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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

ACQUISITIONS

CONTROLLER OF PRISONS

REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1978

(PRISONS — RISDON AND THE KILDERRY FARM AT HAYES)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command

By Authority:
T. J. HUGHES, Government Printer, Tasmania

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(No. 7)

The Attorney-General, The Honourable B. K. Miller,
 Attorney-General's Department,
 Murray Street, Hobart.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report and Statistical Tables of the Prisons Department for the year ending 30 June 1978.

Prison Population

For the seventh consecutive year, a decrease in the daily average number of prisoners held in custody has been recorded. Although not so dramatic a decline as the 14.8 per cent recorded during the previous year the reduction of 8.26 per cent was still quite substantial. The highest number of prisoners confined on any day during the year was 269 and the lowest number was 221. The former figure is the lowest recorded since 1964.

The following table outlines the highest number of prisoners held and the daily average prison population during the past decade:—

<i>30 June</i>	<i>Highest Number Held</i>	<i>Daily Average</i>
1969	362	333.21
1970	405	359.09
1971	414	385.85
1972	406	373
1973	398	370.7
1974	388	343.78
1975	366	342.07
1976	365	308.73
1977	301	263.12
1978	269	241.38

The continuing effects of parole and the alternative penalties now available to Courts have undoubtedly been responsible for the decline in prison population over the past two years. Prison populations are notoriously difficult to predict but indications over the last two months of the year under review appear to indicate that a base level may have been reached.

Populations could again increase should Courts hand down harsher sentences for breaches of alternative penalties.

Accommodation and Buildings

The new Security Patients' Hospital at Risdon was completed early in the year. This unit with accommodation for up to 28 patients will alleviate the poor medical facilities at Risdon and provide treatment facilities for both the physically and mentally ill for many years to come.

Work continued during the year on much needed maintenance at Risdon Prison. The Remand Yard in particular has been given a substantial overhaul. Unfortunately, this work has had to be severely limited due to the unavailability of funds.

During the year a new closed circuit television surveillance system was installed at the Risdon Prison and Security Patients' Hospital. The installation has already proved its worth as a valuable back-up aid to safety and security.

Launceston Prison

As indicated in last year's report the old prison at Launceston was abandoned during that year and the prisoners were transferred to the new Police Headquarters building. Since then the Police Department have taken over the financial responsibility for the operation and control of remandees in Launceston. In view of this no separate statistics are provided in this report for Launceston.

Women's Prison, Risdon

The daily average number of woman prisoners increased from 3.73 in the previous year to 5.63 per cent last year. A total of thirty-nine female prisoners were received into custody during the year. Much help has again been received from voluntary helpers at this institution and I wish to express my appreciation for their efforts.

Escapes

There were no abscondments from maximum or medium security during the year. One prisoner absconded from the Prison Farm at Hayes. He was re-captured two days later and suitably dealt with by the Court.

Official Visitors

Official Visitors continued to visit all institutions throughout the year. I wish to express my appreciation for their assistance and co-operation.

Educational and Recreational Activities

During the year the Education Officer who was previously seconded from the Education Department was appointed a full time officer of the Prisons Department. This brings Tasmania into line with the majority of the mainland States.

In April a Recreation and Amenities Officer was appointed to the Department and this has permitted us to expand the range of activities available to inmates.

The established education and recreation activities continued. These include contact lessons in basic subjects, supervision and counselling in respect of correspondence studies in a wide range of subjects (one inmate successfully completed a Science degree, majoring in Maths and Computer Studies), football or cricket in season, regular use of well-stocked library, debating club, chess club, hobby classes in woodcarving, metalwork, silkscreen printing and oil painting. In the exercise yards volley ball, table tennis, chess, padder tennis and simple cricket are available. Rug making in the cells has continued to be a popular activity.

The annual exhibition of prisoners' arts and crafts was held in the State library in late November and the Red Cross sponsored auction of these works was held in December at Domain House.

A first aid course leading to the St John's certificate was held and ten inmates were successful in obtaining certificates.

An Alcoholics Anonymous group was founded at Risdon under the sponsorship of the Moonah Group. This will be a valuable addition to the activities within the prison and it is envisaged that a system of sponsorship by people in the community will develop.

The Red Cross Blood Bank continues to visit Risdon and Hayes quarterly and the percentage of staff and inmates giving blood is very high when compared with the general community. For the year under review 363 donors from Risdon and 53 from Hayes donated blood.

The Athletic Carnival at Risdon which takes up all the Christmas and New Year recess once again provided the highlight of the activities. Gratitude is expressed for the donations of prizes at this time and for all the support given during the year by individuals and clubs which visit the prison in an encouraging role.

Discipline and Health

The discipline of prisoners throughout the year has been of a high standard and the health of prisoners remained generally good.

Prison Industries

The prison workshops have again had a very satisfactory year's operations. As well as providing useful occupation, training and work experience for prisoners, many other government agencies and approved organisations have benefited from the work carried out. The surplus returned to Consolidated Revenue at the end of the year's operations was \$63 658.

Welfare and After-Care

The Prison Welfare Officer ably assisted by the Probation and Parole Service and the many non-statutory bodies has again capably dealt with the many problems facing prisoners on incarceration. Numerous enquiries have been carried out on behalf of inmates into matters relating to domestic, marital, behavioural and financial problems. In addition to this close co-operation has been maintained with solicitors, psychiatrists, sociologists, psychologists and other agencies. Commonwealth Employment Officers continue to interview prisoners prior to release thus ensuring registration for employment prior to discharge. The assistance received from the Probation and Parole Service, the Commonwealth Employment Service, Hobart City Mission, Prisoners' Aid Society, Society of St Vincent de Paul and a number of other individuals is greatly appreciated.

H.M. Prison Farm, Hayes

The daily average number of prisoners held at the Prison Farm during the year was 33.45. This was the lowest number held there for the past 26 years and is approximately one-half the daily average of two years ago. Despite the dearth of suitable labour, farm activities were maintained at a high level. Production figures for the year include:—

Milk — 398 895 litres.

Wool — 5 197 kilos.

Eggs — 35 638 dozen.

Vegetables — 264.42 tonnes.—

A surplus of \$33 864 was paid into Consolidated Revenue at the end of the year's operations.

Several major prizes were won at the Royal Hobart Show in the piggery section.

The Farm Potters also took out a first prize.

Charitable Institution

During the year the use of this building to house inmates committed there under certain sections of the Police Offences Act was discontinued. The building was undoubtedly a fire risk and its abandonment was long overdue.

Staff

During the year, twenty-five new officers were inducted into the service and all completed a four week induction training course. Nine officers undertook a three week course for Senior Prison Officers and 115 male and two female Prison Officers qualified for the St Johns Ambulance First Aid to the Injured Certificate.

The Education Officer and the Welfare Officer attended two seminars on Drugs and Alcohol, one of two and the other of three days duration.

The Education Officer also attended an Adult Literacy Conference at Melbourne University and an Education of Prisoners' Workshop at the Institute of Criminology in Canberra.

Throughout the year the staff have performed their duties efficiently and conscientiously and I wish to express my appreciation of their efforts.

Yours faithfully,

D. HORNIBROOK, Controller of Prisons.

TABLE 4
RETURN SHOWING OFFENCES FOR WHICH CONVICTED PRISONERS WERE RECEIVED IN THE STATE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1978

Offences against the person

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Murder	2	...	2
Wounding	1	...	1
Robbery with violence	13	3	16
Common assault	43	...	43
Aggravated assault	2	...	2
Assault police	23	...	23
Rape	7	...	7
Attempted rape	1	...	1
Indecent assault	9	...	9
Assault a female	1	...	1
Defilement	4	...	4
Unlawful carnal knowledge	8	...	8
Indecent practices between male persons	4	...	4
Forcible abduction	4	...	4
Incest	3	...	3
Obstruct police	2	...	2
Drunk in charge of a dangerous weapon	1	...	1
	128	3	131

Offences against property

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Aggravated burglary	13	...	13
False pretences	162	57	219
Uttering	37	20	57
Forgery	45	17	62
Burglary	405	3	408
Attempted burglary	5	...	5
Steal a motor vehicle	135	...	135
Attempt to steal a motor vehicle	7	...	7
Stealing	406	168	574
Stock stealing	5	...	5
Trespassing	56	1	57
Trespass with intent	13	...	13
Unlawfully setting fire to property	3	...	3
Attempting to set fire to property	20	...	20
Imposition	8	...	8
Receiving	21	1	22
Defraud	5	...	5
Injury to property	34	...	34
Other offences against property	12	...	12
	1 392	267	1 659

Offences against good order

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Breach of suspended sentence	32	1	33
Breach of bail	21	....	21
Breach of probation order	46	3	49
Breach of parole	5	....	5
Breach of social services act	4	....	4
Revocation of work order	13	....	13
Non payment of fines	85	1	86
Drunk and incapable	29	11	40
Drunk and disorderly	23	3	26
Indecent language	9	....	9
Resist arrest	10	....	10
False statement to police	20	1	21
Use threatening language to police	5	....	5
Contempt of court	6	....	6
Escape from custody	6	....	6
Endeavour to impose untrue representation	6	....	6
Fail to comply with an order	5	....	5
Vagrancy	11	....	11
Discharge a firearm	2	....	2
Perjury	1	2	3
Other offences against good order	8	....	8
	<u>347</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>369</u>

Traffic Offences

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Drive whilst disqualified	197	1	198
Exceed .08 per cent	69	....	69
Traffic offences	33	....	33
Drive under influence	29	....	29
Dangerous driving	9	....	9
Drive an unregistered motor vehicle	3	....	3
Having no third party insurance	2	....	2
Drive whilst alcohol present in body	2	....	2
Drive without licence	2	....	2
In possession of a licence calculated to deceive	1	....	1
Refuse breath test	1	....	1
Cause death by dangerous driving	1	....	1
Fail to stop at an accident	1	....	1
	<u>350</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>351</u>

Drug Offences

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sell prohibited substance	16	....	16
Possess prohibited substance	13	....	13
Use prohibited substance	7	....	7
Import dangerous drugs	4	....	4
Grow prohibited plant	1	....	1
Traffic in a dangerous substance	1	....	1
Administer dangerous drugs	1	....	1
Failure to disclose source of supply	1	....	1
	<u>44</u>	<u>....</u>	<u>44</u>

END