

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO TASMANIAN ADULT IMPRISONMENT AND YOUTH DETENTION MATTERS

Onesimus Foundation



14th April 2023

Legislative Council Inquiry into Tasmanian Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention Matters



Onesimus Foundation

Norm Reed, Executive Officer

Introduction

“In 1998, the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) was confronted with two pressing issues — an overcrowded prison that was straining infrastructure and resources, and a shortage of manpower due to difficulties in staff retention and recruitment. The situation was compounded by poor public perception of the organisation and its work. Prison officers were overworked and had low morale. The situation became so bad that SPS had to ask its parent Ministry, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), to slow down law enforcement. SPS was also seriously contemplating overseas recruitment of prison officers to address the manpower shortage”.¹

At that time, the prison had an inmate population of 17,000 and was on the verge of building accommodation for an additional 5,000 inmates. The recidivism rate was 44.1%. By 2009, the recidivism rate dropped to 26.5% and the number of people incarcerated to 13,000. Consequently, the additional accommodation was never built. In 2022, the population of the prison was 7,660 and the recidivism rate 20.6%.²

“The SPS is one of the most cost-effective prison systems in the world, with an average cost of incarceration of S\$75 per day and inmate-to-staff ratio of 7.6:1”². (As compared to Tasmania’s current cost per day [operating cost] of \$432³ (exceeded only by ACT) and an estimated inmate-to-uniformed correction staff ratio of 1.8:1⁴).

Confronted with a situation that is not dissimilar to the issues faced by the Tasmanian Correctional system, SPS intentionally addressed the challenges they were facing and transformed itself from an agency focusing on protecting society through the safe custody of criminals to a leading rehabilitation agency. Today it is one of the most cost-effective prisons in the world and has one of the lowest recidivism rates internationally. “Yet, security and discipline have not been compromised — there has been no escape or major riot, and the assault rate has been kept low. Staff morale has also been high, with about 81 percent of officers indicating their satisfaction with work in the organization”¹.

While the reasons for the successful transformation of the SPS were many and multifaceted the primary and underlying reason related to a change in prison culture and the transformation of correctional officer role from one of a custodial officer to becoming a Captains of Lives.⁵

¹ [“The Story of the Singapore Prison Service -From Custodians of Prisoners to Captains of Life”](#) (Attachment 1)

² [SPS Annual Statistics Release for 2022](#) (Attachment 2)

³ [Report on Government Services 2023](#)

⁴ See page 5 paragraph 6 of this report.

⁵ [Towards a Society without Re-offending \(pp 6\) - Lena Leong - Institute of Leadership and Organisation Development, Civil Service College, Singapore](#) – (Attachment 3)

While cultural issues will obviously have a bearing on direct comparisons between the Australian and Singapore systems, we would suggest the approach taken by SPS does warrant consideration by the Legislative Council as part of its inquiry.

Background

In 2014, I was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship to visit 21 prisons around the world. This study included a week in Singapore hosted by Jason Wong, the former Deputy Director of the Prison and Founder of the Yellow Ribbon Program.

My study resulted in some amazing findings and initiatives which were incorporated in the Department of Justice 2016 *“Breaking the Cycle – A Safer Community: Strategies for Improving Throughcare for Offenders (“Breaking the Cycle”)”*⁶. These findings primarily focused on supporting inmates to develop healthy family relations to better reintegrate into community and address intergenerational offending. Initiatives such as the introduction of Family Engagement Workers and Hidden Sentence Training, have been successful and helped engender better family relationships between inmates and their families and have raised an awareness in the community of challenges faced by inmates’ families. Onesimus Foundation has been actively involved in work in Risdon Prison for more than a decade (see Annex A for details).

While this submission could inform the Inquiry of the very valuable, evidence-based role good family connection can play in successful reintegration, we would much prefer to address the challenges faced by government and non-government agencies in delivering services to inmates in Tasmania Prison Service.

I suspect that the inquiry will receive many suggestions and recommendations for creative and evidence-based rehabilitative initiatives and programs. **HOWEVER, unless there is a drastic change to the prison culture, any efforts to engage with inmates to achieve better reintegration and rehabilitative outcomes will be severely hampered.**

It is our contention that the Department of Justice and TPS (Tasmania Prison Service) have genuinely attempted to address the rehabilitative and reintegration needs of inmates. In 2003, there were approximately seven non-uniformed staff working in a Prisoner Support Unit (PSU) and associated with prisoner support initiatives. Since that time, the Interventions and Reintegration Services (IRS) (previously known as the Integrated Offender Management (IOM)) was created and now staff approximately 80 professionals working in this space⁷. This represents a staff to inmate ratio better than 1 worker for every 10 inmates specifically working in the prison in ‘Interventions and Reintegration’ focused activities.

**WHAT WOULD YOU
PREFER?**

**THE TASMANIAN
GOVERNMENT PAY
\$6,048/FORTNIGHT FOR
A PERSON IN PRISON**

OR

**THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT PAY
\$693/FORTNIGHT
BENEFITS OUT OF PRISON**

⁶ <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/correctiveservices/breaking-the-cycle/breaking-the-cycle/strategies-for-improving-throughcare-for-offenders>

⁷ Ascertained by permission from TPS Phone Directory dated 8 February 2023

There has been genuine good will, new initiatives and resources given to implement the ‘best’ rehabilitative practices within TPS. However, it is a common complaint by most likely ‘all’ of these practitioners and external service providers that they are simply unable to gain access to inmates to effectively work with their clients because of the **constant lockdowns**, lack of adequate facilities and the security focus of the prison.

The System is Broken

Any visit to Port Arthur will reveal that Australia and Tasmania have been trying to come to terms with how to run an efficient prison system for nearly 250 years, and perhaps the only thing we learn from that history is that we haven’t done too well.

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA)⁸ 2015 report (updated to 2017) provides an international comparison of the costs, scope, and effectiveness of criminal justice in Australia. The findings of the report are very relevant to Tasmania and help to underscore the Tasmanian public’s perception to crime and the approach by government to address concerns about crime.

The IPA’s report shows that Australia has:

- the fifth most expensive prisons in the OECD, per prisoner basis.
- the seventh fastest prison spending growth rate in the OECD.
- a comparatively large and rapidly growing prison population.
- a higher spend more per capita on police services than all but nine other developed countries.
- more police per capita than all other common law countries except Ireland, with this measure growing at the fifth fastest rate in the OECD.
- a population that feels less safe than the citizens of many comparable countries, and that may experience more crime than other peoples.
- criminal justice systems that seem to be ineffective in correcting criminals’ behaviour (although international comparisons of this effectiveness are almost impossible).

The report states that there is reason to believe that Australians are receiving worse value for criminal justice spending than many other countries. Australians report their concern about crime, governments respond by hiring more police, and this feeds through the system to increased incarceration and higher costs. But the original problem – Australians’ perception of crime – persists. Either the increased spending is not preventing the growth of crime, or it is failing to reassure the public of their safety, or both. The IPA report underscores the need for criminal justice reform in Australia.

While the Tasmania prison system has been the subject of numerous reports and inquiries, the ‘system’ is broken.

AUSTRALIA'S
CRIMINAL JUSTICE COSTS
**AN INTERNATIONAL
COMPARISON**



Institute of
Public Affairs
ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND POLICY

Andrew Bushnell, Research Fellow

⁸ [The Institute of Public Affairs Australia’s Criminal Justice Costs – An International Comparison](#)

Lockdowns

In March this year it is understood that there was not one single day where the 'whole' prison has been unlocked. Within Risdon Prison Complex (Medium, Maximum and Southern Remand Centre (SRC)) there appears to have been a total lockdown 30% of the time across all facilities. Anecdotally, one inmate in Medium advised that he had only been unlocked for a period of seven consecutive days twice since January 2022.

The issue of lockdowns has been raised by the Tasmania Custodial Inspector in a specific Lockdown Review⁹ and in his '2021 Annual Report' he stated, *"I noted that I have held concerns regarding lockdowns for my entire tenure as Inspector..."*¹⁰

The Custodial Inspector goes on to say *"Primarily, lockdowns affect the time prisoners are able to spend out of cell but, as I have previously highlighted in inspection reports and annual reports, the effects are far more wide ranging. For prisoners, the effects include social isolation both from other prisoners and staff, reduced ability to attend activities including personal visits, and loss of autonomy and control over almost all aspects of daily life. For correctional staff, lockdowns increase their workloads, and they must also deal with frustrated prisoners who would naturally prefer to be unlocked and following their usual regime. For non-correctional staff, the inability to deliver their programs to prisoners and undertake their core work impacts on staff morale and causes a high degree of frustration for these staff too."*

SO, WHILE THIS INQUIRY
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Yet despite these matters being flagged by the Inspector, lockdowns have not only continued but become more frequent and prolonged.

So, while this Inquiry will consider some excellent recommendation for better preparing inmates for release, we would suggest that even the world's best practices will be of little benefit if the current restrictions affecting access to inmates are not addressed.

In the Custodial Inspectorate's Lockdown Report (pp 16) it was noted that 79% of lockdowns in January 2019 were due to staff shortages. In the same report the Inspector notes that poor recording of the reason for a lockdown suggesting that the number of lockdowns, because of staff shortage could be much higher. The report expands on staffing needs concluding that "... staff recruitment of Correctional staff by TPS is not keeping up with staff attrition" (pp 17).

Although a concerted effort has been made by TPS to increase the number of new recruits, attracting suitable candidates appears extremely difficult if not impossible. While we are not privy to

⁹ [Custodial Inspectorate Report – Lockdown Review 2021](#)

¹⁰ [Custodial Inspector Annual Report – 2020-2021](#)(pp 16)

recruiting information, it is understood a recently scheduled recruit school did not proceed because of the lack of suitable applicants giving credence to comments I have heard “that we’ve fished the pond dry.”

Compounding the issue of poor recruitment and high attrition rate, a high number of staff are unable to work because of sickness, stress, or compensation claims.

Correctional Officer Staff- Compensation

In the Custodial Inspector’s ‘Resources and Systems Inspection Report 2019’¹¹ he notes the extremely high number of worker compensation claims. From my investigations it has been suggested that currently up to 20% of uniformed staff could be on stress leave or return to work, with one person commenting that of the 70 or so people recruiting in the last 12 months, 50% are now on stress leave. While I cannot substantiate these claims, there would seem to be merit in the Inquiry looking into the effectiveness of the recruiting process.

In relation to compensation claims, the ‘Resources and Systems’ report states that for the period 1st July 2017 to 30th June 2019 “there were 226 claims, the breakdown of which was as follows:

Accepted 209

Pending 1

Rejected 16

The number of claims is significant given a total staff of 489 staff (46%).

At the time of the inspection there were 89 active claims (open or pending) and 153 finalised claims, including those which had been rejected.”

While a number of good initiatives have been introduced by the Department to support staff experiencing work related stress, the numbers of staff on compensation continues to be high. While the Custodial Inspector was **not** able to ascertain the number of non-uniformed or uniformed staff, the total number of staff associated with the prison at that time was 489. I have estimated the number of uniformed correctional staff currently to be about 380.

Based on these estimates the **Correctional Staff ratio to inmates** would be about 1:1.8 (or **10 officers for every 18 inmates**) - quite a contrast to SPS’s ratio of 1:7.6² (or 10 officers for every 76 inmates).

¹¹ [Resources and Systems Inspection Report 2019](#) (pp21)

² [SPS Annual Statistics Release for 2022](#)

Prison Overtime

Because of the 'shortage' of available staff TPS has had to resort to drawing on 'overtime' in order to operate the prison. This issue has been the subject of considerable scrutiny by the Legislative Council, the Tasmanian Auditor General and the Custodial Inspectorate, yet with little or no impact upon the alarming increasing dependency on overtime as the means to keep the prison operational.

Ongoing compensation claims, coupled with the overtime costs (previously the subject of a 2013 Legislative Council's Inquiry)¹² **are undoubtedly one of the most significant factors contributing to exorbitantly high prison operating costs.**

At the time of the 2013 Legislative Council's Inquiry, assurances were given that TPS management had to accept responsibility for the level of workers compensation claims at the prison and that: *"A safer workplace for us would actually reduce the cost of our overtime and we can't blame staff for that; we have to accept responsibility as an organisation for putting in place those practices. As an example, we didn't have any workplace health and safety representatives throughout the various parts of the prison until the last four months. We now have those in place, and we have a whole range of strategies to deal with workplace injury that perhaps we weren't as good at dealing with as we should have been."*¹³

The Inquiry report concluded (pp32) with the statement by:

- The new Change Manager Mr Brian Edwards (brought into following the Palmer Report to lead change in the prison) that: *"...there was now a different approach to the way absences are dealt with on an individual basis".*
- The new Director of Prisons Mr Barry Greenberry who said: *"...a key element of the new approach outlined by Mr Edwards was the greater empowerment of managers."*
- And finally, by Robert Williams, the Director of Corrective Services that: *"The employment of around 35 additional staff by January 2013 would help overcome the understaffing problem, which in turn would reduce the need for overtime... Our early indications are that we will expect to see a trend down in the overtime rate. We are tackling the structural thing. Those people coming in January will have a significant impact on that 50 per cent that is structural. In terms of sick leave, we look like we are trending down"* (pp32)

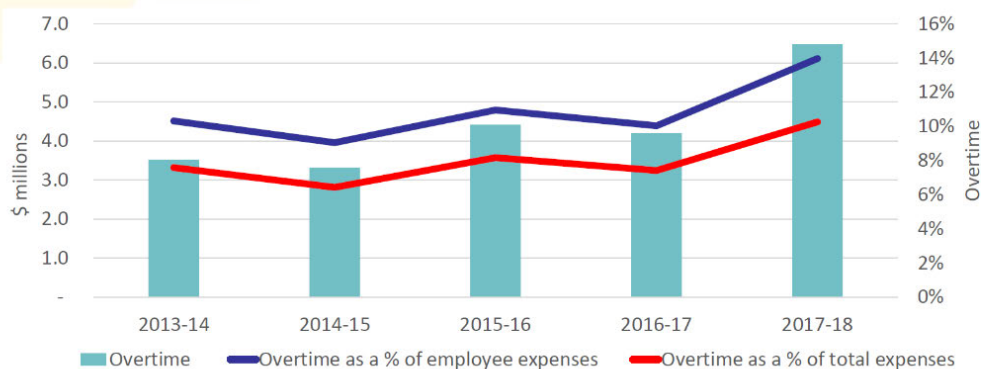
Yet despite these assurances the rate of overtime "has continued to trend upwards since 2013-14 both in dollar terms and in percentage terms compared to total employee and total employee expenses" as reported by the Tasmanian Auditor General¹⁴.

¹² [LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE "B" INTERIM REPORT ON The Overtime Costs of the Tasmanian Prison Service](#)

¹³ LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE "B" INTERIM REPORT ON The Overtime Costs of the Tasmanian Prison Service – pp16 and pp 32

¹⁴ [Report of the Tasmanian Auditor General No.2 2019-20 – Tasmania Prison Services Use of Resources 2019](#)

Extent of overtime



Overtime has been trending upwards since 2013-14 both in dollar terms and in percentage terms compared to total employee and total employee expenses

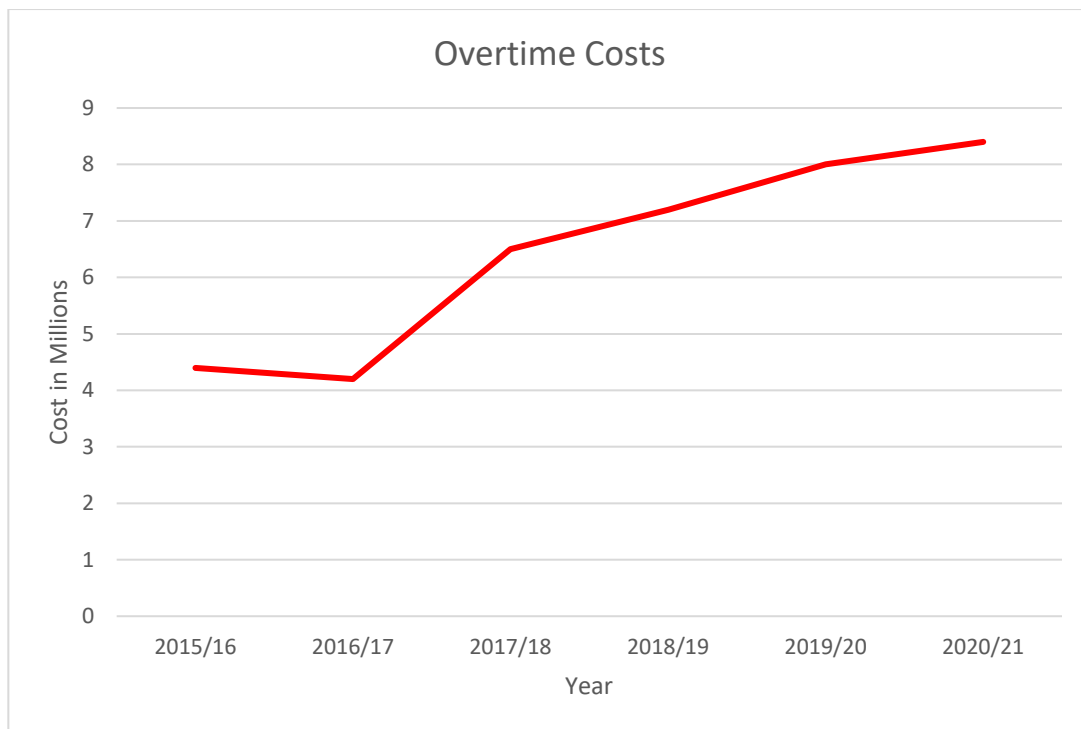


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From our investigations it appears that this concerning trend is continuing with current rates extrapolated to be well in excess of \$9 million. Twice the amount at the time of the Legislative Council's 2013 Inquiry. **From my understanding of parliamentary discussions this figure could be as high as \$15 million this year.**

In discussions on the Supplementary Appropriations Bill on 23 March this year, I note that Dr Board commented "We see as well in the Tasmanian Prison Service an absolutely extraordinary situation **where the prison system needs an extra \$15 million for additional staffing costs.** That is predominantly from workers compensation and overtime. That is an extraordinary amount of money that shows the crisis that must be unwinding in Corrective Services. We have a prison service that is under much pressure, it is understaffed, people are stressed, the prisoners are in lockdown, they lash out, we have assaults up, we have prison staff quitting, on compensation, or having to cover extra shifts. The sort of pressure that it brings on is costing \$15 million. It is extraordinary. How about you fix the problem"¹⁵.

¹⁵ Hansard - PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY REPORT OF DEBATES 23rd March 2023 – pp 60



Prison Population

In March this year, the prison recorded the highest number of people incarcerated with more than 730 people in prison, an increase of about 90 on 2022 ROGS figures¹⁶. This included 300 inmates on remand. It is apparent that since the opening of the 140 bed Southern Remand Centre in July last year there has been a steady increase in prison numbers. Unfortunately, transforming Kevin Costner's "You build it, and they will come" from a dream - into a nightmare.

With ballooning prison numbers, constant lockdowns, staff shortages, budget blowouts and increasing recidivism rates, only a diagnosis of insanity would suggest that we should CONTINUE doing the same old things the same old way and expect different results.

An Evidenced-Based Success Story

Earlier in this submission reference was made to the transformation of the Singapore Prison Services. It is noted that Australian culture is different to that of Singapore and to suggest merely copying what Singapore has done is both impractical and naive. Nevertheless, there are some valuable lessons to be drawn from the Singapore experience. With perhaps **the most valuable being that CHANGE IS POSSIBLE** and that having made the hard choices, Singapore now benefits from:

1. Astronomical long term financial savings.
2. A safer community with a continuing reduction in recidivism.
3. A reduction of more than half of the prison population.
4. A prison that boasts 81% of officers satisfied with their work in the organisation.

¹⁴ Report on Government Services 2023

To better understand the transformation of the Singapore Prison Service, I've **included with this submission four attachments**. These attachments are an easy read and help provide an overview of some of the reform aspects of the SPS.

a. **The Story of the Singapore Prison Service – From Custodians of Prisoners to Captains of Life – A Case Study.** ([Download](#))

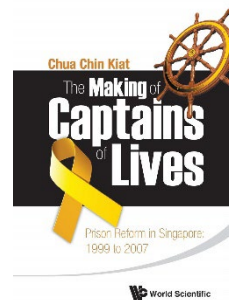
This report presented to the Centre for Governance and Leadership Singapore Civil Service College “Chronicles the change journey of the SPS how a traditional command-control agency faced with challenges of an increasing prison population, high staff turnover and poor public perception, engaged its staff, stakeholders and community to create outcomes that changed the lives of inmates, their families ...” and society.

b. **Civil Service College Singapore – Towards a Society without Re-offending** ([Download](#))

This report also provides a summary of the changes in the SPS with a particular focus on the efforts made to change public perception to appreciate the importance of receiving ex-offenders back into society. This report highlights the work of the Yellow Ribbon Program (YRP) and ripple effect of this program.

c. **The Making of Captains of Lives – Chua Chin Kiat (Director of SPS)** ([Link](#))

The book by the Director of Singapore Prison Service tells the story of ‘the process of the reform of prison service from a custody focused mindset to rehabilitation centred culture. “This change was wrought despite the lack of enthusiasm of the then political leadership”. “It is a personal account of the public sector leader who helped build a highly efficient prison system in Singapore, providing a strong case study for successful change management and public sector leadership.”



d. **The SPS Annual Statistics for 2022.** ([Download](#))

A report providing a comprehensive summary of current SPS statistics and a synopsis of some current reintegration initiatives. *(Hidden in the statistics is information that identifies 6,265 employers who are hiring ex-offenders and 94% of inmates obtaining employment when they have been referred (more than 2,500 people).*

[Learning from the Singapore Experience](#)

A summary of key events in the SPS story is as follows:

1. In late 1998, Chua Chin Kiat took over as Director of Prisons.
 - a. Chua concluded that **an increase in staff could not solve SPS problems** and could not be sustainable in the long term.
 - b. He recognised that **SPS did not have an overarching vision of its role in society**.
 - c. In 1999, **800 staff members, strategic partners and voluntary welfare organisations were invited to share their vision for SPS. It took about a year to develop and confirm the new vision:** “We aspire to be captains in the lives of offenders committed to our custody. We will be instrumental in steering them towards being responsible citizens with the help of their families and the community. We will thus build a secure and exemplary prison system.”

2. SPS then **developed a set of core values**¹⁷:
3. Chua realised that **without a significant increase in staff he would have to find ways to free up staff for the real work of reforming the prison**. This resulted in **outsourcing non-core functions**.
 - a. The **role of Correctional Officers was changed so that they could engage with inmates** in their housing unit in a meaningful and purposeful way.
 - b. **A research and planning branch was set up** to conduct research, network with external research institutes and coordinate the planning and implementation of key organisation-wide initiatives.
 - c. **A program branch was set up to give greater focus to rehabilitation**.
 - d. **Internal systems and structures were put in place** to encourage behaviour to support the operational strategies. (e.g., Twice a week informal 'agenda-less' breakfast meetings among Senior Management, heads of staff units and superintendents). Leaders took turns to meet with new recruits and walk the floors and connect with ground staff.
 - e. **An intentional strategy put in place to change the environment for staff**. Online platforms were developed to facilitate sharing among officers and notes of the senior management meetings were posted on the intranet so that staff could follow the thinking behind decisions.
4. Recognising the value that family played in successful reintegration, a **Family Resource Centre was set up to help inmates' families cope with incarceration**.
5. SPS ventured beyond the confines of the prison to **engage the wider community to develop a system of well-established rehabilitation and reintegration programs** with a strong emphasis on family and social support. 96 strategies organised along four local areas were developed: enhanced operational capabilities; staff development structure; integrated in-system care for inmates; and coordinated after care for ex-offenders. 15 projects were prioritised over three years.
6. In-system care and after care were merged into Maximising Inmates' Reintegration Potential acknowledging that **reintegration really begins on the first day of incarceration**. A key thrust of this focal area was to **"improve the public perception of ex-offenders" by using mass media**.
7. A new focal area, **Preventing Offending and Re-offending, with the goal of significantly reducing the incarceration rate** was also set. SPS worked more closely with family members and community partners.

a. ¹⁷ Honour our vision by placing it above self-interest and inspiring others to our cause,
 b. Excel in our work because we care enough to want to be the best.
 c. Be agile by being innovative and open to new possibilities, overcoming adversity through continuous learning.
 d. Respect our fellow colleagues and the community we come into contact with, and
 e. Foster teamwork by coaching, guiding, and inspiring one another in our workplace.

8. **SPS Public Affairs branch was charged with revamping the organisations image** and a series of advertisements were produced in 2001 to change the public perception. **A media campaign was launched** in 2002 and SPS opened its doors to the public and reporters were given prison tours. In 2003, **a media strategy aimed at education and garnering the support of the community for rehabilitation work and acceptance of ex-offenders into the community** was launched.
9. To strengthen **aftercare for ex-offenders SPS adopted sub-strategies:**
 - a. Development of structures and coordinated after-care programs;
 - b. Development of a network of governance structures to oversee the coordination of aftercare services, investment in family education to help family members cope with problems arising from incarceration and prepare them to receive ex-offenders upon release;
 - c. Building community acceptance and non-rejection.
10. SCORE (Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises¹⁸) was totally restructured and relocated within prison headquarters and realigned to the to SPS objectives. **Prison industries started successfully competing with commercial companies for tenders.**
11. The Community Action for Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders (CARE) network was one of the 15 projects identified for implementation in 2000. SPS brought together **eight major community and government organisations responsible for rehabilitating ex-offenders to form the C.A.R.E Network** seamless in-system care and after-care support for ex-offenders.
 - a. One of the **CARE Network's** first initiatives was the Case Management Framework Program. Under the framework, case managers from the Singapore After-Care Association and Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association **met inmates one to two months before their release to cover their aftercare needs and then follow up with them to ensure they received the support up to six months after release.**
12. One of the CARE network's most successful initiatives was the annual **"Yellow Ribbon Program" (YRP). Started as a public education program** in 2004, YRP grew into an annual event that inspired the community to give ex-offenders a second chance. The YRP project has grown over the years. What started as a branding and public education effort gained momentum and became a significant influence in transforming the Singapore community's attitude to ex-offenders. **A nationwide public perception survey in 2007 revealed that 94% of respondents expressed an awareness of the YRP and 70% were willing to accept ex-offenders as their friend or colleague.**

¹⁸ SCORE was established as a statutory board in 1975 to provide prison industry, vocational and employment training and assist in finding employment for inmates on release.

Observations from SPS Story

Reflecting on the Singapore experience it is evident that many of the principles expounded by Jim Collins in his seminal texts “Good to Great” and “Built to Last”¹⁹ undergird the successful transformation of SPS. Taking a failing correctional service, Chua Chin Kiat decided that they could become the best in the world in rehabilitation and reintegration and he created it. I don’t think there was any *‘single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Rather, the process resembled relentlessly pushing a giant heavy flywheel, turn upon turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough and beyond’*²⁰.

The story of the transformation of the Singapore Prison Service demonstrates that the issues of a failing correctional service are complex. The prison culture and staffing issues were a priority in the SPS transformation, but the transformation didn’t stop there. At its heart, the Singapore story recognises that ex-offenders ultimately need to be accepted back into a community and that the period of incarceration provides a window in time to provide offenders with the skills for personal development, the opportunity to envision a new future, be equipped to provide a valuable contribution to society and be supported in having a ‘second chance’.

While many of the steps outlined in the SPS story have been implemented to some degree by the Department of Justice and TPS, I would suggest they have often been reactive and ad hoc. The Corrections Strategic Plan has been largely an embarrassing bureaucratic departmental PR exercise that lacks credibility with staff and stakeholders and only exemplifies the department’s lack of resolve when it comes to rehabilitation of offenders.

As a first step we would suggest, therefore, that the Department not just seek to increase the likelihood of a reduction in reoffending but make a firm and definite commitment to reduce the number of people in prison and reduce reoffending. To set goals that are both measurable and accountable.

To achieve this, we would suggest a course of action that might include:

Application and Recommendations

- 1. Government makes a commitment to reduce prison numbers and achieve a recidivism rate in Tasmania of 30% by 2034.**
 - a. Setting a definitive goal for a recidivism rate, and being accountable for it, will have a significant impact on mobilizing government – police, courts, prisons, to work together for a genuinely safer (long-term) community.
 - b. This would also be a catalyst as a visioning exercise to create innovative solutions and challenge current practices. For example:
 - i. Better use of diversionary courts.
 - ii. Consideration of alternative sentencing (a number of jurisdictions have abolished sentences less than 12 months).

¹⁹ Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't - Jim Collins – (Harper Business)
Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies – Jim Collins & Jerry I. Porras – (Harper Business)

²⁰ “The Flywheel” concept described in ‘Good to Great’.

2. Undertake a comprehensive review of TPS's HR processes and practices.

Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the TPS by genuine HR consulting experts. The terms of reference for the review could be:

1. Undertake a comprehensive audit of TPS human resource management processes against HR best practice principles (such as those as articulated by the AHRI²¹)
2. Conduct a benchmarking exercise to identify best practice in Correctional HRM within the western world.
3. Revisit the Singapore study to test whether the improvements have been sustained – if not, why not and if so, how.
4. Examine whether the practices adopted in other industries such as Lean Manufacturing could be successfully adapted to corrections.
5. Develop a comprehensive HR strategy to address the findings.
6. Adopt an HR audit tool to annually measure progress on implementation of the HR Strategy.

The magnitude of the problem is such that it demands both significant human and financial resources. The review would be oversighted by a high-level steering group consisting of, for example:

- Director of Corrective Services.
- Director of State Service Management Office.
- two community representatives with demonstrated interest and expertise in improving correctional outcomes.
- two representatives from unions representing correctional staff.

3. TPS develops a coordinated approach for agencies to work together to achieve better outcomes for people leaving prison. (Similar to the Singapore CARE network)

- TPS brings together major community and government organisations responsible for rehabilitating ex-offenders to formalise a network to promote seamless support for in-care and after-care support of offenders with the focus: to maximise resources and results through alignment and collaboration.
- Develop a framework for individual case management that can be shared between agencies.

Conclusion

In her book “Imaginable²²”, author and Director of ‘Institute for the Future’ Jane McGonigal asks, “When you think about the next ten years, do you think things will mostly stay the same and go on as normal? Or do you expect most will dramatically rethink and reinvent how we do things?” It’s a good question, and one that this Committee will ultimately have to answer when this Inquiry is over.

While I’m generally optimistic, I find it difficult, based on the past 10 years’ experience, of imagining that much will change when it comes to the Tasmania corrections system. However, I am convinced that change is possible. The Singapore experience demonstrates this. Jane McGonigal, in her book, invites the reader on a journey to begin to imagine what the future could look like, and begin to create it.

²¹ Academy to Innovate HR - <https://www.aihr.com>

²² [Imaginable – How to see the future coming and be ready for anything – Bantam Press](#)

It was ten years ago that this committee convened to consider the issue of overtime in the prison. Ten years down the track, very little – if anything – has happened with overtime rates continuing to climb. **Wouldn't it be good to think that 10 years from today, that this Inquiry could convene to celebrate: reduced prison numbers, a recidivism rate of 30%, correctional staff satisfaction rating of 75%, and a community that is willing to give ex-offenders a second chance.**

Attachments:

1. The Story of the Singapore Prison Service – From Custodians of Prisoners to Captains of Life – A Case Study.
2. Civil Service College Singapore – Towards a Society without Re-offending
3. The Making of Captains of Lives – Chua Chin Kiat (Director of SPS)
4. The SPS Annual Statistics for 2022

Onesimus Foundation

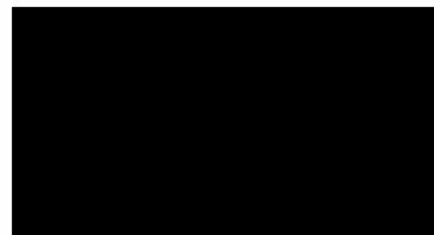
Phonetic Pronunciation of Onesimus

o-NEH-sih-muhs or own-ESS-ee-mus

The foundation seeks to engage with men and women during their incarceration, develop and nurture healthy family relationships and building on the opportunities in prison to better prepare prisoners to return to their families (and communities) as "useful" members of society.

Onesimus features in the New Testament book of Philemon. He was a slave who stole from his master, Philemon, and then ran away.

Onesimus happened to run across the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome under house arrest. Paul returns Onesimus to Philemon using a play on words saying "Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me." **Onesimus' name meant "useful."**



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Onesimus Foundation

[own-ESS-ee-mus]

Onesimus Foundation (Onesimus) is a not-for-profit organisation that has grown out of the work of the Christian Family Centre, the church adjacent to Risdon Prison, and has been working with the Tasmania Prison Service (TPS) for over 10 years to support offenders and their families. Onesimus' work over many years has included the following:

1. Provision of a team of Family Engagement Workers (FEW) working with offenders to establish or maintain healthy relationships with their families.
2. Establishment of Hillside Haven - accommodation for families who travel from interstate or regional Tasmania to visit someone in prison (funded through Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF)).
3. Providing video visits for families who, because of geographical distance, could not visit the prison. These visits were provided pre-COVID and were offered in partnership with churches and agencies across Australia, who provided a remote visit centre.
4. Providing compassionate video visits for offenders to view funerals prior to COVID and visit loved ones in hospital.
5. Provision of a \$50,000 playground in Ron Barwick Prison (funded through TCF).
6. Provision of training through:
 - a. Hidden Sentence Training - engaging more than 1,000 professionals to better understand the challenges faced by families of offenders (including Roadshow presentations to Regional Areas);
 - b. Practitioners' training for professionals working with children of offenders.
7. Facilitation of *Children Affected by Parental Offending (CAPO)* an inter-department and interagency working group seeking to develop best practice in working with children of offenders.
8. Facilitation of programs in the prison including:
 - a. Kid's Day;
 - b. Mums and dads journals;
 - c. Homework program for children to engage with their incarcerated parents through special contact visits or video visits to schools;
 - d. Onesimus Bear Program (recording voice of an offender in the paw of a teddy bear).
 - e. Parenting program; and
 - f. Inside Out (a reintegration program).
9. Facilitation and/or support of a number of Prison/Justice network meetings:
 - a. Working with Men Network;
 - b. Just Desserts (support for the Drug Court Program);
 - c. Tasmania Custodial Reference Group.
10. Facilitation of churches across Australia to provide services to TPS such as:
 - a. Toiletry packs for women entering prison;
 - b. Pamper packs for women leaving prison; and
 - c. Clothing for men leaving prison.
11. Working with TPS to develop a garden for offenders to 'pay back' garden produce to society through Second Bite, and later, Loaves and Fishes.
12. During COVID we supported TPS in rolling out video visits in the prison, supporting families in the use of video technology for video visits.
13. Investigated a support program for offenders attending Magistrates Court in Hobart and Devonport.
14. Worked with TPS to introduce the "Email a prisoner program."
15. Worked with the Custodial Inspectorate to develop and facilitate the first survey of Prisoners in Tasmania.

In 2014, Norm Reed, Onesimus' Executive Officer, undertook a Churchill Fellowship visiting 21 prisons in Singapore, France, Belgium, England, Wales, and Scotland to better understand the needs of families of offenders with a view to developing best family practices in Tasmania. Since this study, Onesimus has worked closely with TPS and other government and non-government agencies. This led to the introduction of Hidden Sentence Training as a key strategy in the Department of Justice's *Breaking the Cycle Strategy* in 2016, and the decision by TPS to introduce the role of a Family Worker in the prison

PRESS RELEASE

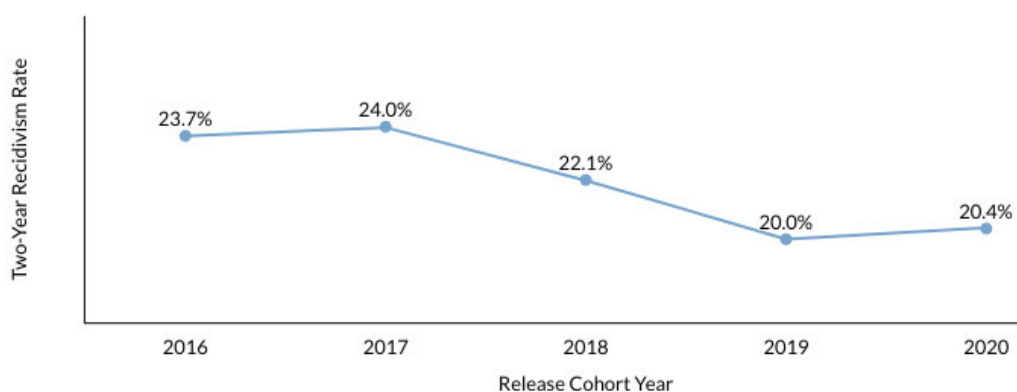
SPS Annual Statistics Release for 2022

In 2022, the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) continued to keep our prisons safe and maintain low recidivism rates.

Two-Year Recidivism Remained Low and Stable

2. The two-year recidivism rate for the 2020 release cohort remained low and stable at about 20 per cent (see Figure 1a).¹ It remains amongst the lowest globally (see Figure 1b).

Figure 1a : Two-Year Recidivism Rates for 2016-2020 Release Cohorts



¹ Recidivism rate is defined as the percentage of local offenders under the custody of the Singapore Prison Service, who were subsequently detained or sentenced to imprisonment or day reporting order within two years of release into the community.

Figure 1b : International Comparison of Two-Year Recidivism Rate

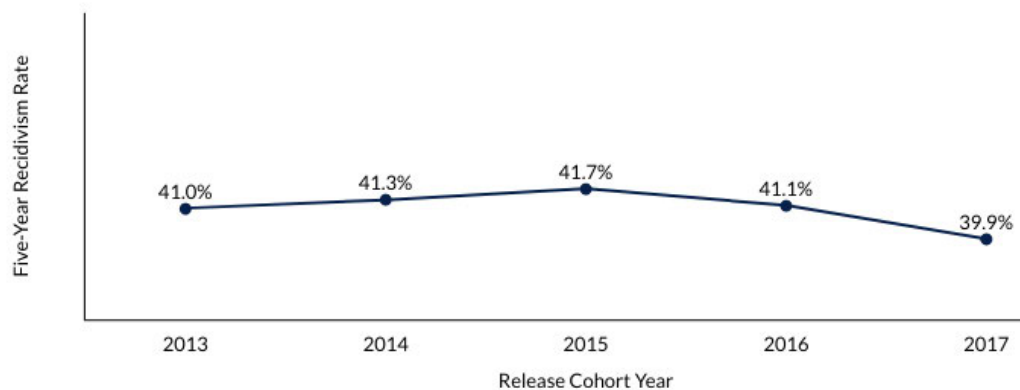
Country/Jurisdiction (Release Cohort Year)	Two-Year Recidivism Rate
Japan (2020)	15.1%
Singapore (2020)	20.4%
Hong Kong (2019)	20.9%
Denmark (2018)	31.3%
South Australia (2019)	33.2%
Western Australia (2019)	35.4%
New Zealand (2019)	35.8%
Scotland (2017)	36.9%
Queensland (2019)	42.6%

3. The low two-year recidivism rate is indicative of the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes provided to inmates while they served their sentence in prison, followed by structured community supervision by SPS and aftercare assistance provided by SPS's community partners after they were released into the community.

Promoting Long-term Desistance

4. That said, more can be done. Ex-offenders may not remain crime or drug-free in the longer term. This is evident from the five-year recidivism rate that has remained around 40 per cent, albeit improving slightly for the two most recent release cohorts (see Figure 2). To address this, SPS and Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) will work with our community partners to increase longer term support to ex-offenders.

Figure 2 : Five-Year Recidivism Rates for 2013-2017 Release Cohorts



5. Research by SPS shows that many ex-offenders go through multiple attempts to remain crime or drug-free before eventually succeeding. Those who successfully desist are able to recognise and internalise the consequences of their actions on themselves and others, make **intentional lifestyle shifts to lead more prosocial lives**, and **actively participate in structured prosocial events and activities**.

6. Through **community corrections**, SPS and YRSG, alongside community partners, provide structured reintegration support to inmates serving the tail-end of their sentence in the community under supervision. This structured support, which includes counselling, befriending services, employment assistance, and housing and financial assistance, **helps start the offenders' journey towards desistance. After supervision, the reintegration support from our community partners for them and their families must continue.**

Mobilising the Community to Reduce Long-term Recidivism

7. Ex-offenders, like other vulnerable Singaporeans, may face challenges in managing day-to-day issues such as employment, finances and family relations. Therefore, it is critical to **build a sustainable ecosystem of support in the community** involving community partners, employers, families and government agencies to promote desistance, and eventually lower the five-year recidivism rate.

8. SPS and YRSG will continue to make efforts to galvanise the community to strengthen support for ex-offenders and their families, by growing new collaborations, and deepening existing partnerships.

Throughcare Volunteers

9. Volunteers complement SPS's rehabilitation efforts through providing structured religious and secular programmes, as well as offering reintegration support upon inmates' release. At present, SPS has about 4,000 volunteers, including about 1,100 volunteers from the Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP) who are grassroots volunteers visiting the families of inmates to offer assistance and support. SPS also works closely with many other organisations and volunteers involved in aftercare and supporting ex-offenders and families, such as the volunteers of CARE Network agencies.

10. SPS has doubled training spaces for new volunteers from 700 in 2021, to over 1,400 in 2022, to better equip volunteers to work with inmates and supervisees. Training is focused on befriending skills, individual and family work, self-care, and knowledge on corrections.

11. 12 religious organisations have come on board our Throughcare Volunteer Framework to provide throughcare support to inmates upon their release.² There are also about 16 other secular agencies (about one-third of all secular partners working with SPS) involved in providing throughcare

² The 12 religious organisations are Buddhist Fellowship, Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF), Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC), The Hindu Centre (THC), Muneeswaran Community Services Ltd (MCS), SANA Hindu RGV, Loving Hand Fellowship (LHF), Prison Fellowship Singapore (PFS), Christian Counselling Services (CCS), Roman Catholic Prison Ministry (RCPM), Family and Inmates Through-care Assistance Haven (FITRAH) and Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam Singapura (PERGAS). In the throughcare approach, inmates' risks and needs are addressed while in prison, and followed through in the community upon their release.

support to inmates. SPS will be seeking to expand our volunteer pool for both incare and aftercare, and our collaborations with our throughcare volunteers.

Desistor Network

12. SPS will be forming a **Desistor Network** (DN) in the second quarter of 2023, comprising ex-offenders who have remained crime-free for an extended period of time. Desistors are powerful sources of inspiration for inmates and ex-offenders alike in their reintegration journey. DN will also provide avenues for ex-offenders to connect through events and formation of interest groups to extend prosocial support to one another.

Enhancing Employability of Inmates and Ex-Offenders

13. Stable employment is a key factor of successful desistance. YRSG adopts a comprehensive approach to employment by preparing inmates and ex-offenders for the workforce through skills training, career placement services, and career retention support by career coaches. In 2022, YRSG provided employment assistance to more than 2,500 inmates. 94 per cent of these assisted inmates secured jobs. These jobs were largely in wholesale and retail trade, transportation and storage, administrative and support services, and accommodation and food services industries.

Conclusion

14. SPS and YRSG need the continuous support and partnership of the community to strengthen inmates and ex-offenders' desistance from crime and drugs, promote their successful rehabilitation and reintegration, and advocate for second chances for them.

- END -

About the Singapore Prison Service (SPS)

As an agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs and a key member of the Home Team, SPS enforces the secure custody of inmates and rehabilitates them for a safer Singapore. SPS's team of *Captains of Lives* – comprising uniformed officers and civilian staff – works closely with inmates, their family, aftercare agencies, community partners and volunteers. The Captains of Lives inspire and steer inmates to take ownership of their rehabilitation and be responsible and contributing citizens.

With its world-class prison system and evidence-informed correctional practices, SPS was awarded the Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation in 2012 and 2019 – a recognition of its dedication to the secure custody and effective rehabilitation of inmates. SPS, YRSG and community partners work closely to keep the recidivism rate in Singapore low and stable.

About Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG)

YRSG is a statutory board under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was established in 1976 as the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) and rebranded as YRSG on 1 May 2020.

YRSG adopts a multi-faceted approach to prepare ex-offenders for reintegration into society and re-join the national workforce. These include initiatives to help them develop skills and long-term careers through partnerships with industry, as well as initiatives to garner community support and acceptance of ex-offenders.

YRSG works with more than 7,000 like-minded partners. Our collective efforts have contributed to the low and stable recidivism rate in Singapore.

YRSG will continue to advocate for ex-offenders, raise awareness of the challenges they face, and bring the private, public and people sectors together for their successful reintegration and contribution back to society.

For more information, refer to YRSG's website at <http://www.yellowribbon.gov.sg>.

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Singapore Prison Service Annual Statistics for 2022

Total Offender Population in Prisons and in the Community³

Offender Population	2020	2021	2022
Incare	9,242	8,160	7,660
Community Corrections	3,426	3,402	2,920
Total	12,668	11,562	10,580

Two-Year Recidivism Rates⁴

Recidivism	Release Cohort 2018	Release Cohort 2019	Release Cohort 2020
Overall	22.1%	20.0%	20.4%
Penal⁵	21.4%	19.1%	18.5%
Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC)⁶	25.9%	24.5%	26.1%

Five-Year Recidivism Rates⁷

Recidivism	Release Cohort 2015	Release Cohort 2016	Release Cohort 2017
Overall	41.7%	41.1%	39.9%
Penal⁸	40.0%	40.3%	38.8%
Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC)⁹	48.9%	44.3%	45.2%

³ The figures are as at 31st December of the respective years.

⁴ Two-year recidivism rate is defined as the percentage of local offenders under the custody of the Singapore Prison Service, who were subsequently detained or sentenced to imprisonment or day reporting order within two years of release into the community.

⁵ This refers to the recidivism rates for inmates in SPS's custody who have been sentenced to imprisonment by the Courts.

⁶ This refers to the recidivism rates for inmates in SPS's custody who have been admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre to undergo treatment and rehabilitation.

⁷ Five-year recidivism rate is defined as the percentage of local offenders under the custody of the Singapore Prison Service, who were subsequently detained or sentenced to imprisonment or day reporting order within five years of release into the community.

⁸ This refers to the recidivism rates for inmates in SPS's custody who have been sentenced to imprisonment by the Courts.

⁹ This refers to the recidivism rates for inmates in SPS's custody who have been admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre to undergo treatment and rehabilitation.

Convicted Penal Inmate Population¹⁰

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total Convicted Penal Population		6,934	5,945	5,038
Gender	Male	6,249	5,374	4,574
	Female	685	571	464
Age Group¹¹	19 & below	164	138	107
	20-29	1,167	1,015	872
	30-39	1,488	1,343	1,168
	40-49	1,655	1,298	1,064
	50-59	1,608	1,364	1,155
	60-64	557	478	370
	65-69	213	223	223
	70-74	71	65	55
	75 & Above	11	21	24
Education Level¹²	No Education	102	92	64
	Primary	2,051	1,656	1,326
	Secondary	3,426	2,938	2,471
	Pre – U	257	251	265
	Vocational	732	650	575
	Tertiary and Above	366	358	337
Main Offence Group¹³	Crimes Against Person	692	702	726
	Property Crimes	712	639	579
	Commercial Crimes	370	343	336
	Drug Offences	4,646	3,682	2,867
	Immigration Offences	23	24	41
	Crime Against Public Order	138	171	174
	Customs Offences	186	160	159
	Traffic Offences	52	88	65
	Other Offences ¹⁴	115	136	91

¹⁰ Convicted penal inmate population refers to the number of sentenced inmates who were in SPS's custody on 31st December of the respective years.

¹¹ Refreshed age groups are based on recommendations on definition and classification of age from Department of Statistics.

¹² Educational level as declared by inmates upon admission.

¹³ Inmates are grouped according to their aggravated (i.e., most serious) offence.

¹⁴ Examples of "Other Offences" include National Registration offences, National Service-related offences and telecommunication & computer-related offences.

Convicted Penal Admissions¹⁵

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total Convicted Penal Admissions		6,219	5,858	5,965
Gender	Male	5,511	5,192	5,294
	Female	708	666	671
Admission Age Group¹⁶	19 & below	137	91	82
	20-29	1,544	1,419	1,420
	30-39	1,833	1,701	1,767
	40-49	1,238	1,154	1,228
	50-59	990	964	939
	60-64	287	289	302
	65 -69	144	156	155
	70-74	33	59	54
	75 & Above	13	25	18
Education Level¹⁷	No Education	106	84	55
	Primary	1,280	1,123	1,126
	Secondary	2,833	2,750	2,719
	Pre – U	392	370	527
	Vocational	908	806	736
	Tertiary and Above	700	725	802
Main Offence Group¹⁸	Crimes Against Person	1,160	1,105	1,152
	Property Crimes	910	840	846
	Commercial Crimes	565	538	639
	Drug Offences	964	805	703
	Immigration Offences	310	205	262
	Crime Against Public Order	564	531	588
	Customs Offences	366	358	389
	Traffic Offences	734	819	984
	Other Offences ¹⁹	646	657	402

¹⁵ Convicted penal admission figures refer to the number of persons admitted to prison to serve an imprisonment sentence in the respective calendar years.

¹⁶ Age as at admission. Refreshed age groups are based on recommendations on definition and classification of age from Department of Statistics.

¹⁷ Education level as declared by inmates upon admission.

¹⁸ Inmates are grouped according to their aggravated (i.e., most serious) offence.

¹⁹ Examples of “Other Offences” include National Registration offences, National Service-related offences and telecommunication & computer-related offences.

Remand Population²⁰

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total Remand Population		1,182	1,109	1,081
Gender	Male	1,092	1,021	1,006
	Female	90	88	75
Age Group ²¹	19 & below	32	24	25
	20-29	313	294	280
	30-39	337	300	308
	40-49	235	223	205
	50-59	180	181	178
	60-64	56	53	51
	65-69	23	25	23
	70-74	5	8	8
	75 & Above	1	1	3
Education Level ²²	No Education	16	13	9
	Primary	234	249	206
	Secondary	614	561	574
	Pre - U	75	88	64
	Vocational	160	124	152
	Tertiary and Above	83	74	76
Main Offence Group ²³	Crimes Against Person	236	242	231
	Property Crimes	172	151	168
	Commercial Crimes	69	71	88
	Drug Offences	542	497	429
	Immigration Offences	8	6	9
	Crime Against Public Order	53	43	57
	Customs Offences	38	42	43
	Traffic Offences	19	23	28
	Other Offences ²⁴	45	34	28

²⁰ Remand population figures refer to the number of remand inmates who were in SPS's custody on 31st December of the respective years.

²¹ Refreshed age groups are based on recommendations on definition and classification of age from Department of Statistics

²² Educational level as declared by inmates upon admission.

²³ Inmates are grouped according to their aggravated (i.e., most serious) offence.

²⁴ Examples of "Other Offences" include National Registration offences, National Service-related offences and telecommunication & computer-related offences.

DRC Inmate Population²⁵

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total DRC Population		2,984	3,120	3,337
Gender	Male	2,513	2,666	2,908
	Female	471	454	429
Age Group ²⁶	19 & below	98	59	38
	20-29	667	500	407
	30-39	668	642	692
	40-49	614	700	732
	50-59	601	752	876
	60-64	222	301	333
	65-69	88	126	189
	70-74	22	33	60
	75 & Above	4	7	10
Education Level ²⁷	No Education	51	48	51
	Primary	787	939	1,018
	Secondary	1,405	1,432	1,573
	Pre – U	115	119	136
	Vocational	420	378	373
	Tertiary and Above	206	204	186

²⁵ The DRC regime is meant for local inmates only. The figures refer to the number of DRC inmates who were in SPS's custody on 31st December of the respective years.

²⁶ Refreshed age groups are based on recommendations on definition and classification of age from Department of Statistics.

²⁷ Educational level as declared by inmates upon admission.

DRC Inmate Admissions²⁸

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total DRC Admissions		1,905	1,714	1,995
Gender	Male	1,560	1,434	1,731
	Female	345	280	264
Admission Age Group ²⁹	19 & below	118	62	41
	20-29	560	387	342
	30-39	432	393	475
	40-49	348	352	396
	50-59	285	333	443
	60-64	111	127	171
	65-69	41	45	93
	70-74	7	13	30
	75 & Above	3	2	4
Education Level ³⁰	No Education	33	18	30
	Primary	433	448	536
	Secondary	893	794	921
	Pre - U	87	78	103
	Vocational	274	225	256
	Tertiary and Above	185	151	149

²⁸ The figures refer to the number of persons admitted to DRC in the respective calendar years.

²⁹ Age as at admission. Refreshed age groups are based on recommendations on definition and classification of age from Department of Statistics.

³⁰ Educational level as declared by inmates upon admission.

Criminal Law Detainee (CLD) Population³¹

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total CLD Population		98	88	80
Gender	Male	98	88	80
	Female	0	0	0
Age Group ³²	19 & below	2	2	4
	20-29	56	49	41
	30-39	31	28	24
	40-49	8	8	10
	50-59	0	1	1
	60-64	0	0	0
	65-69	1	0	0
	70-74	0	0	0
	75 & Above	0	0	0
Education Level ³³	No Education	0	0	0
	Primary	12	12	16
	Secondary	69	62	50
	Pre - U	5	5	3
	Vocational	10	8	10
	Tertiary and Above	2	1	1
Type of Criminal Activity	Secret Societies	95	86	78
	Unlicensed Moneylending	3	2	2
	Drug Trafficking	0	0	0
	Others	0	0	0

³¹ The CLD population refers to the number of persons detained under the Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act and were in SPS's custody on 31st December of the respective years.

³² Refreshed age groups are based on recommendations on definition and classification of age from Department of Statistics.

³³ Educational level as declared by inmates upon admission.

Releases – Convicted Penal Releases

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total Convicted Penal		7,332	6,776	6,352
Gender	Male	6,493	6,008	5,644
	Female	839	768	708

Releases – DRC Releases

Category		2020	2021	2022
Total DRC Releases		1,212	1,534	1,787
Gender	Male	976	1,235	1,497
	Female	236	299	290

Number of Judicial Executions

Executions	2020	2021	2022
Murder	0	0	0
Firearms	0	0	0
Drug	0	0	11
Total	0	0	11

Major Incidents³⁴

Major Incidents	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022 (up to Dec 2022) ³⁵
Escape Rate Per 10,000 Inmate Population	0	0	0
Assault Rate Per 10,000 Inmate Population ³⁶	46.9	48.0	37.2

³⁴ Major incidents are measured per fiscal year (FY) as published in the annual Budget Book.

³⁵ The actual figure as at the end of the fiscal year (FY) will be published in the 2023 statistics release.

³⁶ This covers assault cases perpetrated by inmates who are charged under aggravated prison offences. Such cases would include any attack by inmates on prison officers, or assaults by inmates on fellow inmates in which serious injuries are sustained by the victim(s).

Emplacement and Completion Rates for Community-Based Programmes (CBP)

Emplacement Number	2020	2021	2022
CBP for Penal Inmates	1,410	1,403	1,648
CBP for DRC Inmates	1,635	1,834	1,564

Completion Rates	2020	2021	2022
CBP for Penal inmates	95.2%	94.0%	94.4%
CBP for DRC inmates	90.1%	85.4%	73.6%

Sentencing Numbers and Completion Rates for Community-Based Sentences (CBS)

Day Reporting Order (DRO) ³⁷	2020	2021	2022
Number of Offenders Sentenced	41	30	14
Completion Rates	96.7%	94.4%	100%

Short Detention Order (SDO) ³⁸	2020	2021	2022
Number of Offenders Sentenced	31	14	26
Completion Rates	100%	100%	100%

Emplacement and Completion Rates for Mandatory Aftercare Scheme (MAS)³⁹

Mandatory Aftercare Scheme	2020	2021	2022
Number of Inmates Emplaced	1,349	1,459	1,231
Completion Rates	94.0%	94.4%	97.2%

³⁷ A Day Reporting Order is a Community-Based Sentencing option whereby an offender reports to a day reporting centre for counselling and rehabilitation programmes, instead of serving a sentence in prison.

³⁸ A Short Detention Order is a Community-Based Sentencing option whereby an offender is detained in prison for a period not exceeding 14 days.

³⁹ Selected ex-offenders who are at higher risk of re-offending or who need more support in their reintegration will be placed on the Mandatory Aftercare Scheme (MAS). The MAS is a structured aftercare regime that gradually reintegrates selected ex-offenders into society through progressive arrangements. It aims to support ex-offenders in staying crime- and drug-free and prevent them from re-offending.

Upskilling of Inmates

Skills Training ⁴⁰			
Yearly Enrolment	2020	2021	2022
Average Number of Training Hours per Inmate Trained per Year ⁴¹	54	60	64
Number of Inmates Trained ⁴²	4,717	4,748	3,740

Work Programmes ⁴³			
Engaged in Work Programmes	2020	2021	2022
Average Number of Inmates	2,902	2,615	2,308

Employment Assistance

Number of Employers Supporting Hiring Ex-offenders ⁴⁴		
2020	2021	2022
5,895	5,634	6,265

Percentage of Inmates Referred to YRSG and Secured a Job Prior to Release ⁴⁵		
2020	2021	2022
93%	94%	94%

⁴⁰ Skills Training Programmes are administered by YRSG to equip inmates with nationally accredited skills. The trainings offered are aligned to Singapore's Skills Framework, and consist of a mix of literacy skills, critical core skills, and technical skills and competencies.

⁴¹ Average number of training hours per inmates trained per year is calculated by taking the total number of training hours spent by inmates on training in a year divided by the total number of unique inmates trained in the same year.

⁴² Number of inmates trained refers to the number of unique inmates trained; an inmate may attend more than one training course.

⁴³ Work programmes aim to impact vocational and employability skills through on-the-job training. Discipline, positive work ethics and values are inculcated by immersing inmates in a real work environment within prisons.

⁴⁴ The drop in figures from 2020 to 2021 is due to a one-time data clean-up exercise to remove registered employers who are no longer in business.

⁴⁵ 2022 figure is as at end-December 2022. As YRSG is still assisting a small group of ex-offenders who were released in 2022 with employment assistance, the final figure for 2022 is subject to change.

Academic Programmes

Yearly Enrolment	2020	2021	2022
Other Courses ⁴⁶	46	70	40
GCE 'NA' Level	124	106	57
GCE 'NT' Level	116	92	64
GCE 'O' Level	82	80	73
GCE 'A' Level	45	57	37
NITEC (Business Services)	0	0	13
Diploma	28	29	16
Degree	8	4	3
Total	449	438	303

Academic Results

GCE 'NA' Level Results of Prison Candidates (At least 1 'NA' Pass)		
2020	2021	2022
100%	100%	97.7%
GCE 'NA' Level Results of Prison Candidates (19 points or less in ELMAB3 - English, Mathematics and Best 3)		
2020	2021	2022
66.2%	41.1%	46.5%
GCE 'NA' Level Results of Prison Candidates (5 'NA' Passes)		
2020	2021	2022
77.9%	53.6%	58.1%
GCE 'NT' Level Results of Prison Candidates (At least 1 'NT' Pass)		
2020	2021	2022
100%	94.9%	100%
GCE 'NT' Level Results of Prison Candidates (3 'NT' Passes)		
2020	2021	2022
82.7%	61.5%	85.0%
GCE 'O' Level Results of Prison Candidates (At least 1 'O' Level Pass)		
2020	2021	2022
94.3%	96.6%	86.8%
GCE 'O' Level Results of Prison Candidates (At least 3 'O' Level Passes)		
2020	2021	2022
79.2%	62.1%	57.9%
GCE 'O' Level Results of Prison Candidates (5 or more 'O' Level Passes)		
2020	2021	2022
40.4%	21.6%	16.7%

⁴⁶ Other courses include literacy and numeracy courses conducted by the Prison School.



CC-04-1114/09

Case Study

Towards a Society without Re-offending

By Lena Leong

10 November 2014

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Institute of Leadership and Organisation Development (ILOD) promotes and supports the development of leadership and organisation development capabilities in the Singapore Public Service. Its research seeks to inform and sharpen practice of effective leadership and organisational intervention in public agencies.

ABSTRACT

After 10 years, the “Yellow Ribbon Project” (YRP) continues to create awareness, generate acceptance and inspire community action towards the rehabilitation and re-integration of ex-offenders into society. This case study traces the key milestones of the YRP and shows the vision and bold experiments of the Singapore Prison Service and its partners. It presents the intuition and commitment of individuals and organisations to create sustainable behavioural change in society, as well as the challenges that they faced and how they overcame these challenges. The YRP story is an example of how passionate individuals changed the mindset of society.

KEYWORDS

Governance, social, rehabilitation and reintegration, community programme, organisation change and leadership.

Towards a Society without Re-offending

Introduction

In 1998, the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) was confronted with two pressing issues — an overcrowded prison that was straining infrastructure and resources, and a shortage of manpower due to difficulties in staff retention and recruitment. The situation was compounded by poor public perception of the organisation and its work. Prison officers were overworked and had low morale. The situation became so bad that SPS had to ask its parent Ministry, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), to slow down law enforcement. SPS was also seriously contemplating overseas recruitment of prison officers to address the manpower shortage.

Towards the end of that year, Chua Chin Kiat was appointed Director of Prisons. Chua felt that a mere increase in staff headcount would not address SPS's problems and that they had to find new ways to reform the prison system. One of the first things that he did was to create regular platforms for his leadership team to meet. Every officer two levels down from Deputy Director of SPS would meet together with Chua every Monday and Friday over breakfast. These were informal chats for the group to educate him on running of the prisons and for Chua to share with them his principles, values and aspirations for the service. Wednesdays were set aside for more formal meetings to deliberate on issues raised at the breakfast meetings. Chua also set up a Research & Planning Branch to research, network with other research and correctional services, and co-ordinate organisation-wide initiatives. The Branch, with initially a Branch Head and two officers, scanned the literature on the practice of prison systems across the world. It tested and implemented many new ideas. Subsequently, the Branch instituted 3-year planning horizons and introduced an evidence-based orientation and approach to rehabilitation of inmates in SPS.

"... before I formally took over, I had already resolved to do two things. One, I would look deeper into the possibility of introducing a formal structure to deliver programmes aimed at creating positive change in the prison inmates. In order to tackle the problem of overcrowding, I must stop the revolving door. Two, I would introduce a forward looking element in the organisation of the service to take up research and planning, and ultimately to develop intellectual properties in the core competency areas of the Prison Service."

Chua Chin Kiat
Director
Singapore Prison Service
(1999–2007)

(Source: The Making of Captains of Lives, 2012)

The Ripple Concept

SPS was a secure and safe institution with a zero escape rate, but Chua questioned its value proposition if its focus was only on maintaining security and safety within the prisons. The recidivism rate then was high, at 44.4 per cent, which meant that almost half the ex-offenders returned to prison within two years of release. How was SPS creating a safer society if it did not do anything to reduce repeat offences? Chua saw rehabilitation, and not incarceration, as the way forward.

Even though rehabilitation had always been one of SPS's guiding values, it remained a remote concept to prison officers, whose role was mainly custodial. Rehabilitation was considered the job of counsellors and volunteers. Efforts towards rehabilitation were fragmented and limited to work regimes, education and religious counselling. Prior to Chua's arrival at SPS, pockets of staff were already disturbed by trends that revealed inter-generational prisoners, which meant the children of inmates were becoming offenders. However, SPS's proposal to set up a Rehabilitation Division was rejected by the MHA. The reason being that the Ministry was concerned whether "the huge amount of resources requested for would produce any results".¹ Given the lack of a vision for the future, SPS saw itself as a high security ship with no destination.²

Ideas on the desired future of SPS were shared at its Work Plan Seminar in May 1999, where junior prison officers were invited to participate for the first time in SPS's history. The concept of a ripple, which came from one of the pre-seminar work groups, was used to symbolise and explain how organisational change could be achieved (see Figure 1). Prison officers, at the centre of the ripple, must first be committed to the task of reforming inmates. They were the ones to set off the first wave. Inmates, who would respond to the actions of the prison officers, then set off the second ripple of change. To sustain the change in inmates, their families, the criminal justice system, and the community must be supportive. This ripple would then create a change in attitudes towards ex-offenders nationally and internationally.

Chua believed SPS's vision had to be developed "by the staff for the staff" in order for it to outlast his tenure in SPS, so he invited all prison officers to give their views at focus groups and over online chats after the seminar. Although most prison officers embraced the idea of rehabilitation, many also feared that "better" treatment would encourage defiance in inmates and compromise security. Of those who gave feedback, 250 prison officers across the ranks who had the most interesting ideas were invited to a 2-day visioning retreat, where many more divergent views surfaced. SPS senior management pushed ahead to craft SPS's vision.

¹ Chua Chin Kiat (2012) *The Making of Captains of Lives*, Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.

² Singapore Prison Service, "The Visioning Exercise", internal documentation.



Figure 1: The ripple effect of the six stakeholders and the proposed vision mark.

The initial vision proposals were met with scepticism by MHA. Security was MHA's paramount consideration and "Ministry officials intimated that the bosses felt that the vision statement gave the impression that the Prison Service had gone soft".³ Chua and his senior management team assured the Ministry that rehabilitation would be on top of what SPS was doing and they would test the idea as a pilot without additional resources. SPS's persistence paid off. After several rounds of refinement, including a re-visioning exercise with representatives from MHA, SPS was given the go-ahead to experiment with rehabilitation. Its new mission and vision statements were officially announced by the Home Affairs Minister at the ground-breaking ceremony of the new Changi Prison Complex in December 1999:

"I wanted the statement to be publicly unveiled to commit the Service and the government to the cause. The families of inmates and community at large also needed to be enrolled into the vision for it to work ... I therefore needed not only to persuade my parent Ministry to approve the mission and vision statements but also the Minister to unveil it."

Chua Chin Kiat
Director
Singapore Prison Service
(1999–2007)

(Source: *The Making of Captains of Lives*, 2012)

³ Chua Chin Kiat (2012) *The Making of Captains of Lives*, Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.

Mission

As a key partner in Criminal Justice, we protect society through the safe custody and rehabilitation of offenders, cooperating in prevention and after-care.

Vision

We aspire to be captains in the lives of offenders committed to our custody.
We will be instrumental in steering them towards being responsible citizens
with the help of their families and the community.
We will thus build a secure and exemplary prison system.

The new mission and vision statements started a fundamental mindset shift in SPS — beyond security and safety to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into society. They injected a sense of purpose and urgency, and became instrumental in shaping many of SPS's subsequent strategies, including the Yellow Ribbon Project.

Becoming Captains of Lives

Prison officers, at the heart of the ripple, were SPS's agents for change. The participative nature of the visioning exercise was a turning point in SPS's command and control organisational culture. A series of initiatives was further introduced to empower prison officers on the ground to voice their views, as well as encourage interactions and exchange of ideas across SPS in order to create a learning and more innovative work environment.

"To begin with, it was difficult to change our own staff. The greatest enemy was ourselves — what if there was riot? We had to first change our officers to believe that something else was possible."

*Jason Wong
Deputy Director
Singapore Prison Service
(1988–2002)*

(Source: CSC Class Sharing, 2013)

Even before the visioning exercise was completed, SPS had begun testing its ideas on rehabilitation. The Housing Unit Management System, a new approach to managing the prisons, was introduced in December 1999 to create a more inmate-centric management facility. Prison officers were used to keeping a distance from the inmates for fear that getting too close to them would heighten security risks. Periodic job rotations within SPS reinforced this divide. However, under the new system, prison officers were assigned to supervise a group of inmates, whom they had to know well enough, to work out rehabilitation programmes based on the inmates' strengths, weaknesses and motivations. This went against prison officers' entrenched belief that their duty was to give inmates a hard time in order to deter re-offence. The SPS leadership team recognised that a fundamental change in mindset was needed and launched the system as a pilot. Six of the 15 institutions within SPS volunteered for the trial roll-out of the Housing Unit Management System. The pilot was fraught with challenges as prison officers were anxious over their expanded job scope, potential conflict of roles and fear of loss of control. However, over time, operational efficiency, intelligence gathering and job satisfaction improved, raising the level of security and discipline in the prisons. As positive outcomes emerged, confidence in

and support for the system grew. Even so, it took SPS another three years after the launch of the new system to scale the initiative up to the other prison institutions.

Another project, initiated before the launch of the new vision, was the Rehabilitation Framework. It was one of the first tasks assigned to the Research & Planning Branch when it was formed in 1998. The Framework would optimise resource allocation and enable SPS to take systematic steps towards rehabilitating the 15,000 inmates under its charge. One of the key components of the Framework was the Level of Service Inventory–Revised (LSI-R) instrument, an instrument used in correctional services in Canada, which SPS adapted for its needs. The LSI-R matched inmates to correctional programmes based on their criminogenic risks and rehabilitation needs. Using this instrument, prison officers could modify treatment plans, called Personal Route Maps, to cater to each inmate’s progress throughout incarceration. Adapting the LSI-R was a gruelling process that included norming it to the local profile, calibrating the system for use throughout incarceration and customising it for use by prison officers, who were not psychometrically trained. Prison officers were unhappy about having to test and learn the instrument on top of their heavy workloads. In particular, the older staff felt threatened by the new technology, which they feared would render their experience irrelevant. Nonetheless, the LSI-R was launched just in time for it to be used to assess and select inmates for admission into the new Prison School, launched in early 2000.

Providing inmates with an education was not new to SPS. Teachers from the Ministry of Education conducted lessons for inmates, but the curriculum did not include life or employability skills that would facilitate the inmates’ reintegration into society. Lessons were conducted in make-shift classrooms scattered across the prison institutes and there was little interaction between teachers and prison officers. Inmates were reluctant learners who saw the lessons merely as a welcome relief from prison confinement. MHA was initially hesitant to invest resources into establishing a school, a domain which they felt belonged to the Ministry of Education. Nonetheless, SPS persisted and eventually obtained approval to proceed. With the opening of the Kaki Bukit Prison School in January 2000, for the first time in SPS’s history, the prison environment was converted into an educational institution with an operating philosophy of “School First, Prison Second”.⁴ A new curriculum tailored to the social development, employability and motivational needs of inmates was created. Inmates were addressed by name instead of number, and they, themselves, were responsible for maintaining discipline in class. These innovations turned out to be powerful interventions in generating among the inmates a sense of ownership towards the school’s goals. The enthusiasm of the inmates began to rub off on some of the prison officers in charge of the project, whose initial doubts faded as they observed the transformation in their wards.

These initiatives changed the way SPS operated. They stretched resources and were often perceived by some as contrary to the fundamental objectives of prison work and the professional identity of prison officers. An organisational climate survey in early 2000 revealed that many officers were unhappy. They felt that the SPS management did not fully understand the challenges they faced on the ground. Nonetheless, the change champions pressed on to develop a 3-year strategic framework from 2000 to 2002. The framework mapped SPS’s stakeholder groups to primary functions and proposed 15 anchor projects,

⁴ Singapore Prison Service, “*School First, Prison Second. Kaki Bukit Centre Prison School*”, internal documentation.

most of which were intended to improve SPS's internal efficiency, and aligned its functions to its vision. Two of the projects, the CARE Network and Family Involvement, became pivotal in transforming the way inmates were rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

Changing Public Perceptions

SPS realised that its efforts at rehabilitating prisoners would come to naught, with the chances of re-offence remaining high, if the community refused to give an ex-offender a second chance. In fact, a public perception survey in 2000 revealed that the public knew and cared little about SPS and its work. SPS's past deterrent approaches to reduce re-offence had resulted in the public perceiving the prisons and inmates as scary. Besides, SPS's poor public image was hindering staff recruitment. SPS realised that it had to change the community's perception of SPS and ex-offenders in order to succeed in rehabilitation.

In 2002, when Chua was confident that SPS had created substantial systemic structures to help inmates reform and that the organisational culture had sufficiently shifted to support such an approach, he tasked SPS's Public Affairs Branch to launch a media campaign to rebrand the organisation. The exercise would not only boost the morale of serving prison officers, but also help SPS to attract recruits with values that were aligned to sustain the organisation's vision.

The campaign with the theme *Captains of Lives, Rehab, Renew, Restart*, profiled SPS as an effective and forward-looking organisation with professional officers, who sought to protect society by keeping offenders in secure custody and rehabilitating them (see Figure 2).

Prison is not just about imprisonment			
Singapore Prison Service has embarked on a bold, new commitment to place greater emphasis on rehabilitation. We are already committing funding, focus and expertise within SPS to enable inmates to renew and restart their lives. We need your help because it is our firm belief that this will eventually reduce the burden on the community of repeat offenders.			
Secure custody	Rehabilitation & care	Recruitment	Community
Secure custody of inmates by SPS is our primary responsibility of keeping Singapore safe.	Rehabilitation is offered to inmates who are capable and willing. We have designed programmes to help them through in-care and after-care.	As Captains of Lives, we truly make a difference. We balance compassion with firmness, are well paid, have the opportunity for growth and can be certain that the skills we acquire will be in demand wherever we go in life.	Be bold with us. Be part of the move by Singapore to be number one by providing inmates with the opportunity to restart their lives and integrate into the community, thus reducing the burden of repeat crime-rates on the community.

Figure 2: Key messages of the “Captains of Lives, Rehab, Renew, Restart” campaign.

Everyone in SPS was involved in the media blitz. Superintendents, who were briefed on the concept, cascaded it to their staff. Senior management handpicked prison officers to be SPS's voice and face to the world, as well as to be role models to staff. This helped to align internal and external messages. Three provocative television commercials with catchy taglines anchored the campaign (see Figure 3).

Name of television commercial	Tattoo	Circuit Board	Witness
Description of the commercial	A tattooed chef carving a water melon in a restaurant.	An inmate working hard at a computer assembly workshop.	A lady driver looks anxiously at a tattooed man approaching a little girl but breaks into smiles when the man and child walkaway hand-in-hand with the mother of the child.
Message	Who says ex-convicts cannot serve society with conviction.	We believe, with rehabilitation, doing time is not a waste of time.	Whilst it is easy to see the flaws in people, it is also important to see the good in them.

Figure 3: An overview of the television commercials.

With its new focus on working with families and communities, SPS was able to interest the media to run stories on reformed inmates in newspapers, over radio and television, and on billboards. Reporters were given tours of the prisons to help them understand and write about SPS's rehabilitation programme. Subsequent television commercials featured prison officers sharing about their experiences in rehabilitation work.

At around the same time in 2002, Jason Wong, previously Deputy Director of SPS, was seconded to the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) as its Chief Executive Officer. A self-funding statutory board under MHA, SCORE was in charge of prison industry, employment and skills training for inmates. Its concern with the availability of funding and business sustainability often ran into conflict with SPS's push for more attention to rehabilitation. SCORE embarked on its own transformation journey and adopted the following mission and vision statements:

Mission

We rehabilitate and help reintegrate offenders to become responsible and contributing members of society.

Vision

We build bridges of hope for offenders and their families.
 We contribute to a safe community by successfully reintegrating offenders.
 We exemplify and lead in creating a more compassionate society

that offers second chances.

Wong, a firm believer in the power of storytelling, mooted the idea of producing a movie that would not only entertain but also spread the message of giving “second chances” to ex-offenders. Undeterred by the lack of funds, Wong broached the idea with a media company, which agreed to jointly produce a movie. In 2003, SCORE launched its first community movie, *Twilight Kitchen*, which chronicled the journey of an ex-offender. The film was released in phases to different segments of the community to optimise the effects of each outreach exercise (see Figure 4).

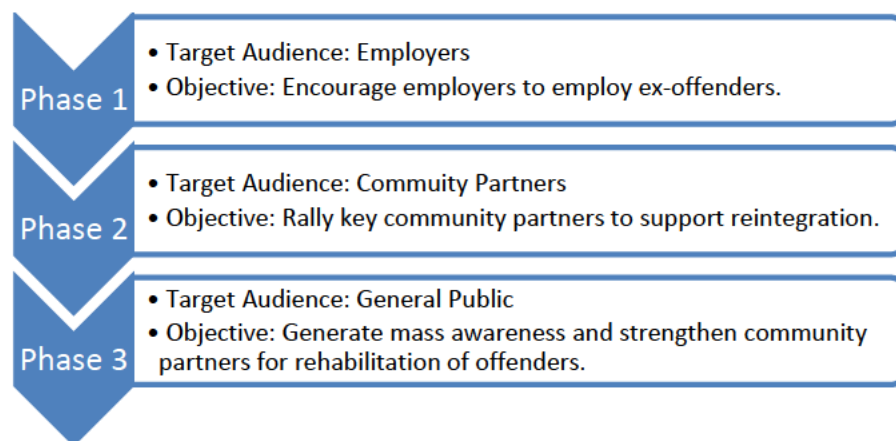


Figure 4: Phased release of SCORE’s community movie: “Twilight Kitchen”.

The combined media outreach efforts of SPS and SCORE were a success. SPS’s advertisements became the talking point at public places. In 2002, SPS won the Singapore Creative Circle Award (Bronze) in the Television & Cinema category, as well as the Institute of Advertising Singapore award for Television Campaign of The Year. About 250 employers stepped forward to offer employment to ex-offenders. Qualified and highly motivated individuals who wanted to do their part for society applied to join the Prison Service. The external affirmation significantly lifted the spirits of SPS and SCORE officers. They felt proud to be part of the Prison Service, and internal support for SPS’s rehabilitation and rehabilitation efforts surged.

The Yellow Ribbon Project

With an already strong focus on in-care for offenders, SPS realised that it had to strengthen the after-care support in order for its rehabilitation efforts to be effective. Earlier, in May 2000, SPS had officially set up the Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders (CARE) Network to optimise resources and integrate in-care and after-care support for ex-offenders. It comprised eight members in the after-care sector with six representatives from the social and

The Yellow Ribbon Message:

1. Every offender encounters two prisons — a physical prison, and a psychological and social prison.
2. Offenders’ families, friends, neighbours, employers, colleagues, and the community hold the keys to unlock the second prison.
3. Help unlock the second prison.

security sector.⁵ The Network held annual retreats and met every quarter to set direction and co-ordinate efforts in the after-care sector.

In 2004, the CARE Network capitalised on the public's overwhelming response to SPS's and SCORE's publicity blitzes to launch the Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP), a public education effort to raise awareness, generate acceptance and inspire action for the cause of giving ex-offenders a second chance at restarting their lives. The name was inspired by a 1970s song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree". It described an ex-offender's request to his wife to tie a yellow ribbon round an old oak tree as an indication of her forgiveness and acceptance.

The CARE Network had overall responsibility for the project. It was supported by YRP steering and sub-committees comprising mostly SPS and SCORE officers, who were responsible for the implementation of its programmes. YRP was funded off SPS's and SCORE's operating budget. Additional funding support came from Tote Board only for the organising of subsequent campaigns. A separate Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF) was set up with an Institution of Public Character (IPC) status, to provide financial support for reintegration and family support programmes.

The YRP started with the aim of changing the public's perception of ex-offenders by sharing with them SPS's and SCORE's rehabilitation programme. The theme for its inaugural campaign in 2004 was *"Help Unlock the Second Prison"*. The campaign comprised a series of activities anchored around a key event, a charity concert graced by then President S. R. Nathan and Mrs Nathan. Prison tours were organised to help policy-makers and potential volunteers better understand life behind bars and the part they could play in supporting inmates' rehabilitation. About 200 employers attended a demonstration of inmates' skills at SCORE. 320,000 hand-made yellow ribbons were distributed to the public to raise awareness of the YRP cause.

The enthusiasm at the YRP launch surprised SPS and SCORE officers. The 7,000-strong audience at the concert broke into resounding applause when ex-offenders stood up to perform. Advocates wrote to the newspapers to support the YRP cause. Employers expressed interest in hiring ex-offenders. YRP's message of acceptance, renewal and hope was starting to shift society's view of inmates and ex-offenders. The success of the first YRP campaign gave the organisers confidence to embark on more ambitious programmes in succeeding years. The YRP became an annual event every September spawning new activities with different themes but the same message — give ex-offenders a second chance (see Figure 5).

By the fourth year in 2007, 94 per cent of respondents of a post YRP survey indicated that they were aware of YRP's objectives. Regular networking forums involving both local and overseas professionals in correctional work, policy-makers, the academia, community partners and employers emerged to discuss issues on the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. More professionals and corporate groups started to volunteer in the prisons to develop inmates' artistic, musical and culinary talents. Inmates and ex-offenders themselves

⁵ The six representatives from the social and security sectors were: Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Social & Family Development, Industrial & Services Co-operative Society Ltd (ISCOS), National Council of Social Service, Singapore After-Care Association, and Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association.

began to participate in YRP events such as performing on roadshows and sharing their testimonies. The media gave extensive coverage of these events.

By the sixth year in 2009, YRP went beyond raising awareness to engaging the community to take action. Political leaders continued to participate in YRP fund-raising events. Community groups collaborated to run YRP related events. Some even initiated their own projects. For example, SPS's Tattoo Removal Programme, a critical component of its zero tolerance policy towards gang-related activities in the prisons, was made possible by GiGATT International Marketing Pte Ltd, a distributor of medical technologies. The company called the YRP hotline and donated laser equipment that enabled inmates to remove their tattoos and renounce their affiliations to gangs. The Board of Visiting Justices and Board of Inspection also initiated iCare, a matching dollar scheme that encouraged inmates to remit their prison work allowance to their families instead of spending it on food items in prisons. iCare enabled inmates to take responsibility for their family, and hence enhanced their self-esteem and resolve to change.

By 2013, the number of YRP volunteers had grown from 76 in 2004 to 2,625 in 2013. Together, they contributed resources and ideas that augmented SPS's rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

Year & theme	Key initiatives
2004 Creating Awareness : "Help Unlock the Second Prison"	The Yellow Ribbon Project was launched: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inaugural Yellow Ribbon Charity Concert (2004, 2006 and 2008) was graced by then President of Singapore Mr S R Nathan and attended by 7,000 people. • The movie, <i>Coming Home</i>, on three inmates preparing to reintegrate into society after serving their sentence was launched. The movie premier was attended by 6,500 people.
2005 Engaging the Community: "Give Ex-offenders A Second Lease of Life"	The YRP message of acceptance and support for ex-offenders was extended to a wider audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inaugural "Tie-A-Yellow" Ribbon Walk (2005-2008) attracted 14,000 people. • The inaugural Yellow Ribbon Conference gathered partners in correctional work to share best practices and research. It became an annual event to develop better integrated rehabilitation and reintegration approaches. • The inaugural Yellow Ribbon Job Fair, co-organised with North East Community Development Council, offered 660 vacancies to pre-released inmates. • The movie, <i>One More Chance</i>, on the difficulties faced by three ex-offenders after their release from prison was launched. It attracted 150,000 viewers.
2006 Engaging The Ex- Offenders: "Widening the Reach, Deepening the Message"	The YRP began to mobilise inmates and ex-offenders to contribute to society through community service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yellow Ribbon Concert was broadcasted over local television. • The inaugural Yellow Ribbon Creative Festival comprising poetry and song-writing competition was held in Changi Prison to give inmates an opportunity to express their hopes and appreciation to those who had helped them. • The inaugural Celebrating Second Chances Award Ceremony (2006, 2008, 2011 and 2013) recognised 300 ex-offenders for remaining crime-free. • MediaCorp produced and broadcasted, <i>Turning Point</i>, which featured the

Year & theme	Key initiatives
	struggles of four ex-offenders on national television.
2007 Giving Back: “Extending the Reach, Inspiring Action in Inmates & Ex- offenders”	<p>The YRP profiled inmates and ex-offenders as responsible members of society with gifts, talents, and acts of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was the guest-of-honour at the annual Tie-A-Yellow Ribbon Walk. • The Yellow Ribbon Community Service Project was introduced in prison. • The Inaugural Yellow Ribbon Community Art Exhibition (2007-2013) was launched, where works by inmates were sold to raise funds for YRF. • Other events such as the Yellow Ribbon Culinary Competition and, the Yellow Ribbon Appreciation Dinner, and the Yellow Ribbon Fund Charity Gala Dinner.
2008 Beyond Just Words: “Going beyond awareness to action by actively engaging the community”	<p>The YRP encouraged family members, employers and volunteers to take action to help ex-offenders reintegrate into society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratam was the guest-of-honour at the Yellow Ribbon Journey Exhibition, <i>Our Crossroads</i> that showcased the real-life stories of three ex-offenders. • The inaugural Yellow Ribbon Fund, Fund-raising Golf Tournament & Dinner (2008, 2010 and 2012) raised funds for programmes to strengthen family ties of inmates and ex-offenders. • A local film director produced, <i>The Days</i>, which depicted the relationship of two brothers involved in gangs.
2009 Giving Back: “Inmates and Ex- offenders Playing a Role to Give Back to Society”	<p>The YRP focused on encouraging inmates and ex-offenders to give back to society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inaugural Yellow Ribbon Run (2009-2013) was flagged off by Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean. Among the participants were 80 ex-offenders. • The Tattoo Removal Programme, supporting SPS’s zero tolerance policy towards gang-related activities in the prisons, was launched with the sponsorship of GiGATT International Marketing Pte Ltd
2010 Coming Together, We care: “Engaging the Community for Action to Help Ex- offenders reintegrate”	<p>The YRP focused on fostering partnerships with the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 ex-offenders and 250 community members, comprising ex-offenders’ families and students formed the YRP contingent at the Chingay Parade. • North East Community Council launched the Rekindle Programme that helped inmates from the Reformatory Training Centre reconcile with their families.
2011 Little Gestures, Big Difference: “Encourage everyday gestures that signify acceptance of ex- offenders by the community”	<p>The YRP encouraged small acts of kindness and support for inmates and ex-offenders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISCOS led ex-offenders and volunteers to serve lunch cooked by inmates to residents of a home for the aged. The event raised funds which were matched by the Southeast Community Development Council. • Marshall Cavendish Editions produced a book, <i>Yellow Ribbon</i>, on the success stories of ex-offenders and their challenges in assimilating into society.
2012 Will: “Inspire inmates and	<p>The YRP encouraged inmates and ex-offenders and their families to work towards a better future with the support of the community:</p>

Year & theme	Key initiatives
ex-offenders to take charge of their own rehabilitation and contribute to the society."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual, 53 year-old Mdm Jenap ran 12 hours in a self-initiated "Dusk till Dawn Challenge" to raise more than \$130,000 for YRP in 2012. • The Yellow Ribbon mobile application was launched to update smartphone users on the latest YRP news.
2013 Celebrating 10 years of Second Chances: "The Road to Acceptance"	<p>The YRP celebrated its 10th anniversary with a stronger focus on empowering more Singaporeans with the opportunity to be part of the YRP movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean participated in the Yellow Ribbon Run. • A record 1,230 participants formed a Giant Human Yellow Ribbon to commemorate YRP's 10 year anniversary.

Figure 5: A broad overview of Yellow Ribbon campaigns.

Moving forward, SPS and SCORE hope to do less of organising YRP events and more of facilitating ground-up initiatives by creating and connecting networks of like-minded individuals and organisations across the community sectors. They also planned to increase the engagement of youths in the tertiary institutions and secondary schools and seek their views on reintegration issues. Besides raising awareness through talks in schools and learning journeys to prisons, they would partner community groups to facilitate youth-led volunteering projects and research. This would ensure that society in the future continued to embrace an inclusive society where ex-offenders had equal opportunities.

The Ripple Effect of YRP

What started off as the conviction of a group of SPS officers that inmates could be transformed grew with the support of their colleagues and society. YRP impacted staff and inmates, inmates' families, the criminal justice system, and the community and beyond.

Staff Reframing their work in the context of YRP goals, gave SPS and SCORE officers a sense of shared purpose and focus. A lot of their work suddenly "made sense". Their view of the world was expanded and their aspirations were unleashed to do more for inmates. For example, they overcame employers' scepticism and doggedly grew a pool of employer advocates. They trained workplace supervisors and developed on-boarding programmes to ensure that employers were successful in inducting ex-offenders into their workforces. Without an additional budget, they sought partnerships with institutions and corporate groups such as the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to build new training facilities, e.g., a fully equipped kitchen and computer laboratories. It also obtained funds from WDA to expand employability skill training, which used to be limited to electrical works and hair-dressing, to include generic work and supervisory skills, as well as progressive levels of trade certification in a range of areas such as landscaping, laundry operations, culinary skills, food preparation, IT, and logistics. The number of inmates trained increased by 65 per cent from

3,567 in 2009 to 5,896 in 2013. Once the in-care infrastructure was in place, they worked on strengthening the after-care support for ex-offenders.

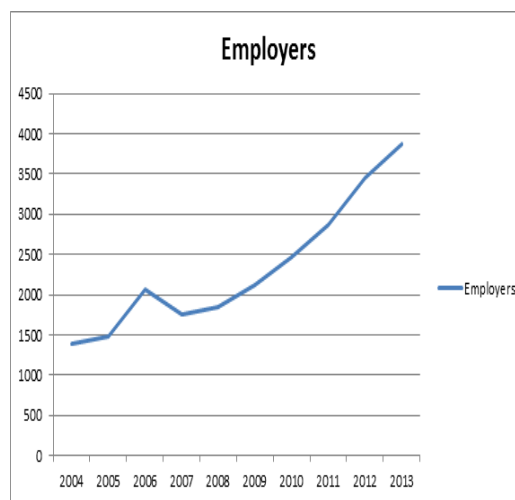
Inmates Initially, the inmates themselves had no faith in the ability of the YRP to help them and cringed when approached to share their testimonies as YRP ambassadors. They did not realise they could paint, sing, compose songs and pass examinations. The YRP gave them hope, helped them channel their voices to the world, and restarted their lives. With the community more accepting of ex-offenders, more of them found employment and the recidivism rate had dropped significantly, from 44.4 per cent for the 1998 cohort to 27.4 per cent for the 2011 cohort.

Darren's Story

Darren Tan sat for his A-level examinations in the Prison School. He was accepted into university, but was unable to leave the prison for the pre-admission interview. The university dean travelled to Changi Prison to interview him. A company then sponsored his university education. Darren eventually graduated with a law degree in 2013.

Inmates' Families The YRP's help reached the families of inmates and ex-offenders. In 2006, the Yellow Ribbon Emergency Fund was set up under YRF to disburse cash within 48 hours to dependents of inmates to tide over urgent needs. The YRF-ISCOS Fairy Godparent programme was also started in 2006 to provide bursaries, tuition and mentoring to ex-offenders' children. In 2010, MHA initiated the Yellow Ribbon Community Outreach Project (YR-COP) as a pilot, where grassroots volunteers were assigned to families affected by incarceration to understand their needs and link them to community support avenues. By October 2014, 65 grassroots divisions were on YR-COP. More than 620 grassroots volunteers were trained to provide community support to assist needy families and about 2,100 inmates' families had been assisted.

Criminal Justice System In 2005, the Government amended the Criminal Registration Act to strike out criminal records for minor offences, a move that gave a second chance to some types of offenders. With society more accepting of inmates and more open to giving ex-offenders a second chance at restarting their lives, SPS was able to implement Community-Based Sentencing such as the Short Detention Order and the Day Reporting Order in 2011. Both were extensions of the Home Detention Scheme introduced in 2000, where offenders of minor crimes serve the tail-end of their sentences at home tracked by electronic tagging devices. These amendments in legislation enabled offenders who have not committed serious crimes or developed criminal lifestyles to access community resources for their rehabilitation. They also minimised disruptions to inmates' families and employment while punishing them for their offence.



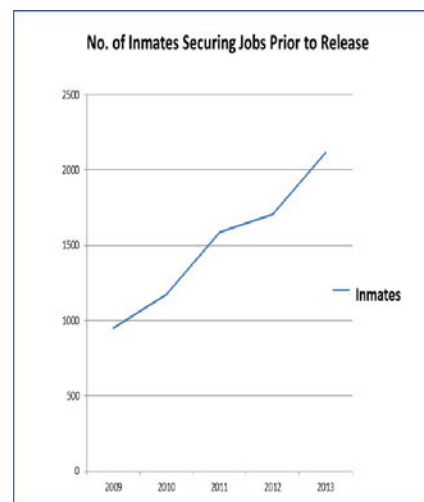
No. of Employers in SCORE's Job Bank

(Source: YRP Secretariat)

The Community & Beyond The YRP helped to significantly reduce the stigmatisation of ex-offenders. Members of the public had gone beyond the act of wearing a yellow ribbon to providing funds, jobs and expertise to help inmates and ex-offenders. The number of employers in SCORE's job bank doubled from 1,381 in 2004 to 3,876 in 2013. More

employers were also prepared to mentor and develop ex-offenders and were proud to associate their companies with YRP as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.

More importantly, people at workplaces had become more accepting of ex-offenders as colleagues. The number of inmates securing jobs before they left prisons more than doubled from 951 in 2009 to 2,114 in 2013. More schools involved their students in activities with inmates and ex-offenders. In 2013, 15,000 students, an increase from 10,000 students in 2011, participated in YRP activities such as street sales, fund-raising and packing of YRP goodie packs. With societal acceptance, ex-offenders became more confident about confronting their past and sharing their journeys to encourage others, while inmates gained hope of a future beyond prisons and the motivation to change. The YRP crossed national boundaries and cultures — its concept of harnessing all of society to give ex-offenders a second chance served as an inspiration for the emergence of similar movements in Fiji, Nigeria, Mozambique, the United States, Australia and the Philippines.



No. of Inmates Securing Jobs Prior to Release
(Source: YRP Secretariat)

Shifting from Prison Service to Correctional Service

SPS's framing of its mission in the context of societal goals enabled it to see new possibilities, identify new partners and create space for others to contribute. These improved the outcomes of SPS programmes and moved the results up the value chain. As talented recruits and community resources became available, SPS and SCORE were able to shift their focus towards new areas of work and building new capacity.

First, SPS strengthened its in-care strategy. In 2012, SPS implemented the Enhanced Supervision Scheme for Long Term Imprisonment repeat drug offenders, who would undergo regular urine tests, stricter monitoring, and intensified counselling with SPS Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists to reduce their chances of re-offence. It started the Pre-Release Centre, where inmates were put through more intensified rehabilitation programmes during the final 10 months of their sentences. These were intended to develop self-confidence and social skills and to prepare inmates for life upon release.

Second, SPS shifted more attention to close gaps in after-care. Internal research showed that re-offending rates significantly dropped when ex-offenders were able to stay in their jobs for the first six months. Hence, SCORE assigned Career Vocational Officers to assess inmates' motivations to put them on the appropriate industry training track, and help them secure a job before they left prison. SCORE Employability Case Managers would then help

"We underestimate the difficulties ex-offenders face in transition. They can work three days a week as bookies and earn as much as \$3,000 a month. Loan-sharks pay them \$100 for splashing paint on one door. This is "easy money" compared to 10-hour shifts as cooks in a restaurant. The temptation to return to their former ways is very real and great."

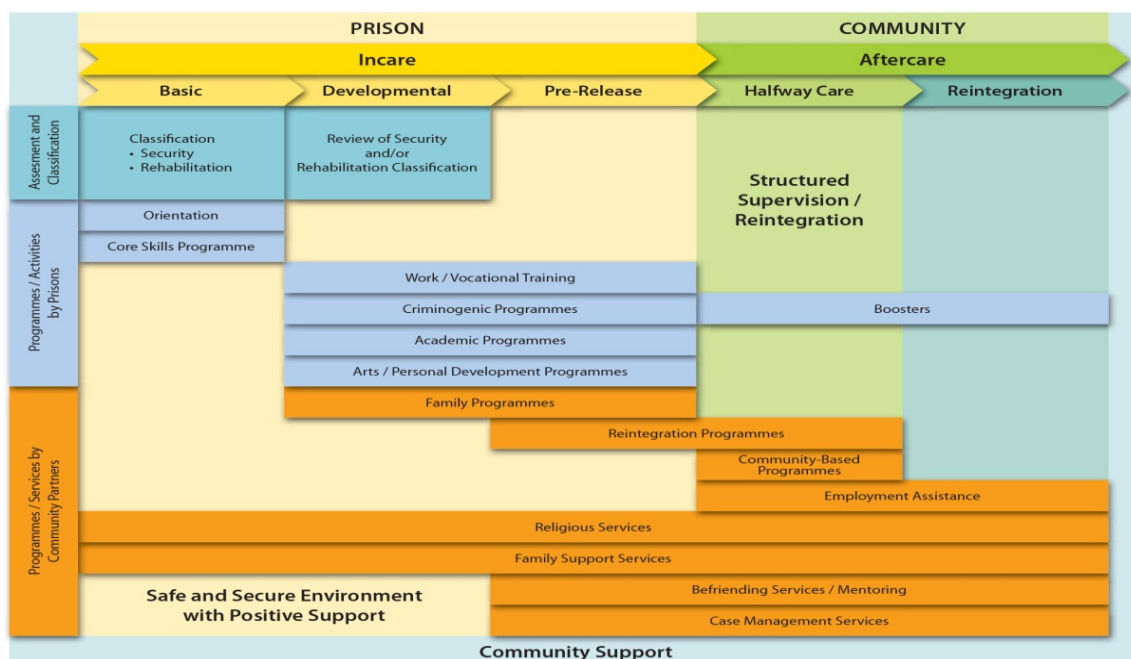
Patrick Lau
Chief Operating Officer
Singapore Corporation of
Rehabilitative Enterprises
(2001–2013)

(Source: Interview conducted by Lena Leong, 2014)

newly released ex-offenders navigate the transition for the first six months upon their release, such as ensuring that they were on time for work, related well with their team and settled into their new work routines. SPS further expanded its after-care role in January 2014 by amending the Prisons Act to subject inmates to conditional release, and to mandate inmates, who were assessed to be at higher risk of re-offending, to come under the aftercare of SPS. These schemes aimed to support ex-offenders and deter them from re-offending.

Third, SPS expended efforts to build the capacity of its partners. In 2010, SPS introduced the Halfway House Service model to enhance the programmes and professionalism of halfway houses. More structured programmes were introduced to train volunteers such as on inmate subculture and counselling so that they could take on more complex work. More time was also invested into forging collaboration within CARE Network and with other partners to find joint solutions, identify opportunities and break the cycle of offending early. SPS's Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R) framework, which promoted an evidence-based and integrated approach to in-care and after-care, helped to create a shared language among stakeholders within and beyond SPS, and galvanised their efforts (see Figure 6).⁶

SPS and SCORE had been invited to share its work in rehabilitation and reintegration with correctional institutions across the world at conventions like the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI).



(Source: Singapore Prison Service, *The Courage to Believe: Unlocking Life's Second Chances*, 2013)

Figure 6: The rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R Framework).

⁶ Singapore Prison Service (2013) *The Courage to Believe: Unlocking Life's Second Chances*, Singapore: Singapore Prison Service.

Sustaining Social Change

The YRP began as a clarion call for help — an appeal to everyone in society to give ex-offenders a second chance at restarting their lives. Each handmade yellow ribbon produced by an inmate symbolised his or her hope for acceptance. Out of nowhere, people came forward to support and give. What caused the shift?

The change started with a small group of SPS officers who believed that inmates could be transformed. They had big audacious goals of rehabilitation and after-care, with families being strengthened and society playing its part. They intervened at multiple levels of leadership, organisational culture, mission and strategy, and concurrently attended to operational needs, shifting of mindsets and engaging vision. Often, they were learning on the go, sometimes setting off in directions different from their plans when experiments failed or opportunities struck. Their journey was fraught with tensions, obstacles and setbacks. Empowering leadership gathered early adopters, tested and pushed through ideas, and generated quick wins. Once there was success, confidence and followers gradually gathered, and the change momentum grew.

“The most important achievement of all was not systemic or infrastructural, but cultural ... the critical mass of prison officers believed in rehabilitation and they put that belief into action.”

Chua Chin Kiat
Director
Singapore Prison Service
(1999–2007)

(Source: The Making of Captains of Lives, 2012)

Most of the breakthroughs came only when SPS and SCORE officers were emotionally connected to the cause. Once they saw how repeated incarcerations detached offenders from society, destroyed families and put children at risk, and how their work could make a difference, they were motivated and began to perceive their relationships with inmates differently. The officers discovered new partners, created new structures and developed new capabilities that opened up opportunities beyond prisons. Many innovations were a result of officers on the ground seizing opportunities, taking risks and trying out new ideas. Change was facilitated by collective ownership of a compelling shared purpose.

Behind Every Inmate You See, There is a Family

To strengthen family bonds and motivate change, the women prisons obtained special approval for the children of inmates to visit their mothers on Mother’s Day. The sight of the children crying and hugging their mothers as they parted at the end of the day moved the prison officers and changed their view of rehabilitation. A video clip of the event went viral in SPS. Soon, prison officers in the male prisons also wanted to organise a similar event for Father’s Day.

Similarly, when inmates became emotionally connected with how the consequences of their offences affected their loved ones and the possibilities of a new future, they became motivated and learnt to make different life choices. Likewise, when stakeholders and members of the public connected with the stories of inmates and ex-offenders, and saw them as someone’s parent or child — ordinary people who made mistakes and needed others to give them second chances — their perceptions of inmates and ex-offenders changed, and they offered help.

YRP was successful because most people believed in second chances, since people do make mistakes and would need others to believe in them again. SPS recognised this universal truth, branded it, and made it the galvanising force for its work. Change happened when

people were moved by what they saw. It was sustained when mental models shifted and people began to choose to act differently and collectively commit to the cause.

Towards a Society Without Re-offending

SPS embarked on its transformation journey 15 years ago. Since then, its ties with SCORE have been strengthened through the sharing of resources such as space, manpower and budget towards a common cause in YRP. Setting early the conditions for internal culture shifts has also helped to sustain organisational change. The Prison School has since doubled its student intake and moved to new premises with upgraded facilities. Its research team has also developed new tools to assess inmates and published papers in journals to share the SPS experience. SPS now has about 180 trained rehabilitation specialists attending to the in-care needs of inmates and aftercare needs of ex-offenders. In 2012, SPS won the Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation for organisational excellence.

More importantly, SPS has been able to attract the next generation of prison officers with values that are aligned to its vision of transforming the Prison Service into a respected profession. In an online survey that was part of its re-visioning exercise in October 2012, 90 per cent of prison officers responded within two weeks. Of those who responded, 75 per cent felt strongly that SPS should take on a leading role in offenders' aftercare and prevention of offending, 90 per cent strongly felt that ensuring the safety and security of inmates was one of SPS's core roles, and 80 per cent felt that facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders was one of SPS's core roles.

SPS and SCORE are at a tipping point of transforming society. Through the YRP, they succeeded in creating societal awareness and cultivating advocates for rehabilitation. Nonetheless, as Teo Tze Fang, former CEO of SCORE, said "It is for the Yellow Ribbon spirit – the spirit of given second chances – to become spontaneously the spirit of Singapore within the next 10 years."⁷

At the SPS-SCORE Corporate Advance in 2013, SPS under the new Director of Prisons, Soh Wai Wah, launched its new vision statement to further challenge staff to work towards a society without re-offending.

Vision

As Captains of Lives, we inspire everyone, at every chance,
towards a society without re-offending.

Inmates can be a very difficult group of people to manage and prison work very demoralising and demanding. SPS's and SCORE's challenge now is to build on the

⁷ Singapore Prison Service (2013) *The Courage to Believe: Unlocking Life's Second Chances*, Singapore: Singapore Prison Service.

momentum, uphold the sense of purpose, pride and ownership in its officers, and keep sight of what matters. Their ultimate goal is for “the reintegration of ex-offenders to be initiated by the community than by any government agency or non-profit organisation”.⁸

END

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were the high leverage actions that SPS took in rehabilitating and re-integrating inmates? How did they manage to grow and sustain their results? What are the key take-away on leading social and organisational change that you can bring to your organisation?
2. In what other areas can government do more to engage citizens and involve community to co-create public results? How might doing so lead to higher quality outcomes, stronger institutions and a more resilient Singapore? What might be some challenges and enablers?
3. What new capabilities do government and public officers need to have to co-create public outcomes with citizens? What shifts in mindset and enabling infrastructure are needed? Where is a good place to start?

⁸ Singapore Prison Service (2013) *The Courage to Believe: Unlocking Life's Second Chances*, Singapore: Singapore Prison Service.

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