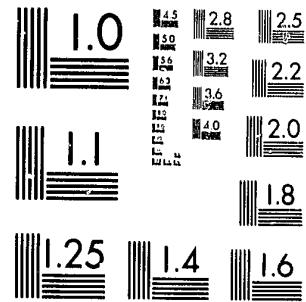


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ACQUISITIONS

VICTORIAN AND INTERSTATE TRENDS  
IN PROBATION AND PAROLE ACTIVITY,  
AND PRISON MORTALITY

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Melbourne.  
March 1978.

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This paper has been prepared by the Victorian Social Welfare Department.

It analyses trends in Victorian probation and parole activity for the ten-year period from 1967-68 to 1976-77 and compares probation and parole activity between the Australian States for 1975-76. An inter-State comparison of prison mortality, based on the three-year period from 1974-75 to 1976-77 is also made.

VICTORIAN TRENDS IN PROBATION AND PAROLE

Trends in probation and parole activity are best viewed in relation to other trends in the criminal justice system, particularly to trends in imprisonment. In order to present a more comprehensive picture of this activity in Victoria, the number of adult offenders placed on probation and the number of adult parole releases have been compared to both the number of convicted prisoners received and the daily average prison population for the ten-year period.

The number of convicted prisoners received; the daily average prison population; the number of adult offenders placed on probation; the number of adult parole releases; and the number of adult parole cancellations for Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77 are shown in Table 1. The results of a linear regression for the above variables are shown graphically in Figure 1.

Probation:

Using the results of the regression analysis to illustrate the trends, it can be seen that the number of convicted prisoners received has dropped dramatically (by 48.8%) during the period under review. This trend is reflected in a similar, but less marked, decrease of 36.6% in the daily average prison population during the same period. The decreasing prison population, whether measured by the number of prisoners received or the daily average, has been matched to some extent by an increase in the number of offenders placed on adult probation. In this case an increase of 17.9%. (Statistical appendix).

However, while the annual number of prisoners received has dropped by about 4,500 over the ten-year period, the number of offenders placed on adult probation has increased by only about 250 in the same time. This leaves a discrepancy between the annual prison and probation figures of around 4,250 offenders which can be accounted for either by:

- \* a decrease in crime;
- \* fewer reports/arrests/convictions; or
- \* a major diversion by the courts towards alternative sentences such as bonds and fines.

When the trend in the number of offenders placed on adult probation is considered as a ratio of every 100 offenders sent to prison, the number of probationers has increased from 13.3 to 33.7 for every 100 convicted prisoners received, as shown in Figure 2, an increase of 153%.

Parole:

Although the number of convicted prisoners received has dropped markedly, the number of prisoners released on adult parole has fluctuated around 690 prisoners per year being released on adult parole. The trend over the ten-year period

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Table 1. Number of convicted prisoners received, daily average prison population, offenders placed on adult probation, prisoners released on adult parole, and adult parole cancellations in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77.

Year	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Convicted prisoners received	8,889	8,745	8,072	8,549	8,260	7,254	5,615	5,344	5,313	4,845
Daily average prison population	2,233	2,315	2,283	2,389	2,366	2,107	1,870	1,651	1,604	1,484
Offenders placed on adult probation	1,533	1,381	1,514	1,458	1,561	1,678	1,502	1,507	1,646	1,824
Prisoners released on adult parole	618	630	706	672	750	811	775	710	643	587
Adult parole cancellations	196	220	213	217	214	236	204	153	212	156

Table 2. Number of offenders placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received and per 10 daily average prison population in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77.

Year	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Prisoners placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received	17.2	15.8	18.8	17.1	18.9	23.1	26.7	28.2	31.0	37.6
Prisoners placed on adult probation per 10 daily average prison population	6.9	6.0	6.6	6.1	6.6	8.0	8.0	9.1	10.3	12.3

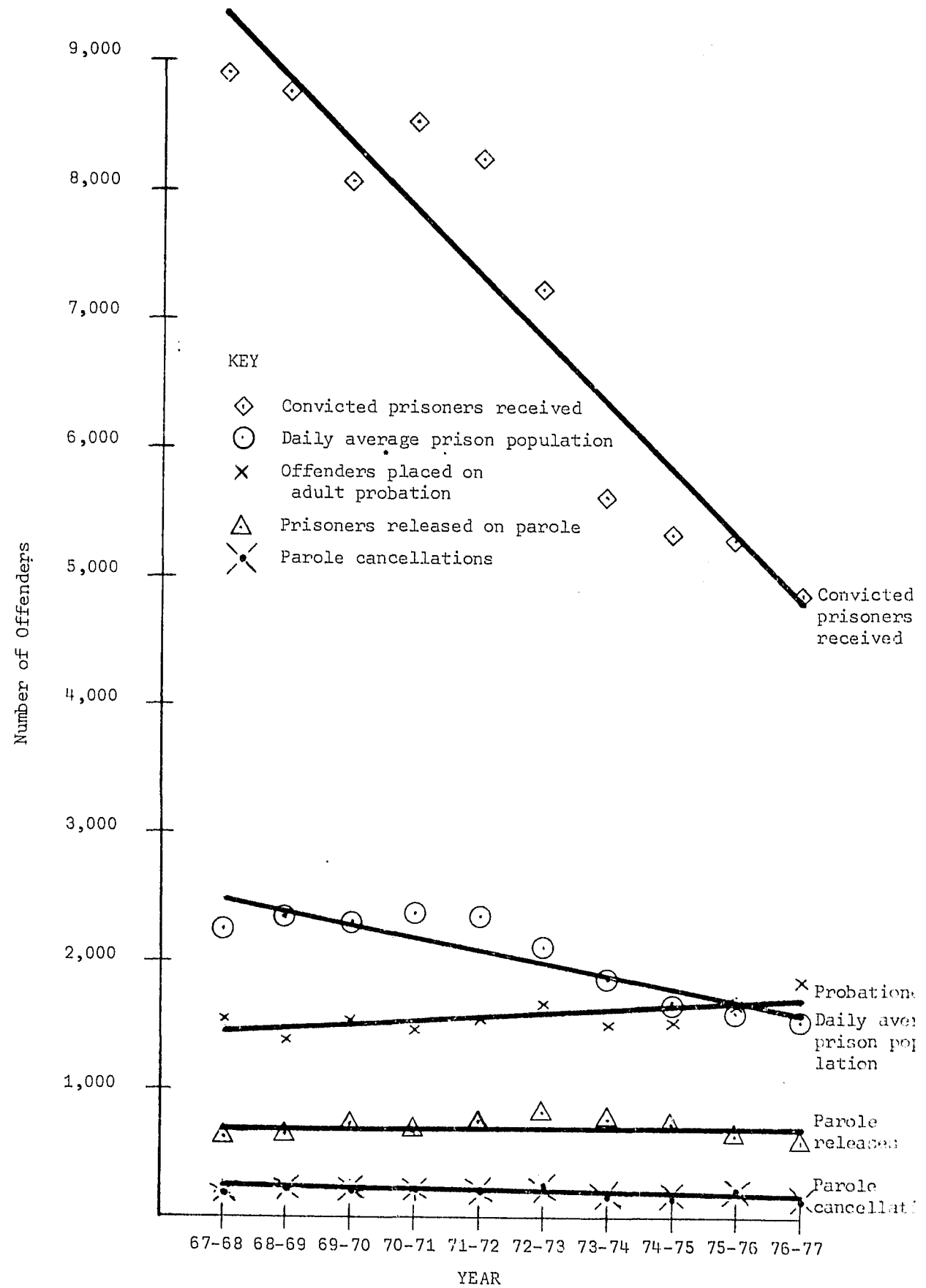


Figure 1. Regression lines showing the trend in convicted prisoners received; daily average prison population; adult offenders placed on probation; prisoners released on parole; and parole cancellations in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77. The numbers involved each year are also plotted.

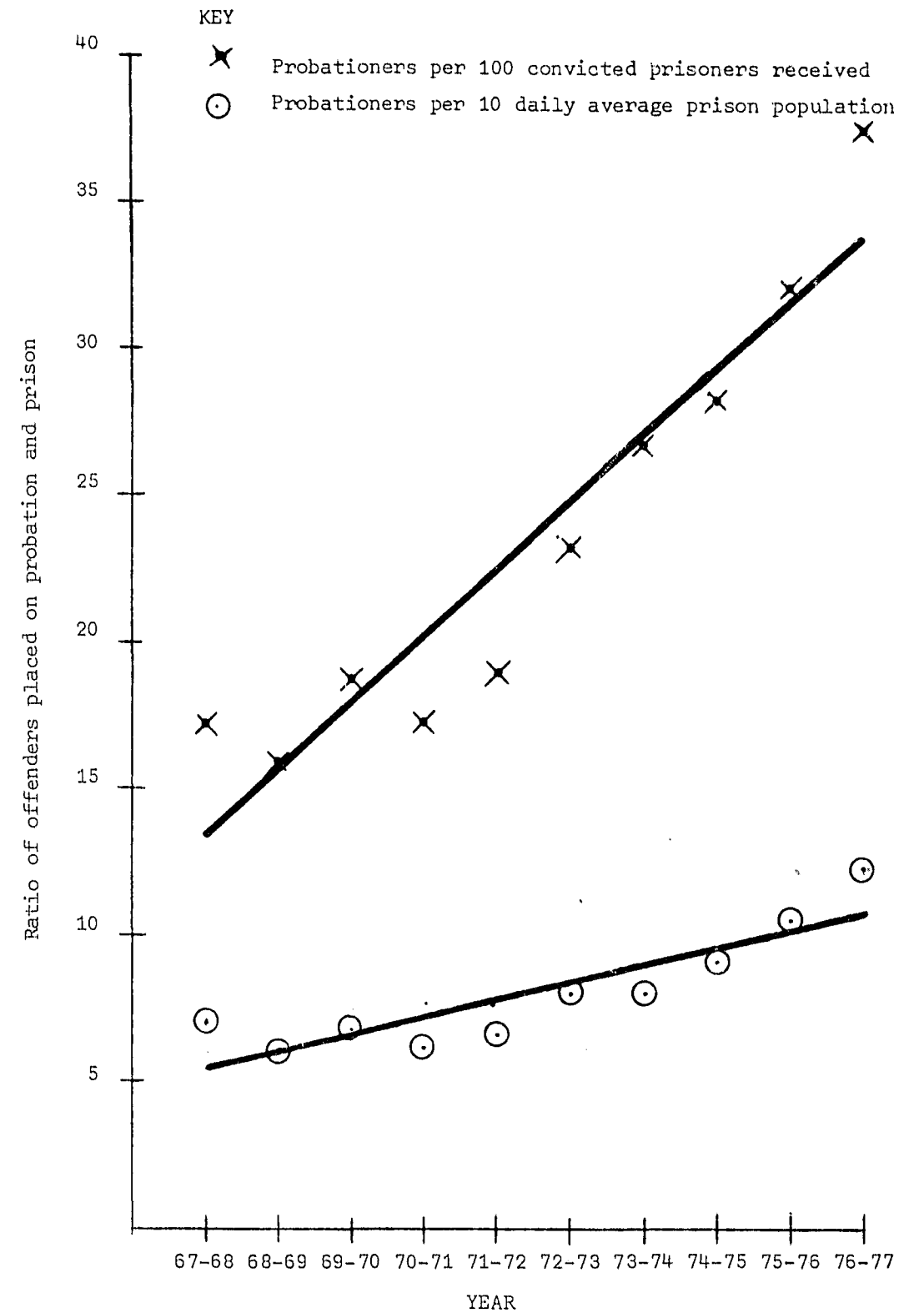


Figure 2. Regression lines showing the trend in the number of offenders placed on adult probation in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77 per 100 convicted prisoners received and per 10 daily average prison population. Annual proportions also shown.

shows a slight increase of 1.6% in the number of adult parolees released. However, the high degree of annual fluctuation, reflected in the low correlation co-efficient of  $r = .05$ , makes the linear regression analysis an unreliable method of describing trends in this instance.

Thus, while the reservoir of potential parolees is shrinking which in turn has presumably restricted the degree of choice for the selection of parolees, the actual numbers released on parole are similar to that of ten years ago.

The changes in parole activity are more pronounced and reliable when the number of adult parole releases is considered as a proportion of every 100 convicted prisoners received or per ten daily average prison population. (See Table 3). The ten-year trend as determined by linear regression is shown in Figure 3 for parole releases in relation to convicted prisoners received and daily average prison population.

The regression analysis shows that the proportion of parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received increased by 97.2% over the ten-year period. That is, the proportion of prisoners released on parole increased from 6.9 to 13.6 per 100 convicted prisoners received. This would tend to imply either that:

- \* there has been a change in criteria for granting parole; or
- \* the decrease in the prison population has not been "across the board", but has resulted in an increase in the proportion of prisoners considered to be suitable for parole.

#### Parole Cancellations:

An 18.0% decrease in the number of adult parole cancellations over the ten years can be interpreted as either:

- \* offenders now being placed on parole are better able to comply with the conditions of the order;
- \* parole supervision and the enforcement of parole conditions have become less stringent;
- \* parole supervision has become more effective resulting in fewer breakdowns and cancellations.

An examination of changes in the type of parole cancellations provides a better insight into the possible reasons behind the overall decrease in cancellations. The percentage of parole releases cancelled as a result of reconviction; the percentage cancelled by the Adult Parole Board and the total percentage of parole releases cancelled in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77 are shown in Table 4. The regression analysis of this data, as plotted in Figure 4, illustrates the ten-year trends.

Based on the regression analysis, the total percentage of parole releases cancelled has decreased by 19.6% from 32.7 to 26.3. But while the percentage of releases cancelled as a result of reconviction has dropped by 58.4% from 23.3 to 9.7, the percentage of parole releases cancelled by the Adult Parole Board has actually increased by 82.6% from 9.2 to 16.8. The higher proportion of parole cancellations by the Parole Board following a breaching of conditions could be due to either:

Table 3. Number of prisoners released on adult parole per 100 convicted prisoners received and per 10 daily average prison population in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77.

Year	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Prisoners released on adult parole per 100 convicted prisoners received	7.0	7.2	8.7	7.9	9.1	11.2	13.8	13.3	12.1	12.1
10 daily average prison population	2.8	2.7	3.1	2.8	3.2	3.8	4.1	4.3	4.0	4.0

Table 4. Percentage of parole releases cancelled by reconviction, the Parole Board, and the total percentage cancelled in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77.

Year	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Percentage parole releases cancelled by Reconviction	21%	24%	17%	23%	17%	18%	15%	9%	10%	11%
Parole Board	11%	11%	13%	9%	11%	11%	12%	13%	23%	16%
Total	32%	35%	30%	32%	28%	29%	27%	22%	33%	27%

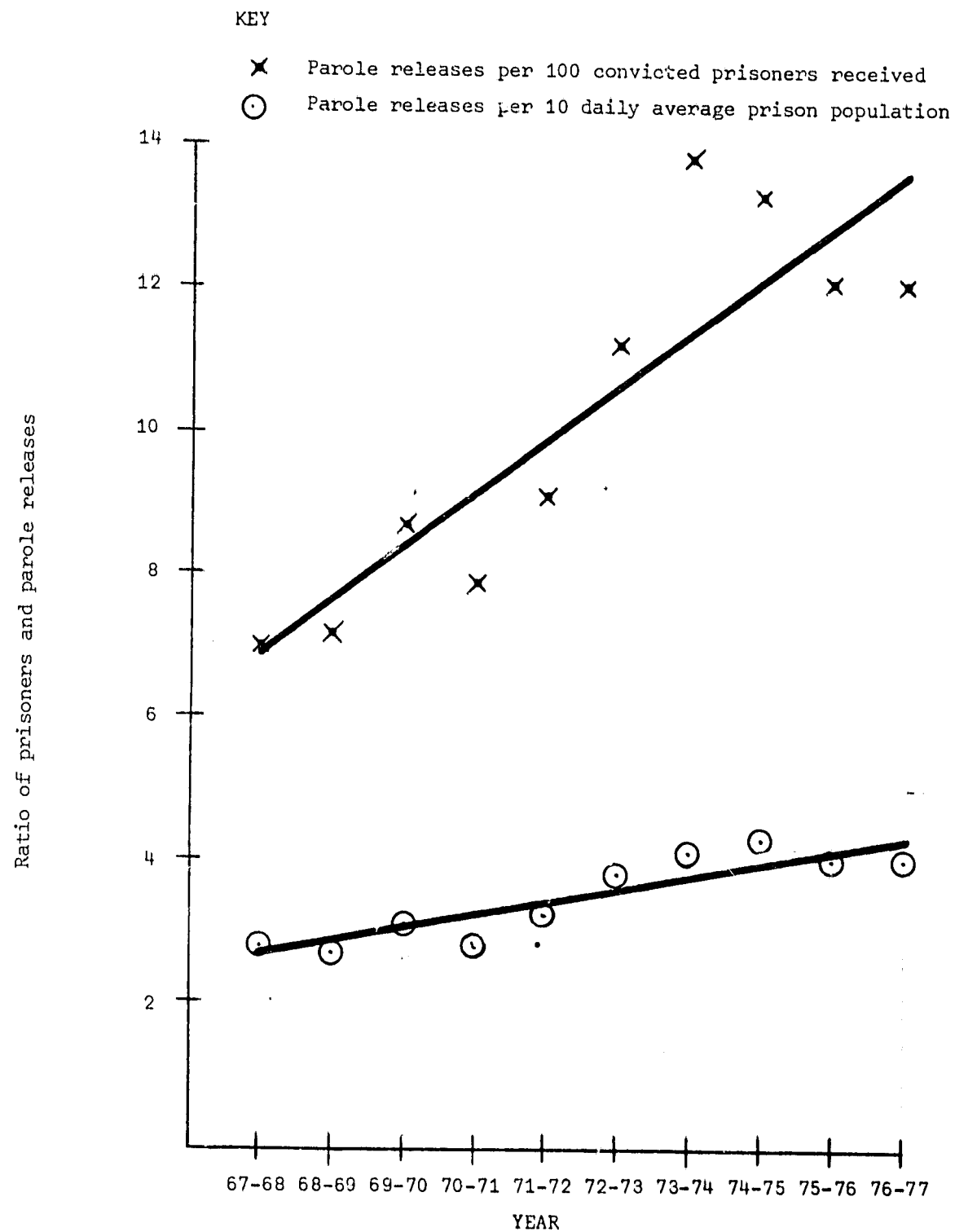


Figure 3. Regression lines showing the trend in adult parole releases in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77 per 100 convicted prisoners received and per 10 daily average prison population. Annual proportions also shown.

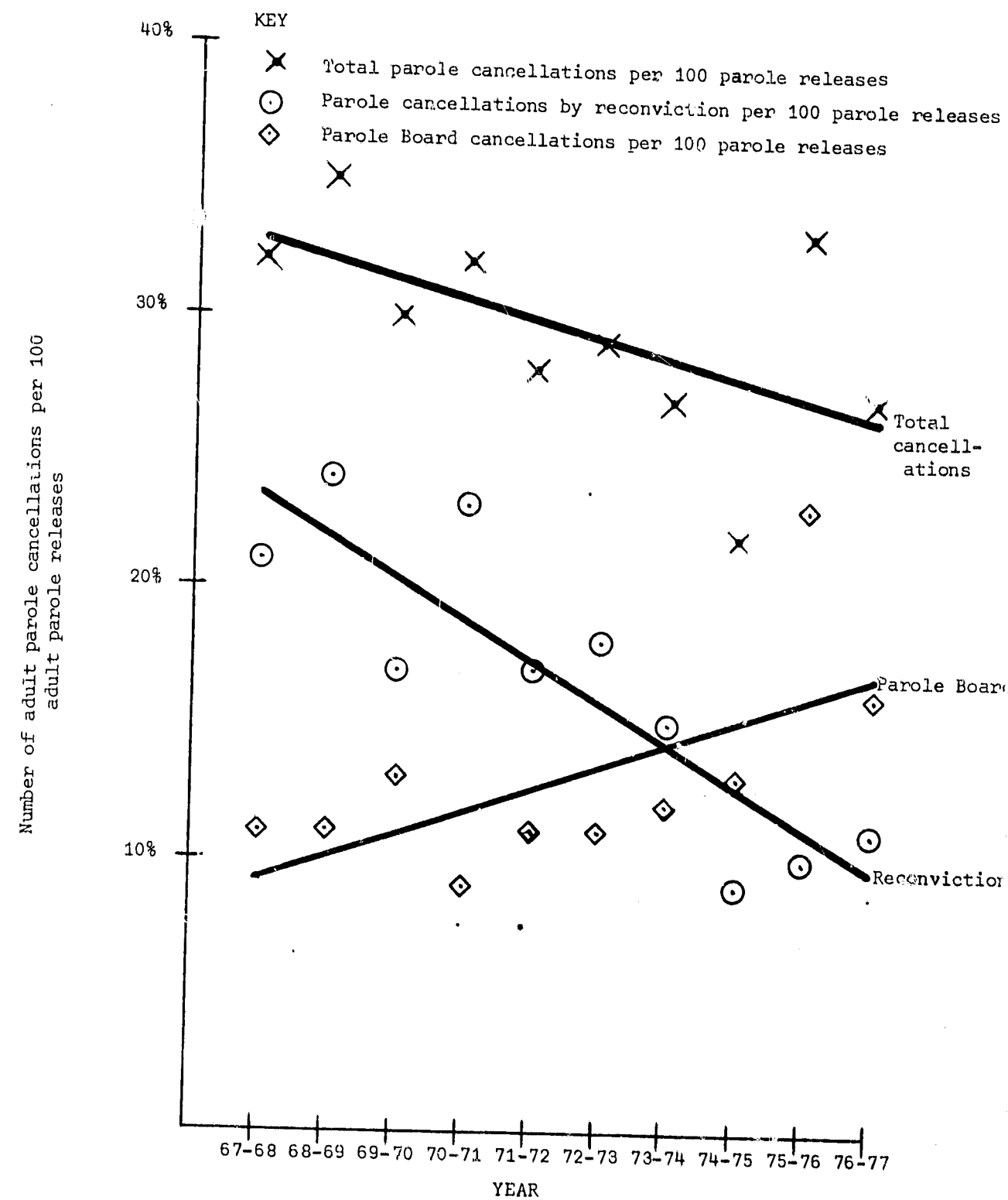


Figure 4. Regression lines showing the trend in adult parole cancellations per 100 parole releases in Victoria from 1967-68 to 1976-77. Cancellations by the Parole Board, by reconviction, and total cancellations are presented, as are the annual proportions.

- \* a change in the criteria used by the Board for cancellation; or
- \* a more rigorous supervision of parolees.

The other possibility, namely that the parolees are becoming more recalcitrant, is not supported by the overall decline in the percentage of parole cancellations. The 58.4% decrease in the proportion of parole releases cancelled as a result of reconviction could be due to either:

- \* more effective "rehabilitation" through prison programmes;
- \* improved supervision while on parole; or
- \* a failure by police and courts to apprehend or convict parolees for subsequent offences.

Summary:

In summary:

- \* There has been an increase in the number of offenders placed on adult probation for every 100 sent to prison (from 13.3 to 33.7).
- \* There has, however, been an overall "loss" of offenders somewhere in the network amounting to about 4,250 offenders per year who have presumably been diverted both from prison and probation.
- \* There has been a 97% increase in the proportion of prisoners released on parole - from 6.9 to 13.6 per 100 convicted prisoners received - over the ten-year period.
- \* There has been an overall decrease of 19.5% in the proportion of parole releases cancelled. Releases cancelled by the Adult Parole Board have increased by 81.5% while cancellations due to reconviction have dropped by 58.6%.

INTERSTATE COMPARISONS OF PROBATION AND PAROLE ACTIVITY 1976-77

In this interstate comparison of probation and parole activity, it is not intended to speculate on various reasons for differences between the States. This is best left to those familiar with the policies and operation of probation and parole activity within their own State. Instead, only the relevant comparative figures will be shown.

Table 5 compares probation and parole activity for each of the States in relation to the following variables:

- \* the number of convicted prisoners received;
- \* the number of offenders placed on adult probation;
- \* the number of prisoners released on adult parole; and
- \* the number of adult parole cancellations.

A comparison is then made between the States in:

- \* the number of offenders placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received;
- \* the number of prisoners released on adult parole per 100 convicted prisoners received; and
- \* the percentage of parole releases cancelled.

Table 5. Number of convicted prisoners received; offenders placed on adult probation; prisoners released on adult parole and adult parole cancellations for the six Australian States in 1976-77. Probation and parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received and parole releases cancelled per 100 parole releases also given.

	NSW	VIC	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS	AUST. (Exclu. N.T.)
Convicted prisoners received	7,642	4,845	3,479	4,972	3,923	509	25,370
Offenders placed on adult probation	3,407	1,824	1,287	1,400	1,080	1,283	10,281
Prisoners released on adult parole	1,206	587	224	177	397	90	2,681
Adult parole cancellations	333	156	45	50	138	14	736
Probationers per 100 convicted prisoners received	44.6	37.7	37.0	28.2	27.5	252.1	40.5
Parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received	15.8	12.1	6.4	3.6	10.1	17.7	10.6
Parole releases cancelled per 100 parole releases	27.6	26.6	20.1	28.2	34.8	15.6	27.5



Probation:

In 1976-77, the Australian<sup>(1)</sup> rate for offenders placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received was 40.5.

Tasmania had by far the highest rate of offenders placed on adult probation at 252.1 per 100 convicted prisoners received. This was over 500% higher than the Australian rate. Western Australia had the lowest rate at 27.5 per 100 convicted prisoners received, which was 32% below the Australian rate. The rate for the number of offenders placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received, for each State, and the percentage difference between the Australian and State rates are shown in Table 6.

Figure 5 shows the State differences in the form of a histogram.

Table 6. The number of offenders placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received for each Australian State in 1976-77. The percentage difference between the Australian and State rates also presented.

	NSW	VIC	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS	AUST.
Probationers per 100 convicted prisoners received	44.6	37.7	37.0	28.2	27.5	252.1	40.5
% difference between Australian and State rates	+10.1%	- 6.9%	- 8.6%	-30.4%	-32.1%	+522%	-

Parole:

The number of prisoners released on adult parole per 100 convicted prisoners received for Australia<sup>(1)</sup> was 10.6 in 1976-77. Once again Tasmania, with a ratio of 17.7 parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received had the highest rate of parole releases in Australia, exceeding the Australian rate by 67.0%. The lowest rate was recorded in South Australia with 3.6 parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received. This is 66.0% below the Australian rate.

The ratio for parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received for each State, and the percentage difference between the Australian and State rates are shown in Table 7. Figure 6 shows the State differences in the form of a histogram.

(1) The Australian rate is for the six States only. No information available for the Northern Territory.

Table 7. The number of prisoners released on adult parole per 100 convicted prisoners received for each Australian State in 1976-77. The percentage difference between the Australian and State rates are also presented.

	NSW	VIC	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS	AUST.
Parolees per 100 convicted prisoners received	15.8	12.1	6.4	3.6	10.1	17.7	10.6
% difference between Australian and State rates	+49.1%	+14.2%	-39.6%	-66.0%	-4.7%	+67.0%	-

The proportion of parole releases cancelled per 100 parole releases was 27.5 for Australia. The lowest rate of parole cancellation was in Tasmania, with 15.6 cancellations per 100 releases, which was 43.3% below the Australian cancellation rate. The highest cancellation rate was recorded in Western Australia where 34.8 cancellations per 100 releases was 26.5% above the Australian rate. The rate of parole cancellations per 100 parole releases for each State, and the percentage difference between the Australian and State rates are shown in Table 8. Figure 7 shows those State differences in the form of a histogram.

Table 8. The number of parole cancellations per 100 parole releases for each Australian State in 1976-77. The percentage difference between the Australian and State rates are also presented.

	NSW	VIC	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS	AUST.
Parole releases cancelled per 100 parole releases	27.6	26.6	20.1	28.2	34.8	15.6	27.5
% difference between Australian and State rates	+0.4%	-3.3%	-26.9%	+2.5%	+26.5%	-43.3%	-

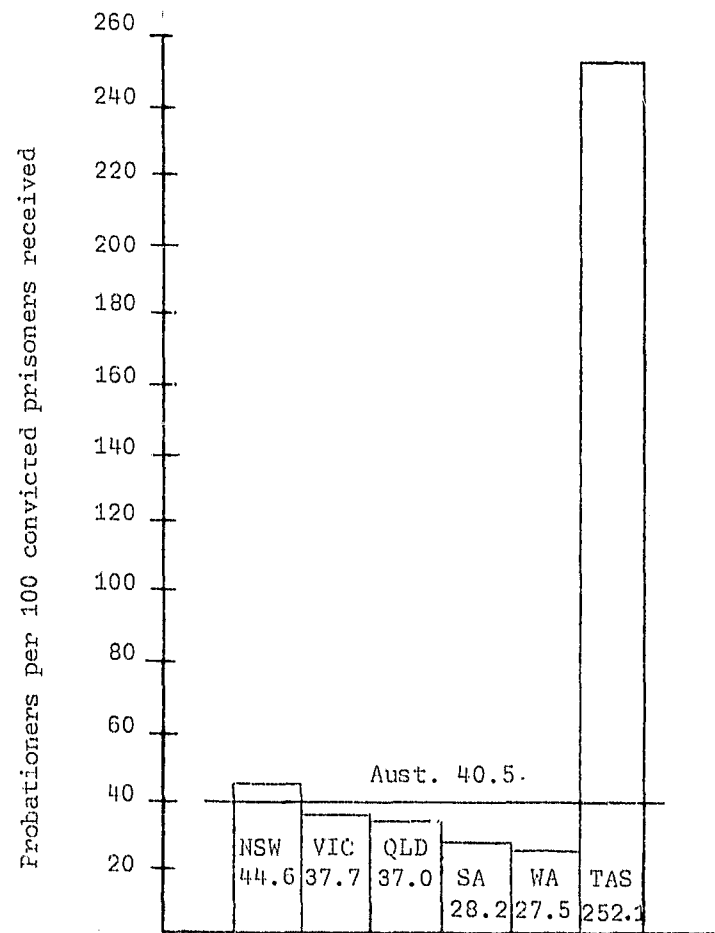


Figure 5. Interstate and Australian comparison of number of offenders placed on adult probation per 100 convicted prisoners received for 1976-77.

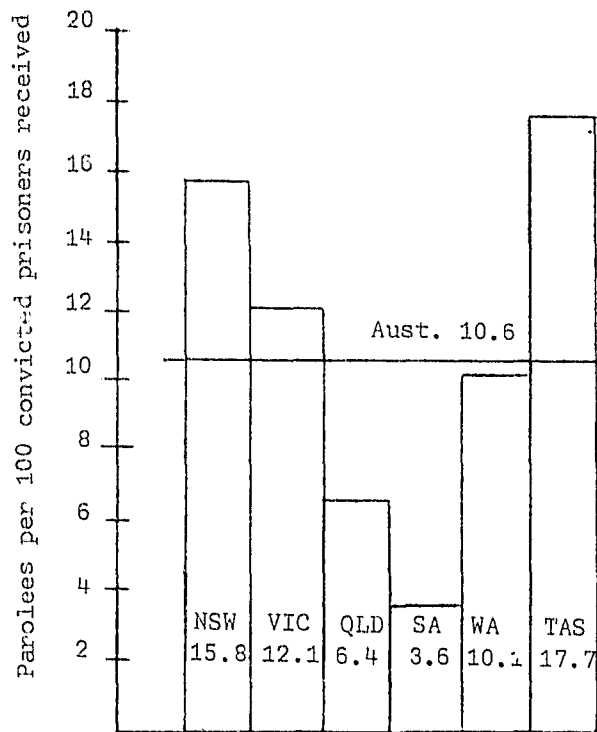


Figure 6. Interstate and Australian comparison of number of prisoners released on adult parole per 100 convicted prisoners received for 1976-77.

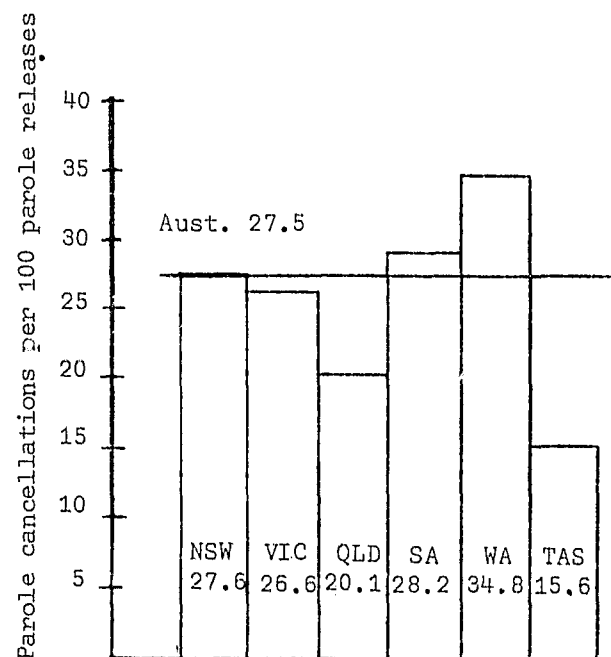


Figure 7. Interstate and Australian comparison of number of parole cancellation per 100 parole releases for 1976-77.

AN INTERSTATE COMPARISON OF PRISON MORTALITY RATES

The annual number of deaths in prison by natural causes, suicide and murder for each Australian State is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. The annual number of deaths in each State's prisons by natural causes, suicide and murder from 1974-75 to 1976-77. The average deaths for the three years also given.

	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	Total	Average over 3 years
<b>N.S.W.</b>					
Daily average prison population	3,393	3,252	3,662	10,307	3,346
Natural causes	2	8	5	15	5.0
Suicide	4	1	4	9	3.0
Murder	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6	9	9	24	8.0
<b>Victoria</b>					
Daily average prison population	1,651	1,604	1,484	4,739	1,580
Natural causes	1	3	2	6	2.0
Suicide	4	1	2	7	2.3
Murder	2	1	2	5	1.7
Total	7	5	6	18	6.0
<b>Queensland</b>					
Daily average prison population	1,526	1,433	1,523	4,482	1,494
Natural causes	6	4	6	16	5.3
Suicide	5	1	3	9	3.0
Murder	-	-	1	1	0.3
Total	11	5	10	26	8.7
<b>S.A.</b>					
Daily average prison population	731	713	704	2,148	716
Natural causes	1	-	-	1	0.3
Suicide	1	-	1	2	0.7
Murder	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	-	1	3	1.0
<b>W.A.</b>					
Daily average prison population	1,027	996	1,121	3,144	1,048
Natural causes	7	3	2	12	4.0
Suicide	2	1	2	5	1.7
Murder	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9	4	4	17	5.7
<b>Tasmania</b>					
Daily average prison population	342	309	263	914	305
Natural causes	-	1	-	1	0.3
Suicide	-	-	-	-	-
Murder	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	1	-	1	0.3
<b>Australia</b>					
Daily average prison population	8,674	8,307	8,757	25,738	8,579
Natural causes	17	19	15	51	17.0
Suicide	16	4	12	32	10.7
Murder	2	1	3	6	2.0
Total	35	24	30	89	29.7

As the annual number of deaths in prison in each State is very low, it was considered that a three-year average of prison deaths would be a more reliable base for making interstate comparisons. The annual prison deaths are therefore shown from 1974-75 to 1976-77. The three-year average and the number of Australian<sup>(1)</sup> prison deaths are also given (see Table 9).

Table 10. The number of prison deaths per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment for death by natural causes, suicide, murder and total deaths for the six Australian States during the period 1974-75 to 1976-77. The Australian prison death rates (excluding N.T.) also given.

Prison deaths per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment	N.S.W. VIC. QLD. S.A. W.A. TAS. AUST.						
	Natural causes	1.46	1.27	3.55	0.42	3.82	0.98
Suicide	0.87	1.46	2.01	0.98	1.62	-	1.25
Murder	-	1.08	0.20	-	-	-	0.23
Total	2.32	3.80	5.82	1.40	5.44	0.98	3.46

Table 10 presents the number of prison deaths per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment resulting from natural causes, suicide and murder. The total number of prison deaths for each State during the period from 1974-75 to 1976-77 are also given.

The percentage difference between the Australian and State prison death rates are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Percentage difference between Australian and State prison death rates.

Death by	N.S.W. VIC. Q.D. S.A. W.A. TAS.					
	Natural causes	-26.3	-35.9	+79.3	-78.8	+92.9
Suicide	-30.4	+16.8	+60.8	-21.6	+29.6	-100.0
Murder	-100.0	+369.6	-13.0	-100.0	-100.0	-100.0
Total	-32.9	+9.8	+68.2	-59.5	+57.2	-71.7

It can be seen from the tables that Queensland, with 5.82 prison deaths per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment, had the highest total prison death rate - 68.2% above the Australian rate. Tasmania, with 0.98 prison deaths per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment had the lowest total prison death rate - 71.7% below the Australian rate.

The highest prison death rate by natural causes was recorded in W.A., at 3.82 per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment; the highest by suicide in Queensland at 2.01; and the highest by murder in Victoria at 1.08 per 1,000 man-years of imprisonment.

(1)

Australian figures are for the six States only. No information available from the Northern Territory.

## STATISTICAL APPENDIX

### Results of regression analysis

	Y-intercept	Slope	Correlation coefficient	Linear regression for		Difference	Percentage change
	m	b	r	1967-68	1976-77	Δ	%
Convicted prisoners received	9,884.2	-508.3	-.945	9,375.9	4,801.3	-4,574.6	-48.8%
Daily average prison population	2,586.7	-101.2	-.883	2,485.5	1,574.9	-910.6	-36.6%
Offenders placed on adult probation	1,404.1	28.4	.684	1,432.5	1,688.3	255.8	17.9%
Prisoners released on adult parole	683.5	1.2	.051	684.7	695.7	-11	1.6%
Adult parole cancellations	226.5	-4.4	-.496	222.1	182.1	40	-18.0%
Adult parole releases per 10 daily average prison population	2.47	0.18	.900	2.65	4.31	1.66	62.6%
Adult parole releases per 100 convicted prisoners received	6.1	0.7	.883	6.89	13.59	6.7	97.2%
Percentage parole releases cancelled by 10 daily average prison population	4.71	0.60	.881	5.31	10.67	5.36	100.9%
Percentage parole releases cancelled by 100 convicted prisoners received	11.1	2.3	.937	13.3	33.7	20.4	153.4%
Percentage parole releases cancelled by Reconviction	24.9	-1.52	-.870	23.3	9.7	-15.6	-58.4%
Percentage parole releases cancelled by Parole Board	8.4	0.84	.637	9.2	16.8	7.6	82.6%
Total	33.4	-0.71	-.564	32.7	26.3	-6.4	-19.6%

**END**