the old Newington State Hospital. The building, which had previously been used as the nurses' quarters, had been completely renovated and fitted with modern equipment to provide a most desirable standard of accommodation for the inmates. At the time of the opening, ten work release inmates were housed at the Centre which has an accommodation capacity for thirty persons.

The work release plan provides a form of treatment which is new within the Australian penal system. It is a programme for carefully selected inmates wherein they accept the responsibilities of citizenship, engage in full-time employment and return to custody each evening and each weekend. The participants in the work release plan remain wholly within the custodial jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Corrective Services. The social, educational and economic implications of the work release plan are far reaching.

As the scheme has been in force for over eighteen months, recently I paid a visit to the Centre to talk with Mr. Jack Jones, the Administrator.

He is enthusiastic over the operation of the centre, and he and his wife, who also is a full-time employee of the Department of Corrective Services, appear to enjoy their work. Mrs. Jones is responsible for the cleanliness of the building, which work is carried out by the house staff. The house staff are not necessarily coming on to work release at a later date, but are carefully chosen for working at the Centre. Mrs. Jones organises the house-keeping, cooking, ordering of supplies and management of foodstuffs. The meals served are of a high standard and compare more than favourably with any boarding house or hotel. Breakfast consists of chop and egg, steak and egg, cereal, tea, coffee and toast. Ingredients for sandwiches are provided, each man making his own lunch. Roast pork, curried chicken, roast lamb are on the dinner menu.

Mrs. Jones is a very good cook, and has been able to pass on much of her knowledge to the staff, as is evidenced by the several tasty meals and morning and afternoon teas I have had at the Centre. On the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Presidents of the Civil Rehabilitation Committees the delightful smorgasbord luncheon and homemade cakes were very much appreciated by guests.

The house staff are paid for their work, something more than is paid in the gaol. When the Superintendent goes shopping, the men are allowed to make purchases of cigarettes, etc.

Mr. Jones acts in the same way as a Superintendent in any other institution. He is responsible for collecting wages from the men, allotting incidental expenses, and is generally in charge of all discipline at the Centre. He is available to discuss any problems with the prisoners

The staff at the Centre now includes a Deputy Administrator and a Social Worker. The Work Release Co-ordinator, Mr. B. Barrier, of the Department of Corrective Services, spends some time at the Centre. He presents prospective work release candidates to the Work Release Committee. If accepted by the committee the final decision is taken by Mr. Barrier. He will accompany the man to the employment interview and assist in obtaining suitable clothing. (A clothing pool has been set up at the Centre as many of the men have only what they are wearing when they leave the gaol). In regard to employment of the men, even before the scheme commenced, employers were 'phoning and offering to take a work releasee. An officer of the Department of Labour and National Service has been assigned to assist in obtaining employment where this is the only bar to a prisoner's entrance to the work release scheme.

The first three men released to work were employed as clerical worker, a factory hand and storeman-packer, and a general factory worker as a carpenter and joiner. From the commencement they went out to work by themselves - a time-table was set, in order to allow sufficient time to reach the place of work. Leeway is allowed for train or bus connections. The time element is strictly controlled, and there is a restriction on pocket money. A man is permitted to have a drink at an hotel on the way home from work. Families are allowed generous visiting hours on Saturday

and Sunday for a period of three hours each afternoon and there is no restriction on the number of visitors. Tea and biscuits are supplied by the Department, and usually are served by members of the House Committee who take turns in preparing the afternoon tea. The grounds are spacious and have well-kept lawns and gardens, with shady trees. If the men are keen gardeners, they are encouraged to work around the Centre.

The men engaged in the domestic work are allowed visitors, but no week-end leave. Married work releasees are permitted to go home from 8.00 a.m. on Saturday morning to 10.00 p.m. on Sunday evening once a month. Single men have a day pass for a Sunday once a month. In order to qualify for these concessions, they must have been at the Centre for at least three months and their conduct and general attitude must be above reproach, otherwise they will not be recommended for the leave by the Administrator. They are permitted to attend church on Sunday morning. (Work releasees only.) Gates are open from 5.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. and are only locked to keep people out!

Saturday mornings are mainly taken up with ironing and personal chores - each man is responsible for his own ironing, although the laundryman does the washing.

One Civil Rehabilitation Committee member for some months would collect three children from a church home and bring them to visit their father - their mother having left them. He maintained the children out of his earnings with a payment of \$6.00 each per week, which was remitted to the home by the Administrator. Any other expenses incurred in caring for the children were paid by the father, who has now been released for some months.

The Administrator receives many letters and visits from previous inmates of the Centre and invitations to their homes.

Each man hands his weekly or fortnightly pay envelope to the Administrator, who allocates pocket money, and keeps a very strict account of the remainder. Usually a regular cheque is sent to a wife or dependent parent, and requests for extra money for special expenses are sympathetically considered. One man, who had never had a bank account in his life, after a period of nine months at the Centre had a bank account containing close to \$1,000!

The men occupy separate rooms, are allowed transistor radios and extras, subject to correct use, and "softening touches" such as family photographs, decoration and pictures. No gambling is allowed, but the men play cards, chess, darts, dominoes and scrabble, or watch television at night. A well-equipped library is available, also billiards, indoor bowls and table tennis. Week-end activities include bush walking and rock climbing in which the Commissioner of Corrective Services has taken part. Only four men in a period of 18 months have been returned to prison and only for minor breaches of house discipline, but a minor breach could lead to a serious breach, so precautions are taken. One man has been returned to maximum security when an extradition order was served on him.

The Commissioner, Mr. W R McGeechan, told the Civil Rehabilitation Committee Presidents that he was proud of the fact that three of the work-release men now were employed in the Public Service. Professional men and labourers are mixing extremely well, travelling to and from work together.

The age group extends from 20 years to 56 years, and the present number of men at the house consists of 21 on work-release and 4 house staff

Group discussions are held every Wednesday evening, with the Co-ordinator and the permanent social worker, when personal and family problems are discussed, and home visits may be arranged for the social worker where desired.

Two sample financial statements are set out hereunder:-

Net earnings	4 month period	3 month period
	1139.70	1014.26
Bonus earnings and private cash on transfer	<u>23.00</u>	<u>6.94</u>
	\$1140.61	\$1021.20
	(Married)	(Single)
Payments to dependants	375.00	Nil
Fares and incidentals	120.00	104.00
Accommodation charges	192.00	168.00
Special deductions	Nil	32.00
Balance of wages on discharge	80.60	59.81
Savings Bank Credit on discharge	<u>373.01</u>	<u>657.39</u>
	\$1140.61	\$1021.20
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It would appear that the scheme is working extremely well in New South Wales, both from an economic and rehabilitative point of view

It is anticipated that the long range aim will be for ten per cent of the prison population to proceed to work release.
