

PROXIMITY

Evaluation Report

ACT Corrective Services: Blueprint for Change Program & Wellbeing

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The background features several abstract graphic elements. On the left, there are overlapping semi-circles in shades of purple, blue, and cyan. On the right, there is a horizontal row of four overlapping circles in shades of red and purple. At the bottom right, there is a large circular graphic composed of many thin, concentric lines in shades of cyan and purple, creating a grid-like or ripple effect.

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Executive Summary

The Blueprint for Change Program was established in early 2022 with the objective of improving the safety and well-being of Correctional Officers (COs) working at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and the Court Transport Unit (CTU). Based on the findings of the Blueprint for Change Oversight Committee, 2021-24, a dedicated project delivery team was formed to support this work in ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS). Funding for the program was received from ACT Treasury in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 budget, totalling \$29.21 million over 4 years.

The commissioning of an independent evaluation of the Blueprint program and wellbeing activities was a key action in the Blueprint program plan. This document is the final report of the independent evaluation of the Blueprint for Change program.

This evaluation examines the extent to which Blueprint program activities have been successfully implemented to date, along with evidence that these have led to the intended outcomes of ACTCS. Findings are intended to inform the future direction of the Blueprint program and help ensure the wellbeing and safety of custodial officers continues to be appropriately prioritised.

The evaluation has drawn on extensive program administrative data, along with consultation with COs at level 1 (32 interviews), level 2 (11 interviews) and level 3 (four interviews). Interviews were also conducted with ACTCS executive staff, senior directors, detainees, members of the Blueprint Oversight Committee, program leads, and key external stakeholders, including the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Official Visitor for Corrections and Children and Young People.

Summary of key evaluation findings

Significant effort has been invested to execute the recommendations of the Blueprint Oversight Committee, which has resulted in considerable progress since the Blueprint Oversight Committee's report in March 2022. The support of the ACTCS executive and management teams has been pivotal to placing Blueprint at the forefront of ACTCS priorities as well as keeping momentum and the required work progressing.

It is important to note, however, that morale, trust, and safety were very low at the AMC and CTU at that time, and much of the work of the Blueprint program has been focused on lifting the operating environment to meet an acceptable standard. The evidence available to this evaluation, including feedback from extensive consultation with staff at all levels, demonstrates that an acceptable standard is now consistently in place, and across a number of domains, has been surpassed. The outlook is now far more optimistic, despite some ongoing issues and recent challenges.

Furthermore, the Blueprint program implementation is closely aligned to the ACT Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2019-2024, focussing on all four pillars of safety, reintegration, dignity, and excellence.

Process evaluation findings

Process evaluation findings reflect strong and effective management of the Blueprint program, by the Oversight Committee, the Program Board, and most vitally, by the ACT Corrections team leading the program of work. The energy, commitment and stakeholder engagement skills brought to bear by the Program Management Office (PMO) have been widely commended by stakeholders and are seen to be a key factor underpinning the progress made to date in improving the operational environment for COs.

Overall, the Blueprint for Change program has been well managed and has been highly effective in delivering its intended activities within allocated timeframes.

Table 1 - Process evaluation key findings

Question and sub-question	Overall findings	
<p>Fidelity</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint been implemented in line with the recommendations of the Committee?</p>	<p>To what extent do Blueprint activities align with the recommendations?</p> <p>To what extent have these activities comprehensively delivered against the Committee's recommendations?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the work of the Blueprint program is well aligned to the recommendations of the Blueprint Oversight Committee. The Committee's Recommendations were translated into effective program management. A significant amount of activity has been sustained over time, with some minor gaps in completeness.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>
<p>Appropriateness</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint been appropriately implemented and adjusted where necessary?</p>	<p>Have initiatives needed to be adapted or implemented differently from proposed? Has this been well managed?</p> <p>Where prioritisation has had to be done, has this been based on sound consideration of risks, benefits and interactions across recommended actions?</p> <p>Have the appropriate funding and resources been provided to deliver the program?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, decisions made regarding the focus of the Blueprint program are in line with the ACT Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2019-2024¹ Where changes have been necessary from the initial design of the Blueprint program these have been driven by results of ongoing stakeholder engagement and by government procedural requirements.</p> <p>Project challenges, re-prioritisation, and funding limitations have resulted in some initiatives being adapted or implemented differently than initially proposed. Despite continuous oversight and well-intended decisions, some projects have been complicated by industrial, financial/procurement, and other necessary governance processes and issues with consultation burnout amongst staff.</p> <p>Broadly, the prioritisation process has been grounded in risk management, and with a consideration of appropriate sequencing. When projects have encountered obstacles, issues were promptly identified, reported, and adjustments were made. The program has been provided significant funding, but the reasons behind the funding decisions from ACT Treasury were sometimes opaque and not directly aligned with the recommendations of the Committee.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good</i> Evidence: <i>Some evidence</i></p>
<p>Coverage</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint supported all members of the Correctional Officer workforce in both AMC and CTU?</p>	<p>Are there differences in experience of Blueprint initiatives for different staff?</p> <p>Are any differences intentional and well-conceived?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the Blueprint program has achieved strong coverage across both CTU and AMC operating environments, with extensive input and effort from staff across CTU, AMC and ACTCS to achieve this.</p> <p>AMC and CTU are distinctly different operating environments. Blueprint activities have been actively tailored to address the requirements of both groups effectively, ensuring suitability to their respective contexts. Differences reflect the specific demands and limitations of the two operating environments.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>

¹ ACT Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 <<https://www.correctiveservices.act.gov.au/about-us/strategic-plan>>

Question and sub-question	Overall findings	
<p>Governance</p> <p>To what extent have governance arrangements provided appropriate oversight of Blueprint?</p>	<p>To what extent does the existing level of data and oversight allow for the ongoing monitoring of progress and program success?</p> <p>Have governance arrangements enabled the success of individual initiatives?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the structures and mechanisms in place for the Blueprint program have ensured accountability, transparency, and compliance with the program objectives.</p> <p>Oversight has been effectively managed, with the available data being compiled and disseminated appropriately and consistently. There has been robust involvement from key decision-makers and the project management team, ensuring all parties are actively engaged. Senior management has been kept well-informed of ongoing issues.</p> <p>The evaluation has highlighted significant data gaps. Currently, the necessary information isn't readily accessible for real-time management decisions. However, the data is in a phase of emergence and maturation.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good Evidence: Sufficient evidence</i></p>
<p>Timeliness</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint been delivered on time against agreed delivery milestones?</p>	<p>To what extent have activities met the key deadlines and priority of implementation outlined by the Committee?</p> <p>When particular initiatives have commenced, have these been delivered against agreed milestones?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the activities and outcomes of the Blueprint program have occurred within appropriate and expected timeframes, with ongoing work underway to continue to strengthen areas that have yet to be finalised.</p> <p>Priority of implementation has generally aligned with the Blueprint Report. Most initiatives are set to be delivered within deadlines and timeframes set by the Committee and have been delivered against agreed milestones.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good Evidence: Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Good progress in a challenging operating environment

While there are inherent challenges in the custodial work environment, the broad consensus is that there has been a notable improvement in the safety, wellbeing, culture, and capability of the custodial officer cohort. It is also evident that numerous initiatives are underway which promise to yield benefits in the long term, even if this isn't immediately apparent in the current data.

The custodial work environment is characterised by high levels of physical and mental risk,² with frequent exposure for staff to crisis situations and the risk of secondary trauma, particularly related to the impact of hearing about the criminal activity of detainees and the probable impact of this on victims of crime.³ In an operating environment focused on detaining and rehabilitating involuntary clients, significant psychological pressure is borne by staff, and strong interpersonal skills are required.⁴ In this context, the importance of the work of the Blueprint and the focus on COs working conditions in ACT corrections is highlighted.

There are three areas where the operating environment at AMC and CTU has markedly improved since the introduction of the Blueprint program. The security of the work environment has greatly improved, notably in the introduction of key equipment such as oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, utility belts and safety vests. Alongside and interrelated with this successful investment in equipment has come a strong uplift in training, resulting in improved workforce capability and confidence in a suite of core skills.

² Ferdik, F, Smith, H. (2017). Correctional Officer Safety and Wellness Literature Synthesis. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250484.pdf>

³ Russo, J. (2019). Workforce Issues in Corrections. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/workforce-issues-corrections>

⁴ Office of Correctional Health, American Correctional Association (2023). Staff Recruitment and Retention in Corrections – The Challenge and Ways Forward. *Corrections Today*. Retrieved from: https://www.aca.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Publications_Carla/Docs/Corrections%20Today/2023%20Articles/Corrections_Today_Jan-Feb_2023_Staff%20Recruitment%20and%20Retention%20in%20Corrections.pdf

The wellbeing of COs is also an area where deep investment has occurred since the Blueprint Oversight Committee's report, with a range of wellbeing supports on offer to staff both in and outside the workplace setting. While there remains some work to do to enhance the culture of mental health help seeking in this cohort, access to these supports has had a beneficial impact on the extent to which staff feel valued and supported in their roles.

Leadership and culture are a focus and should remain a high priority

There remain challenges in other domains of the operating environment, however each is continuing to meet an acceptable standard, and some elements of each of these are of a high standard. Challenges are seen in the safety of the work environment, largely associated with unplanned leave and short staffing. Indicators of organisational culture show this continues to be a challenging area for the AMC and CTU. There are reports of in-groups and some poor behaviour from disgruntled staff, and a lack of commitment to the workplace and each other displayed in observations that staff may be exploiting unplanned leave arrangements.

Effective leadership remains an area for further development, being a key lever to drive performance and outcomes which is beginning to come to life. Recent changes to the operating model are promising, including the introduction of key senior director roles focused on staff wellbeing and culture. These changes appear to have led to an immediate uplift across areas such as two-way communication with staff, engagement, and support for staff with high levels of overtime or unplanned leave, and increased focus on debriefing and on the job coaching. These represent key areas requiring investment and focus going forward, with the uplift in security, capability and wellbeing support for staff now providing a strong basis from which to build a performance culture, where staff have a shared vision of the value of their roles and how these drive outcomes for detainees and the community.

Table 2 - Outcome evaluation key findings

Question and sub-question		Overall findings
<p>Security</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to a secure work environment?</p>	<p>To what extent have the physical working environment been improved to prioritise safety and wellbeing?</p> <p>To what extent has a smoke-free work environment been achieved?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the physical security of CTU and AMC has improved since the implementation of the Blueprint program, largely resulting from investment in fit for purpose training, protective equipment and the cessation of smoking.</p> <p>Investment in personal protective equipment (PPE) has improved the security of the environment for staff. Some gaps in physical security remain, such as CCTV coverage and fencing improvements. Training has improved COs sense of security, including increased emphasis on relational security. Overall, the implementation of Smoke-free has been seen as a success. Anecdotally, some issues relating to NRT-misuse and property damage remain, noting work is underway to help address NRT misuse, for example changing the clinical model.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Some evidence</i></p>

Question and sub-question	Overall findings	
<p>Safety</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to a safe work environment?</p>	<p>To what extent have policy settings been changed to better manage the detainee population (overcrowding, positive engagement, relocation)?</p> <p>To what extent has sustainable rostering and management of overtime been achieved?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall an increase in relational security has improved the safety of the work environment at both AMC and CTU, however issues with staff numbers, detainee boredom and unsustainable overtime remain of serious concern.</p> <p>While policy changes at AMC have improved detainee behaviour management, detainee non-association requirements are a barrier to managing tension and boredom through meaningful activity.</p> <p>At the same time, many staff at AMC continue to feel unsafe and outnumbered due to under-staffing, despite ongoing efforts to recruit for CO roles, with two recruitment rounds per year. The roster project has been significantly delayed and remains a vexed issue because of historical mistrust and the procedural difficulty of change. While staff appreciate access to overtime, there are reports that this is misused. Historical under-recruitment (due to the challenge of finding suitable candidates) has had ongoing impacts on total staffing numbers.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Adequate</i> Evidence: <i>Some evidence</i></p>
<p>Wellbeing</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to strong CO wellbeing?</p>	<p>To what extent do staff have a positive work/life balance?</p> <p>To what extent do staff have access to supports that contribute to staff health and wellbeing?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the wellbeing of custodial officers has improved through Blueprint program initiatives focused on the physical and mental health of COs.</p> <p>There is a strong connection between work/life balance and the roster. While staff enjoy the amount of time off they currently receive, their time at work is negatively impacted by short-staffing, cancelled training and reduced connection to colleagues.</p> <p>While staff value the various wellbeing investments made (gym, Wellbeing team, psychologists, Fortem), some still question its take-up. There remains some cultural reluctance to talk about mental health. Some were concerned that support for staff on psychological injury leave or under investigation may be inadequate.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Question and sub-question		Overall findings
<p>Leadership</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to effective leadership?</p>	<p>To what extent are COs supported through effective policies, procedures and management?</p> <p>To what extent is the current operating model fit-for-purpose, allowing for 2-way communication?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall leadership has improved since the Blueprint report, with 2-way communication and support provided post-incidents identified as key areas where progress is taking place. At the same time, leadership by operational managers was frequently raised in consultations as an area causing tension and mistrust, and strengthening operational management skills is an area requiring further attention.</p> <p>Shifts in senior leadership were frequently recognised as the most significant change occurring at the time Blueprint was introduced. At the operational level, perceived biases in merit-based lists and promotions continue to contribute to staff mistrust. The prevalence of short-term acting arrangements also undermines a proactive approach to leadership. This is aggravated by short staffing issues and the lack of an effective capability framework. The operational environment also limits opportunities for feedback and a consistent manager, and managers are not empowered to manage unplanned leave.</p> <p>Recent changes to the operational structure appear to be rectifying some of these issues. The return of regular staff meetings has been greeted with positive feedback. An emerging focus on engaging and supporting COs who are taking unplanned leave (to ultimately drive down unplanned leave) is a positive development. At the same time, progress on initiatives is often reliant on the individual driving it, and systematising leadership improvements will require additional focus.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Adequate Evidence: Some evidence</i></p>
<p>Capability</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to an effective capable and trained workforce?</p>	<p>To what extent does the workforce have access to training in line with clear role expectations?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall workforce capability has been significantly improved since the Blueprint report, with a substantial increase in training in core skills. Blueprint has significantly increased the CO training offering and uptake, raising training levels to an expected standard. Overall, this has led to improvements in safety, security and confidence. At the same time, access to training remains hampered by under-staffing and the current roster.</p> <p>More could be done to strengthen capability building in performance management arrangements. A more mature Performance Development Plan (PDP) approach would assist in staff accessing training of direct relevance to their own skills and experience.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good Evidence: Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Question and sub-question		Overall findings
<p>Culture</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to a positive organisational culture?</p>	<p>To what extent do staff feel trusted, engaged, and empowered to undertake their roles with confidence?</p>	<p>Summary: While the extent to which staff feel trusted and empowered to undertake their roles has greatly improved since the introduction of Blueprint, the overall culture of the operating environment requires further investment. A number of areas of tension were evident in consultations. These indicate that it is timely to move from the rebuilding process conducted through Blueprint towards a culture which focuses on the purposeful work conducted by COs on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>Staff have been regularly consulted and engaged through Blueprint activities and regular staff meetings. At the same time, concerns with staff “factions”, misuse of integrity reporting tools, bullying, and “gaming the system” of unplanned leave were raised in consultations. There were reflections that inconsistent operational decision-making causes detainees to “officer-shop”. There are reports of a culture of absenteeism and exploitation of overtime and unplanned leave. These are indicators of poor organisational culture where further focus of effort is required, and largely relate to the AMC environment rather than to CTU.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Adequate</i> Evidence: <i>Some evidence</i></p>
<p>Commitment</p> <p>To what extent are staff committed to the organisation and its goals?</p>	<p>To what extent are staff attracted and retained, with low turnover?</p>	<p>Summary: While staff attraction and recruitment have improved since the Blueprint report, alignment to organisational goals remains mixed, linked to findings in both the culture and leadership domains of this evaluation.</p> <p>Evidence from consultations and survey data indicate that staff feelings towards their work and their role have improved over time, with survey responses showing an uplift in some indicators of commitment and loyalty to the organisation. Many COs interviewed demonstrated strong and deep commitment to the overarching goal of detainee rehabilitation. At the same time, other issues raised throughout the evaluation, including issues with unplanned leave, indicate COs may not be aligned to organisational goals.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good</i> Evidence: <i>Weak evidence</i></p>

Enhancing performance management and reporting

The Blueprint report recommended timely investment in the operational management skills of senior staff, and a re-design of the performance management approach currently in place. Staff frequently raised concerns around lack of feedback and inconsistent oversight of their work. This is exacerbated by staff shortages and is associated with reduced morale and the perception that in-group 'factions' lead to favouritism in management decision making. A clear framework and genuine investment in performance development would assist in setting a higher standard for behaviour and culture in the operating environment and would help ensure COs are able to undertake management roles effectively, be they permanent, long-term acting arrangements or simply performing a senior role for the day.

Alongside the need for ongoing investment in leadership skills, is a need to invest in the management (such as HR, leave and training) data available to staff across AMC, CTU and ACTCS. While recent changes to the operating model are promising, embedding improvements into systems will be necessary to avoid reliance on the aptitude of key personnel to drive culture and compliance. Data and reporting through to senior management oversight will be vital, and the effort required to provide data for this evaluation demonstrates that at present, this is not currently collected or utilised in a way that supports strong day to day decision making

across the operating environment. Recent investment in a data and evaluation function at ACTCS is a promising development, and work to deliver a monitoring and evaluation framework to support management decisions at AMC and CTU should be a priority.

Overall, the Blueprint for Change program has led to a strong improvement to the working conditions of staff at AMC and CTU, and has been undertaken with strong processes and excellent stakeholder management. In this difficult operating environment, it is now time to build on the base which Blueprint has delivered, and work to lift the staff culture to one focused on values and outcomes for the Canberra community. Recent efforts and investments in this space should be commended and continue to be a focus in the long term.

Introduction

A program to improve the morale and working conditions of corrections staff

After meeting with ACTCS staff and unions following the 2020 ACT election and critical incidents at AMC, the ACT Minister for Corrections became concerned about low morale, working conditions and associated issues in the corrective services system. Issues such as slow implementation of recommendations of oversight reports, unsustainable overtime, poor management style and high staff turnover were all noted as a concern in the Blueprint for Change report⁵. In response, in early 2021 the Minister established a Committee to develop a Blueprint for Change for AMC and CTU, with the objective of improving the safety and well-being of correctional officers.

Chaired by Professor Christine Nixon AO APM, the Blueprint for Change Oversight Committee (the Oversight Committee) included a diverse range of stakeholders, who consulted closely with AMC and CTU staff, and examined rostering, human resources, training and other ACTCS data. The Oversight Committee released its report in April 2022, entitled *A new future for custodial services*.

The report contained six findings, related to staff resource level, culture, management skills, the safety environment, training and development and detainee tension. Across these six areas, issues were identified with implications for staff wellbeing and engagement, and the capacity for correctional officers to support strong, positive detainee outcomes. In total, fifteen recommendations were identified in the Blueprint report, along with suggested actions and desired outcomes. The findings and recommendations are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Blueprint Committee's Findings and Recommendations

Finding	Recommendations
To address inadequate staffing resources...	1. Engage an external expert to determine operational demand and staffing requirements. In the interim, immediately increase funding for staffing resources.
To address poor staff culture and sense of value...	2. Demonstrate commitment to staff and their safety through fit for purpose uniforms and equipment. 3. Promote a culture of trust by granting internet access, ensure incident debriefs focus on lessons learnt and systemic issues, and actively support staff compliance and confidence in decision-making. 4. Quickly establish regular and effective two-way communication mechanisms and meaningful engagement opportunities.
To address a negative service structure and lack of management skills...	5. Review the structure of custodial operations to simplify, integrate and re-align accountability of operational and strategic functions. 6. Develop and implement leadership and management training for senior staff and emerging leaders.
To address concerns regarding the security of the environment...	7. Commence improvements to the security of the environment through seeking expert advice on security improvements and actioning findings. 8. Establish a maximum capacity for the AMC and explore options to reduce overcrowding, with mitigation strategies in the event of high capacity. 9. Implement smoking cessation across AMC and CTU facilities, alongside Detainee Property Policy, Detainee Discipline Policy and Incentives and Earned Privileges Policy.
To address inadequate staff training and	10. Designing a staffing and/or rostering solution for AMC and CTU that enables regular and sustainable access to training that is responsive, high-quality and has limited impact on operations.

⁵ ACT Justice & Community Safety Directorate. (2022). A new future for custodial services: ACT Corrective Services Blueprint for Change. Retrieved from: https://www.justice.act.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0006/2072976/ACTCS-Blueprint-for-Change-28-03-2022.pdf (Blueprint for Change).

Finding	Recommendations
professional development...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Increase training resources including permanent, qualified custodial training staff, venues and equipment. 12. Develop a capability framework for roles across custodial operations to support individual performance assessment and identification of development opportunities.
To address detainee tension...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Establish mechanisms that promote positive detainee engagement, including a review of the 'structured day', investment in detainee opportunities and services, and increased skill development for custodial officers to support pro-social behaviours. 14. Recognise that some detainees may be beyond the management capacity of a single facility and that such detainees should be considered for relocation interstate. 15. Continue building on staff wellbeing services including access to individual counselling following incidents by specialist counsellors, additional wellbeing training initiatives and establishment of a buddy system.

The Committee's report comprised a comprehensive change program, The Blueprint for Change Program (the Blueprint program), which was established to progress the findings and recommendations outlined in the report. To support this work, a dedicated project delivery team was formed in ACTCS. Funding was received from ACT Treasury in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 budget, totalling \$29.21 million over 4 years.

Once funding was confirmed for the program, a program plan with scheduled activities over three years was developed in consultation with staff. Twelve months remain in this plan, with the first two years of activity having been undertaken to date. The program plan provided a detailed governance structure, benefits realisation plan, communication and change plan and a risk management plan. A Director, Project Delivery was appointed to manage the overall program from the PMO with the assistance of a Project Officer, and in addition, individual officers were selected to become the project leads for each of the objectives and associated activities in the plan, from relevant positions within ACTCS.

The Oversight Committee held its final meeting on 9 April 2024, concluding its 18-month role in monitoring progress against the program plan. Program progress reporting remains ongoing and is undertaken through the governance structures comprising of the Executive Sponsorship Group, Program Board, and several Working Groups. Additionally, these groups are tasked to ensure the program is continuously working towards the Blueprint for Change vision of building a safe and rewarding custodial environment that genuinely engages staff towards a more positive culture, effective leadership and capable workforce.

Commissioning an independent evaluation of the Blueprint for Change Program was also identified as a required activity in the program plan. Proximity Advisory Services were engaged by ACTCS in late February 2024 to undertake the evaluation. This report is the final deliverable from that activity.

Blueprint for Change Evaluation

This evaluation examines the extent to which Blueprint program activities have been successfully implemented to date, along with evidence that these have led to the intended outcomes of ACTCS. These findings will help to inform the future direction of the Blueprint program, so the wellbeing and safety of correctional officers continues to be prioritised in the ACT.

In preparation for the evaluation, the evaluation team obtained human research ethics approval, ensuring research was conducted sensitively with groups of research participants with complex power dynamics.⁶ While participants were interviewed anonymously, a full list of the roles of those consulted is at Appendix C, which included:

- 47 Correctional Officers

⁶ Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council. (2023). National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Retrieved from: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2023>

- 6 Senior Directors
- 6 Detainees
- 20 ACTCS Stakeholders
- 3 External Stakeholders.

The evaluation team also reviewed various data sources, including:

- Human resources data
- Work, health and safety (WHS) data
- Training data
- Detainee data (population, incidents)
- Surveys (Blueprint Survey, ACTPS Survey, Fortem Survey)
- Program reporting (status reports, communiques).

The evaluation scope is outlined in more detail in the key evaluation questions and data matrix in Appendix A. A Theory of Change is also presented to articulate the strategies, actions, conditions and resources to facilitate change and achieve outcomes in the Blueprint Program context.

Evaluation methodology

Results from each data source against each Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) have been synthesised, considering what the results say when taken together, how they complement and extend each other, and whether there are areas where they contradict each other. A set of rubrics have been used to determine the most appropriate interpretation of the data collected, and to explicitly demonstrate how this has been weighted:

- a strength of evidence rubric (Table 4) demonstrates the reliability of each result
- the merit determination rubric (Table 5) identifies the bases for the evaluation judgement reached.

Table 4 - Strength of evidence rubric

Strength of evidence	Description
Sufficient evidence	Where the evidence is sufficient to draw a largely unqualified conclusion regarding the evaluation question because either there is a single source of quality data or multiple sources of data with no major quality issues and which consistently point to the conclusion reached.
Some evidence	Where the evidence suggests the observation is true but there are data limitations, such that the find is qualified and further and/or different data (which may have been unavailable to this evaluation) would need to be sourced to be more confident in the conclusion reached.
Weak evidence	Where the evidence is indicative of a finding but there are major shortcomings in the data such that limited confidence can be placed on the conclusion.
No evidence	Where no data exists upon which to make any finding.

Table 5 - Example merit determination rubric

Merit rating	Standard observed
Excellent	Performance was clearly very strong in relation to the overarching question of the evaluation domain. No significant gaps or weaknesses were identified.
Very Good	Performance was generally strong in relation to the overarching question of the evaluation domain. Some minor gaps or weaknesses were identified.

Good	Performance was generally strong in some areas relating to the overarching question of the evaluation domain. Some gaps or weaknesses were evident.
Adequate	Performance demonstrated some weaknesses in relation to the overarching question of the evaluation domain, however minimum expectations or requirements were met.
Poor	Performance was weak in relation to the overarching question of the evaluation domain. Minimum expectations or requirements were not met.

The findings against each domain are explored in detail below, with process evaluation domains set out first, followed by the outcome evaluation domains. A discussion of the implications of the findings across domains is provided in the final section of the report, mirrored in the executive summary above.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation focuses on how a program is implemented, considering the evidence of activity (what has taken place), and the quality of implementation (how well it was executed).⁷

Process evaluation is important for understanding the mechanisms at play in the implementation of a program and can help identify what has caused successes or failures within elements of the program's delivery.

The process evaluation of the Blueprint for Change program is split into five evaluation domains:

- **Fidelity:** the extent to which the program is delivered as intended
- **Appropriateness:** the extent to which the program aligns with government priorities
- **Coverage:** the extent to which the program has reached its intended recipients
- **Governance:** the extent to which the program has been managed with appropriate oversight
- **Timeliness:** the extent to which the program has met its intended timeframes.

⁷ NSW Government, Education. (2021). Evaluation Resource Hub. Retrieved from: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/pl-resources/evaluation-resource-hub/evaluation-design-and-planning/types-of-evaluations/process-evaluation#Purpose1>

Fidelity

In the field of program evaluation, fidelity refers to the extent to which a program is delivered as intended.⁸ This evaluation has been tasked to answer the following fidelity related questions, looking at the alignment of the work of the Blueprint Program Board with the recommendations set out in the Blueprint Oversight Committee's 2022 report:

- To what extent has Blueprint been implemented in line with the recommendations of the Committee?
 - To what extent do Blueprint activities align with the recommendations?
 - To what extent have these activities comprehensively delivered against the Committee's recommendations?

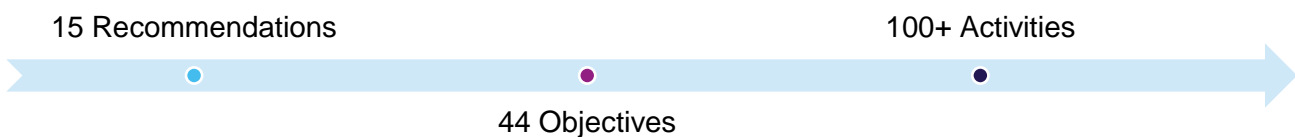


Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint been implemented in line with the recommendations of the Committee?

To what extent do Blueprint activities align with the recommendations?

Overall, the Committee's Recommendations were translated into effective program management. The Blueprint Oversight Committee made six findings and 15 recommendations. Each recommendation was aided by suggested actions to provide further context to the Committee's expectations of change.

To establish program governance and plan the projects within the Blueprint program, a Program Brief was developed and finalised in November 2022. Given the complexity of the Blueprint recommendations, the Program Brief divided each of the 15 Blueprint recommendations into several objectives, and then into a number of proposed activities.



Broadly speaking, the Program Brief objectives logically separated the various elements of each recommendation into achievable and focused goals. Similarly, the proposed activities were largely effective in summarising the key tasks involved in achieving each of the objectives. In some minor instances, the Program Brief, and subsequent Blueprint activities did not appear to comprehensively capture the intended actions from the Blueprint Committee. For example, program reporting and documentation is minimal regarding three of the Committee's recommendations, *Blueprint Recommendation 4: Quickly establish regular and effective two-way communication mechanisms and meaningful engagement opportunities*, *Blueprint Recommendation 12: Develop a capability framework for roles across custodial operations to support individual performance assessment and identification of development opportunities* and *Blueprint Recommendation 14: Recognise that some detainees may be beyond the management capacity of a single facility and that such detainees should be considered for relocation interstate*.

The Program Brief objectives have remained consistent throughout the life of the Blueprint program and are still used in regular status reporting. Over time, funding limitations and program adaptations in response to ongoing feedback from staff have led to changes in some of the funded activities within each objective.⁹

To what extent have these activities comprehensively delivered against the Committee's recommendations?

A significant amount of activity has been sustained over time to drive results across the Blueprint program, however, there have been some gaps in completeness. Many of the recommendations of the Blueprint Report are interrelated, presenting a significant and complex program of change. This requires all recommendations to be delivered, with appropriate sequencing, to enable long term reform. The Blueprint Report also recognised

⁸ Mowbray, C.T., Holter, M.C., Teague, G.B., Bybee, D. (2003). Fidelity Criteria: Development, Measurement, and Validation. *The American Journal of Evaluation*. Pages 315-340.

⁹ These adjustments are further considered in the "Appropriateness" key evaluation question below.

that some of these activities would take up to three years to deliver (noting there is still 12 months remaining of this timeframe).

While Blueprint activities have generally been comprehensively delivered against the Committee’s recommendations, there remain some areas which continue to be progressed through BAU, and others which have not been able to be progressed. Table 6 below presents a summary of progress for each of the Committee’s Blueprint recommendations.

Table 6 – Summary of progress for each of the Blueprint recommendations as of 30 August 2024.

Recommendation 1: Engage an external expert to determine operational demand and staffing requirements. In the interim, immediately increase funding for staffing resources.	
Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant increase in staffing resources (27 funded COs across FY22/23 and 23/24, and funding or increased capacity for training delivery, intelligence team, change management, cultural change facilitator, custodial training leader) Custodial Recruitment Strategy developed and vast majority of recommendations either actioned or being progressed External analysis of operational demand and post review complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some recommendations relating to the new recruitment strategy are yet to be implemented (noting that this has now moved to BAU) Some concerns regarding the extent to which the external staffing review has informed the understanding of custodial officer operational demand and of required future staffing levels. Particularly where the review focussed on new roster options, implementation has been limited by various factors, as discussed further below.
Recommendation 2: Demonstrate commitment to staff and their safety through fit for purpose uniforms and equipment.	
Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant spending on new and upgraded staff equipment (including riot and crowd control gear, new protective head gear, utility belts and emergency lockers) Expanding the AMC uniform storage space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement procedural delays impacting the timeframe for delivery of new uniforms (the Uniform Project)
Recommendation 3: Promote a culture of trust by granting internet access, ensure incident debriefs focus on lessons learnt and systemic issues, and actively support staff compliance and confidence in decision-making.	
Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstated internet access and provided access to more computers at both AMC and CTU as well as training facilities and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited progress of review of debriefs (hot and cold), and post-incident communication guidelines Despite greater access for COs (such as new laptops), there has not been a substantial increase in opportunities to become familiar with new policies and procedures
Recommendation 4: Quickly establish regular and effective two-way communication mechanisms and meaningful engagement opportunities.	
Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstated regular staff meetings (20/40s and 10/20s) Established mechanisms for feedback and suggestions to the Blueprint Program Regularly engaged staff in the design and implementation of Blueprint initiatives Established the AMC Roster Focus Group for staff information and feedback on proposed rosters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited activities focussed on sharing key media and organisational decisions with staff
Recommendation 5: Review the structure of custodial operations to simplify, integrate and re-align accountability of operational and strategic functions.	
Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented new organisational restructure Increased AMC administrative support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A delay on work to align accountability and responsibilities within the new operational structure, however this has not rolled into BAU.
Recommendation 6: Develop and implement leadership and management training for senior staff and emerging leaders.	
Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed tactical leadership training and operational management training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership offering does not yet provide a complete development program as intended by the Committee
Recommendation 7: Commence improvements to the security of the environment through seeking expert advice on security improvements and actioning findings.	

<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduction of K9 Team with trained detection dogs • Implementation of body scanners 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited progress on conducting and implementing changes of security reviews. In particular, issues remain with the implementation of fencing review recommendations (currently unfunded), CCTV and repair programs
<p>Recommendation 8: Establish a maximum capacity for the AMC and explore options to reduce overcrowding, with mitigation strategies in the event of high capacity.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited evidence of any progress relating to detainee overcrowding, including consideration of options for exit or relocation, developing partnership agreements and internal procedures to facilitate immediate reductions in detainees, and supporting readiness for parole
<p>Recommendation 9: Implement smoking cessation across AMC and CTU facilities, alongside Detainee Property Policy, Detainee Discipline Policy and Incentives and Earned Privileges Policy.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful implementation of Detainee Property Policy, Discipline Policy and IEP Policy • Successful implementation of Smoke-Free and associated supports for detainees and staff 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited evidence of a comprehensive audit or monitoring program to support the implementation of smoke-free, detainee discipline and IEP policies, however the evaluation team understands this is part of BAU internal auditing processes for the ACTCS.
<p>Recommendation 10: Designing a staffing and/or rostering solution for AMC and CTU that enables regular and sustainable access to training that is responsive, high-quality and has limited impact on operations.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff consultation and rostering models developed, which include dedicated posts to support additional training hours 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant industrial issues with the implementation of a new roster, which appear likely to persist
<p>Recommendation 11: Increase training resources including permanent, qualified custodial training staff, venues and equipment.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a significant suite of new specialised training to meet demand • Improved training venues to meet demand, including the re-establishment of Symonston training centre • Improved staffing and equipment to enable frequent and quality training 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some concerns regarding the establishment of sufficient equipment to ensure quality training, however overall this was well implemented.
<p>Recommendation 12: Develop a capability framework for roles across custodial operations to support individual performance assessment and identification of development opportunities.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft framework developed 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing progress with the implementation of a capability framework, which has ongoing effects for other program objectives
<p>Recommendation 13: Establish mechanisms that promote positive detainee engagement, including a review of the 'structured day', investment in detainee opportunities and services, and increased skill development for custodial officers to support pro-social behaviours.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some progress of structured day activities (education, equipment and activities) • Upgraded detainee gym equipment • Funding support for IEP privileges • Commenced Family Engagement Program and Chaplaincy Program (developing Detainee Mentor Program) • Cultural understanding training for COs • Delivery of Five-Minute Intervention (FMI) training to support staff motivating detainees to engage in rehabilitative programs and services 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress has been generally limited on recommendations to introduce a 'structured day' and for collaboration between Custodial Operations and Offender Reintegration, although recent work has focused on this in the Integrated Offender Management project.
<p>Recommendation 14: Recognise that some detainees may be beyond the management capacity of a single facility and that such detainees should be considered for relocation interstate.</p>	
<p>Key achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management plan supported through schemes to reduce fire alarms being set off by detainees in accommodation units and IEP 	<p>Identified gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited focus on relocating detainees beyond the capability of the AMC, however other initiatives, such as Detainee Management Plans, have been implemented to address the intent of this recommendation.

Recommendation 15: Continue building on staff wellbeing services including access to individual counselling following incidents by specialist counsellors, additional wellbeing training initiatives and establishment of a buddy system.

Key achievements	Identified gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Wellbeing Team Establishment of external wellbeing providers (Fortem) Establishment of on-site and AVL EAP counselling service (through Converga) providing greater accessibility for staff. Additional wellbeing training and staff safety and wellbeing initiatives (including the upgrade of AMC staff gym equipment) Establishment of a wellbeing space at AMC and CTU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Despite some minor gaps, there is a significant array of work that has been accomplished through the Blueprint program to date. While some areas have yet to be delivered, these have moved into BAU through the establishment of key roles and responsibilities, including the monitoring of detainee discipline and other policies (Rec 9), and the review of post incident communications and debriefs (Rec 3). Key actions which have not progressed as expected are the review of rosters (Rec 10) and the procurement of new uniforms (Rec 2). The management of these projects is discussed in greater detail in the Appropriateness section below.

Blueprint program fidelity - overall summary

Evidence available to this evaluation indicates that overall Blueprint has been implemented in line with the recommendations of the Committee. Blueprint activities are well aligned with the recommendations of the Blueprint Report, and activities have been delivered against the Committee's recommendations with only minor gaps in completeness.

Question and sub-question	Overall findings
<p>Fidelity</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint been implemented in line with the recommendations of the Committee?</p>	<p>To what extent do Blueprint activities align with the recommendations?</p> <p>To what extent have these activities comprehensively delivered against the Committee's recommendations?</p> <p>Summary: Overall, the work of the Blueprint program is well aligned to the recommendations of the Blueprint Committee. The Committee's Recommendations were translated into effective program management. A significant amount of activity has been sustained over time, with some minor gaps in completeness.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Appropriateness

Appropriateness refers to the extent to which a program of work is undertaken in line with the priorities set by government in the allocation of resources, as well as the extent to which program activities are adapted to increase likelihood of success.¹⁰ In the context of the Blueprint program, this evaluation domain looks at whether decisions made regarding the focus of the Blueprint program are in-line with government priorities for the ACT Corrections operating model. This evaluation domain recognises that changes are generally necessary from the initial design of a program of work to how it is implemented over time. The following Appropriateness related evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint been appropriately implemented and adjusted where necessary?
 - Have initiatives needed to be adapted or implemented differently from proposed? Has this been well managed?
 - Where prioritisation has had to be done, has this been based on sound consideration of risks, benefits and interactions across recommended actions?
 - Have the appropriate funding and resources been provided to deliver the program?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint been appropriately implemented and adjusted where necessary?

Have initiatives needed to be adapted or implemented differently from proposed? Has this been well managed?

Project challenges, re-prioritisation, or funding limitations have resulted in some initiatives being adapted or implemented differently than initially proposed. In particular, the implementation of the new roster and uniforms has faced challenges. Despite continuous oversight and well-intended decisions, these projects have been complicated by industrial, financial, and procurement governance requirements and issues with consultation burnout amongst staff. These experiences provide useful insights into balancing efficiency with thoroughness.

Where initiatives have been adapted or implemented differently than initially proposed, this has largely been due to:

- Funding limitations – where funding has not been provided for particular initiatives, they have been delayed or adjusted to fit funding availability
- Resource/staffing limitations - leads were undertaking Blueprint activities in addition to business as usual which impacted the prioritisation and realistic achievement of initiatives
- Re-prioritisation – where initiatives have been assessed as non-critical, or first require the completion of a different ongoing initiative, they have been adjusted in accordance with this re-prioritisation
- Project challenges – where initiatives have faced significant or unexpected challenges, when appropriate, those initiatives have changed timeframes and/or scope.

When projects have encountered obstacles, these issues have been promptly identified, reported, and adjustments were made. The Rosters Project and the Uniforms Project provide two important case studies of projects that have faced significant challenges that have required ongoing adaption. At this time, neither project has reached completion, however extensive work has been undertaken to progress each project, and the approach to each has been adapted in various ways in response to staff feedback, government resource management and procedural rules and changing timeframes required to accommodate feedback and emerging issues encountered along the way.

¹⁰ Australian Government, Department of Treasury, Australian Centre for Evaluation. Evaluation Toolkit, How to evaluate. Retrieved from: <https://evaluation.treasury.gov.au/toolkit/set-evaluation-objectives#s3>

Table 7 - Projects that have faced significant challenges – Rosters Project Case Study

Case Study: AMC Roster Project	
Goal	The AMC Roster Project was tasked with designing and implementing a new rostering solution for AMC in order to provide regular and sustainable staff access to training; to improve team alignment; and staff wellbeing. Reviewing and improving the roster was not a new undertaking for ACTCS. Deficiencies in the roster had been recognised, and previous efforts had already been taken to consider a new solution. The commencement of the AMC Roster Project predated the Blueprint Report.
Challenges	<p>Contractual issues with external provider: An external analysis of operational demand and posts was, in part, intended to help identify potential rostering solutions. This analysis faced significant challenges, with delays due to competing priorities, availability of stakeholders and data all impacting on the capacity of the external provider to meet the expected scope of work within the proposed timeframes.</p> <p>Procedural rules for change to roster: The current Correctional Officers' Enterprise Agreement requires the agreement of a majority of affected employees in order to implement a new roster. Where an individual employee does not cast a vote, this is taken as non-agreement. This means that introducing a change requires a high level of staff engagement in the voting process, along with a majority of staff seeing value in the proposed change.</p> <p>Lack of staff trust to support a new roster: Historic organisational distrust made it difficult for the project team to actively engage COs and promote the benefits of a change in roster. There is an inherent concern amongst COs that any change would worsen their working conditions.</p>
Adaption	Where issues have arisen, this has been communicated with various oversight bodies, including the AMC Roster Project Steering Committee, the Executive Sponsorship Group, Blueprint Program Board and the Blueprint Oversight Committee, and the AMC Roster Focus Group. The challenges of this project have led to numerous and significant adjustments to timeframes. A vote for a new AMC roster has commenced and will conclude mid-September 2024. The project team has conducted significant consultation with COs in an attempt to overcome issues with trust and to inform COs of the benefits of the proposed roster, however this has been a difficult undertaking. There is still a common perception that the proposed roster models will not be successful amongst a vote of COs. The Roster Project must remain cognisant of this possibility and ACTCS consider alternative solutions to address the underlying issues that led to the recommendation for a new roster.

Table 8 – Projects that have faced significant challenges – Uniforms Project Case Study

Case Study: Uniforms Project	
Goal	The Uniforms Project was tasked with reviewing the current uniform style and design, with the aim of implementing a new uniform that is fit-for-purpose and more suited to the physicality of the role and risks presented by serious incidents. This also involved reviewing the uniform supply arrangement, to ensure all COs have appropriate access to uniforms. Investment in uniforms that are fit for purpose was identified as a 'quick win' in the Blueprint Report, to demonstrate commitment to staff and their safety.
Challenges	<p>Complex procurement: Complexity within the ACT Government procurement process necessitated the involvement of multiple stakeholders and created delays with document development and approval. This was compounded by limited fit-for-purpose suppliers within the market.</p> <p>Extensive consultation: Given the Blueprint Program's emphasis on incorporating operational staff in organisation decisions, COs have been significantly consulted throughout this project. While this has helped ensure the newly designed uniforms are fit-for-purpose, it has also increased the complexity of the project. Following some delays, there has also been decreased engagement from COs, with some citing concerns of consultation burnout.</p> <p>Lack of staff trust: Like the Rosters Project, underlying feelings of mistrust within the CO workforce has contributed to wariness, and at times has been a barrier to effective engagement and traction on the project.</p>
Adaption	Delays and issues associated with the project have been appropriately raised with oversight bodies. Challenges have resulted in significant adaptations to project timeframes. The Staff

Working Group which was established to help review requirements and ensure appropriate CO engagement is no longer operational. Following roadblocks, the project explored different delivery options, including leveraging off existing government contracts, without success. At the time of this report, the project has successfully secured a new uniform supplier with provision of new uniform items anticipated early 2025.

While neither the Rosters Project or the Uniforms project have been completed to date, lessons learned from both have been captured and reflected by senior leaders. While the approach to each project has its respective delays and required agile management to address numerous challenges, solutions are in train to meet the underlying need which each project is designed to address. Latest reporting indicates that new uniforms are likely to be rolled out in the current financial year, and while the rosters project may not result in a successful vote for change at this point, ACTCS will continue to work towards meeting the goal to facilitate increased custodial training hours. The need for this change is likely to be ameliorated where other leadership and management activities are strengthened to improve staff absenteeism and unnecessary use of unplanned leave.

Where prioritisation has had to be done, has this been based on sound consideration of risks, benefits and interactions across recommended actions?

The Blueprint Committee set out some guidance on implementation but emphasised the importance of quality in the planning and execution of their recommendations. The Program Brief built on the Blueprint Committee report to set out “Critical Activities” and split the implementation of activities into three tranches:

- Tranche 1: 2022-2023
- Tranche 2: 2023-2024
- Tranche 3+: 2024-2026.

In most cases, the prioritisation of activities in implementation has remained consistent with the Program Brief. While some projects have been delayed,¹¹ they have generally followed the consistent and logically established order of priorities set out in the Program Brief. In a minority of cases, the reasons given for the de-prioritisation of certain initiatives were ambiguous in program documentation. For example, due to “competing priorities”, neither Objective 8.1 (Identify measures to address detainee overcrowding) or Objective 14.2 (Explore relocation options) were reported as having been commenced, despite being intended for completion during Tranche 1 and 2 respectively. Through interviews with program leads, the rationale behind the de-prioritisation of these objectives has been made clear.

Broadly, the prioritisation process has been grounded with risk and the interplay of measures in mind. When projects have encountered obstacles, issues were promptly identified, reported, and adjustments were made. For example, the rationale behind the de-prioritisation of initiatives to manage overcrowding and detainee relocation is based on the natural reduction of detainee overcrowding which has occurred over the course of the Blueprint program. This has reduced the risk level associated with this issue, and the existence of memoranda of understanding and policy guidance for management of the issue if it arises in future have been considered to be sufficient to manage the current risk. While a more proactive approach would be commended, this prioritisation of activities makes sense in the context of the broad array of activities in train and the level of risk currently observed.

Have the appropriate funding and resources been provided to deliver the program?

The program has been provided significant funding, but the reasons behind the funding decisions from ACT Treasury were sometimes opaque and were not directly aligned with the recommendations of the Committee. The Blueprint Committee Report recognised that “several of the proposed activities require specific funding to be allocated, and as a package, the funding required both initially and on an ongoing basis is considerable and in addition to the current budget of ACTCS”. The initial funding for the Blueprint Program was initially \$12.72 million over four years but has since increased to \$29.21 million over the life of the Program. When formal status reporting began for the Program, problems arose with establishing the actual expenditure that should be associated with the Program. In particular, it was difficult to determine employee expenses, compared to

¹¹ The degree to which activities have been implemented within their intended timeframes is considered within the “Timeliness” key evaluation question below.

supplies and services, and capital expenses, and there was an exercise undertaken to map new position numbers against the Blueprint funding. In the Program’s first financial year (2022-2023), its recorded actuals were \$1.35 million with committed funds of \$413,800, which was \$943,600 below the budgeted funds. ACTCS has undertaken work to rectify this in subsequent years.

A year into the Program’s implementation, “understanding and clarity of finance and procurement processes” was raised in program reporting as a key barrier to the completion of initiatives. To rectify this issue, initiative leads attended a workshop with ACTCS finance and procurement teams and were provided with procurement templates and finance coding guides specific to the Blueprint Program initiatives.

Some activities received only partial funding, while there remain others which have not been funded, including for the implementation of the fencing review findings, and the establishment of a sustainable facility repair and maintenance program. It is unclear on what basis these funding allocations were made, however the Blueprint report noted a number of important data gaps across its domains of interest. Increased maturity in data and evaluation going forward may help strengthen the funding decision making for future initiatives. Funding for these initiatives would be commended.

At the same time, staff in the program delivery team observed that there was insufficient staffing to be able to deliver an intense and complex program such as Blueprint in the initial planned timeframes. Whilst in some instances, the funding and work helped leads in delivering their work program, it also meant additional work on top of their BAU, in which they may not have had the additional capacity to accommodate. Additional resourcing would have been helpful to deliver those aspects of the Blueprint Program which have not yet been prioritised.

Blueprint program appropriateness - overall summary

Observations from the data available to this evaluation indicate that the Blueprint program has been appropriately implemented and adjusted where necessary. Where initiatives needed to be adapted or implemented differently from proposed this has been well managed. Where prioritisation has had to be done, this appears to have been based on sound consideration of risks, benefits and interactions across recommended actions. Funding available to the program has been significant, although not all aspects of the Blueprint Committee’s recommendations have been fully funded.

Question and sub-question	Overall findings
<p>Appropriateness</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint been appropriately implemented and adjusted where necessary?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, decisions made regarding the focus of the Blueprint program are in line with government priorities for the ACT Corrections operating model. Where changes have been necessary from the initial design of the Blueprint program these have been driven by results of ongoing stakeholder engagement and by government procedural requirements.</p> <p>Project challenges, re-prioritisation, and funding limitations have resulted in some initiatives being adapted or implemented differently than initially proposed. Despite continuous oversight and well-intended decisions, some projects have been complicated by rigid processes and issues with consultation burnout amongst staff.</p> <p>Broadly, the prioritisation process has been grounded in risk management, and with a consideration of appropriate sequencing. When projects have encountered obstacles, issues were promptly identified, reported, and adjustments were made. The program has been provided significant funding, but the reasons behind the funding decisions from ACT Treasury were sometimes opaque and not directly aligned with the recommendations of the Committee.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good Evidence: Some evidence</i></p>

Coverage

The Blueprint for Change program was introduced to address correctional officers' working conditions across both AMC and the CTU.¹² The Coverage evaluation domain is focused on assessing the extent to which officers in these working environments have benefited from the program, and if these benefits are commensurate across the two areas. The evaluation questions regarding Coverage are:

- To what extent has Blueprint supported all members of the Custodial Officer workforce in both AMC and CTU?
 - Are there differences in experience of Blueprint initiatives for different staff?
 - Are any differences intentional and well-conceived?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint supported all members of the Custodial Officer workforce in both AMC and CTU?

Are there differences in experience of Blueprint initiatives for different staff?

AMC and CTU present two unique operating environments with key differences in daily tasks, remuneration, shift durations, and detainee management. These differences have a clear impact on the ability for Blueprint activities to apply equally across the two groups.

In consultations for this evaluation, CTU staff noted the different skills required in managing detainees in their custody. Detainees are frequently in a heightened emotional state as they face court, and CTU staff manage a high incidence of detainees under the influence of drugs and alcohol. CTU staff are frequently moving detainees between facilities and within the CTU facility, facing physical risks of assault. They are also required to supervise detainees during court appearances, exposing CTU officers to detailed descriptions of the criminal activity and impact on victims being brought before the courts. This is an ongoing source of psychological risk for CTU staff and can lead to vicarious trauma. At the same time, CTU shifts are based around the operating hours of the court, and last 8 hours per day, 5 days per week. The opportunity for overtime, or for the additional pay loadings associated with 12-hour shifts at the AMC do not apply to CTU.

In contrast, a different set of skills is required at AMC, where detainee boredom is more of a source of tension. Staff are undertaking long shifts in posts around the facility, and whereas CTU staff spend short, sporadic amounts of time with each detainee, staff at AMC often have regular contact with the detainee population. AMC staff have ongoing case management-related and motivational interaction roles. To do their job well, they need to develop an understanding of the detained persons in their custody. Establishing mutual respect between detainees and officers is a key skill required for the AMC operating environment, ensuring relational security is maximised throughout the facility. At AMC, staff must enter and leave through a security check point, and to do so must first check in their radios, oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, keys and utility belts. In practice, this is a barrier that precludes them from leaving the facility during their shift to take proper breaks. An industrial obligation to remain on site during paid lunch breaks for security response reasons also prevents correctional officers from leaving the centre boundaries during their 12-hour shift. An onsite gym and a staff break room have been introduced as a result of Blueprint to support better balance whilst at work for AMC staff.

Recommendations in the Blueprint report do not apply equally to the two workplaces. For example, the implementation of recommendations relating to detainee overcrowding, detainee relocation and a structured day are not relevant to the CTU. The ability for Blueprint initiatives to apply equally across the two groups is also impacted by physical limitations of the CTU environment. For example, while the Blueprint Program has funded the creation of a gym at the AMC to support CO wellbeing, this is not physically possible within the constraints of CTU. The public-private partnership (PPP) building management arrangement that applies to the court building, limits the extent to which any physical changes can be made to the CTU facility. While CTU can access the AMC gym, it is important to continue to think creatively about how such measures could be achieved across the two groups. For example, the creation of the Senior Director CTU role and subsequent use of a staff room as an office has had an impact on the ability for the CTU to provide a space for staff to access computers and unwind or debrief informally following incidents.

¹² Blueprint for Change, p 9.

Anecdotally, staff views on how Blueprint has impacted their operating environment are consistently varied across both groups. Consultations across both groups contained COs who expressed high levels of satisfaction with the changes of the Blueprint program, and others who were unsatisfied, and continued to have significant concerns with their working conditions. The Blueprint Committee Report noted that “CTU staff felt that they were ‘poor cousins’ to AMC and were rarely considered in operational decision making” (p25). From consultations with COs from both groups, it is evident this sentiment continues to exist.

Are any differences intentional and well-conceived?

Where there are differences between Blueprint investment between the two operating environments that do not reflect the physical limitations of the two physical environments, these appear to be intentional and well-conceived. Activities have been tailored to address the requirements of both groups effectively, ensuring suitability to their respective contexts. While some training remains primarily focused on AMC activities, an increased focus on CTU-relevant training has occurred, representing a well-conceived change to support the demands of the CTU operating environment.

Blueprint program coverage - overall summary

Overall, evidence gathered through this evaluation indicates that the Blueprint program has supported all members of the CO workforce in both AMC and CTU. There is evidence of differences in experience of Blueprint initiatives for different staff, but these differences are not associated with one operating environment more than another. Where the program took different approaches to support CTU and AMC staff these appear to have been intentional and well-conceived.

Question and sub-question	Overall findings	
<p>Coverage</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint supported all members of the Custodial Officer workforce in both AMC and CTU?</p>	<p>Are there differences in experience of Blueprint initiatives for different staff?</p> <p>Are any differences intentional and well-conceived?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the Blueprint program has achieved strong coverage across both CTU and AMC operating environments, with extensive input and effort from staff across CTU, AMC and ACTCS to achieve this.</p> <p>AMC and CTU are distinctly different operating environments. Blueprint activities have been actively tailored to address the requirements of both groups effectively, ensuring suitability to their respective contexts. Differences reflect the specific demands and limitations of the two operating environments.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Governance

Governance refers to the structures and mechanisms that a program has in place to ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with the program objectives. The following Governance evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent have governance arrangements provided appropriate oversight of Blueprint?
 - To what extent does the existing level of data and oversight allow for the ongoing monitoring of progress and program success?
 - Have governance arrangements enabled the success of individual initiatives?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent have governance arrangements provided appropriate oversight of Blueprint?

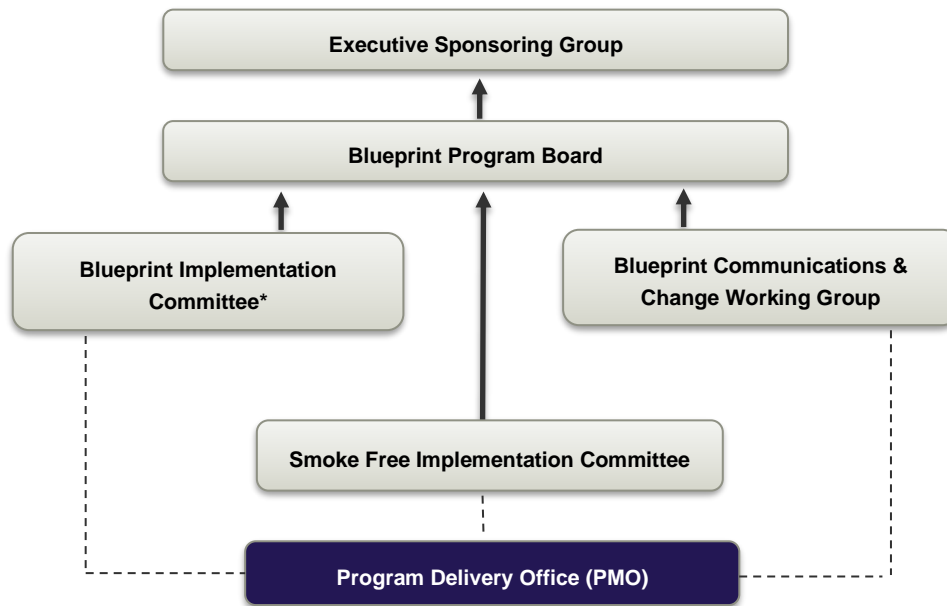
To what extent does the existing level of data and oversight allow for the ongoing monitoring of progress and program success?

The Blueprint Committee Report highlighted the need to quickly establish an appropriate governance framework and required resources to support the implementation of their recommendations. As the outlined in Figure 1 below,¹³ the Program Brief set the program governance controls to enable oversight of Blueprint Program activities. The Program Brief also outlined roles and responsibilities for key functions, in line with the ACTCS's adoption of MSP and PRINCE2 approach to project and program management. In particular, the two bodies jointly accountable for the success of the program were the:

- **Blueprint Program Executive Sponsoring Group (ESG):** responsible for ensuring alignment of approach with the broader JACS and ACTCS strategic direction, reconciling conflicts of priorities, maintaining a view of project, program, and portfolio conduct, and managing escalated issues. In late 2023, the Executive Sponsoring Group diversified to include oversight of a broader group of ACTCS projects and programs (in addition to Blueprint).
- **Blueprint Program Board:** responsible for providing a unified direction to the Program, resolving strategic and directional issues, assuring the realisation of program benefits, and managing escalated issues and risks.

Figure 1 – Program governance controls

¹³ Noting that in November 2022, the ESG endorsed the Communications and Change Strategy to guide engagement with stakeholders throughout the Program. After the strategy was reviewed by the Communication and Change Working Group in March 2023, the Working Group joined an existing communications meeting to streamline discussions.



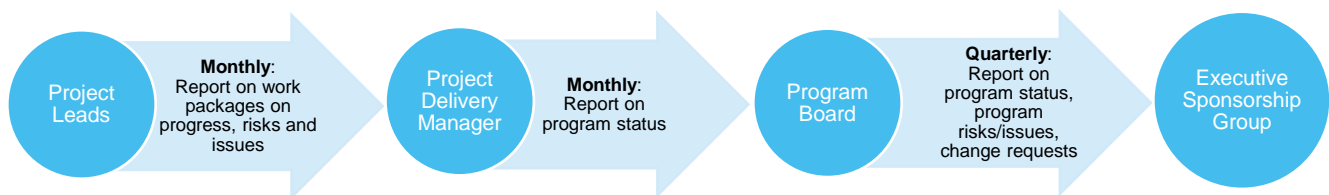
* note, following review of governance structures in late 2022/early 2023, it was deemed a Blueprint Implementation Committee was not necessary and the Program Board met the necessary governance structures for Blueprint.

These groups were supported by the establishment of a Program Delivery team, dedicated to the implementation of the Blueprint Program. In October 2022, a Director Project Delivery and Project Officer commenced to progress planning work and consult with key stakeholders on the progress of each objective.

Additionally, in accordance with the recommendations of the Blueprint Committee Report, the Committee also continued to regularly reconvene in performing an Oversight Function, to enable the Committee to review progress, provide advice and ensure the objectives remain aligned with the actions being undertaken.

Project leads were assigned to deliver work packages on key projects. They were responsible for reporting progress to the relevant Director Project Delivery (as part of the Program Delivery team), including schedule, risks and issues. The Program Delivery Director was then responsible for regularly reporting the program status and escalating any issues and risks to the Program Board, who would then report to the ESG.

Figure 2 – Oversight Function



In addition, the Blueprint Program also reported to other governance groups outside of the agency including the:

- Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACSD) Programs and Projects Committee
- JACSD Strategic Management Committee (not a governance group per se but has oversight)
- Minister for Corrections

Before the expansion of the ESG, Blueprint also provided updates to the ACTCS through the Executive Governance Committee (EGC).

These governance controls have provided effective oversight for the ongoing monitoring of progress and program success. Program progress was appropriately shared and discussed amongst the responsible groups, ensuring senior management were kept well-informed of ongoing issues. These structures ensured there was robust involvement and communication between key decision-makers and the project management team.

Where possible, these groups were provided with relevant data to enable monitoring of activities and key program benefits. The Program Delivery team has sought to identify data attributable to program benefits, and

to collate and distribute this amongst the relevant groups. Overall, the available data has been compiled and disseminated both appropriately and consistently.

This has not been a simple process, with the availability of relevant data presenting a significant limitation. The lack of a comprehensive ACT Public Service approved program management software (such as SmartSheet used in VIC and NSW public services) necessitated the use of a group of monitoring and reporting tools (MS Project, MS Teams, Power BI, Excel finance spreadsheets, MS Outlook emails etc) instead of a single tool, which impacted coordination, scheduling, information gathering, and status reporting tasks, and consequent Program Delivery team resource expenditure. This impacted efficient communications and updates from project leads and the overall time management for program governance, mitigated solely by the diligence of the Project Delivery team.

Where data does exist, it is often held within different areas of the Directorate or requires substantial manual effort to collect. This prevents much of the relevant data from being readily accessible for real-time management decisions and in some instances has been the cause of project delays. These systemic barriers to data collection and usage indicates that ACTCS' data practices are still in a phase of emergence and maturation. With the support of the newly established ACTCS Strategy, Data and Research Team, this should be a priority focus for the Program, and for the Directorate more broadly, to ensure decision-making is supported by effective, streamlined data systems.

Have governance arrangements enabled the success of individual initiatives?

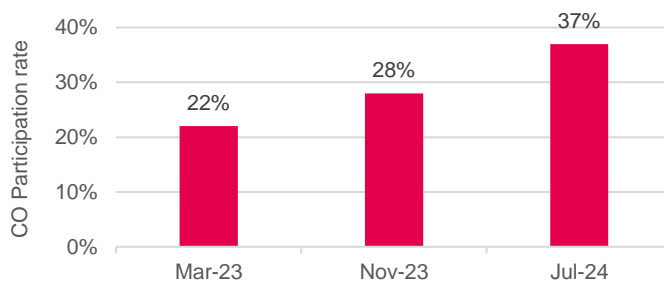
Reflecting on the makeup and engagement of the original Blueprint Committee, there were a range of diverse views on whether “the right people were in the room” to enable the Committee to deliver appropriate recommendations. Broadly, the inclusion of senior decision-makers, along with the choice of an independent chair was commended by stakeholders. There were some differing views on the inclusion of non-ACTCS participants, and the decision for the focus of the Committee to be only on uniformed officers, rather than a broader scope that also included other ACTCS employees at the AMC, or detainees. Anecdotally, in some instances, the composition of the senior group may have inadvertently limited the opportunity for junior members to contribute.

There was some concern expressed that where Committee recommendations aligned with existing ACTCS initiatives, those responsible for the existing initiatives were not appropriately consulted. In some instances, the Blueprint program was perceived as overriding existing progress made within these areas. For those not directly involved in the Committee, there was uncertainty about the role of the Committee, and how the makeup was selected.

Anecdotally, project leads were highly supportive of the role the Program Delivery team has performed in assisting project leads and keeping them accountable for progress across the life of their relevant projects. This has ensured that Blueprint initiatives have remained prioritised, despite potential increases in the workload of business as usual (BAU) matters and was consistently called out as one of the success factors to date.

Governance arrangements have also emphasised consultation and communication with COs. The establishment of surveys, working groups, consistent program communication and a number of opportunities for suggestions and queries have allowed COs to remain heavily involved in the implementation of the Program. Generally, this was appreciated by the CO cohort, and the number of COs participating in the Blueprint Program Survey has progressively increased since its formation.

Figure 3 - Blueprint Survey CO Participation Rate



Blueprint program governance - overall summary

Evidence available to this evaluation indicates that the governance arrangements in place have provided appropriate oversight of the Blueprint program. At the same time, the existing level of data and oversight does

not allow for the ongoing monitoring of progress and program success without considerable manual reworking. Overall, however, governance arrangements have enabled the success of individual initiatives under the Blueprint program.

Question and sub-question	Overall findings
<p>Governance</p> <p>To what extent have governance arrangements provided appropriate oversight of Blueprint?</p>	<p>To what extent does the existing level of data and oversight allow for the ongoing monitoring of progress and program success?</p> <p>Have governance arrangements enabled the success of individual initiatives?</p> <p>Summary: Overall, the structures and mechanisms in place for the Blueprint program have ensured accountability, transparency and compliance with the program objectives.</p> <p>Oversight has been effectively managed, with the available data being compiled and disseminated appropriately and consistently. There has been robust involvement from key decision-makers and the project management team, ensuring all parties are actively engaged. Senior management has been kept well-informed of ongoing issues.</p> <p>The evaluation has highlighted significant data gaps. Currently, the necessary information isn't readily accessible for real-time management decisions. However, the data is in a phase of emergence and maturation.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Timeliness

Timeliness focuses on whether the program’s activities and outcomes are occurring within appropriate and expected timeframes. Achieving program objectives in a timely manner is crucial to the delivery of an effective and relevant program. The following evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint been delivered on time against agreed delivery milestones?
 - To what extent have activities met the key deadlines and priority of implementation outlined by the Committee?
 - When particular initiatives have commenced, have these been delivered against agreed milestones?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint been delivered on time against agreed delivery milestones?

To what extent have activities met the key deadlines and priority of implementation outlined by the Committee?

The Blueprint Committee Report did not specify a complete implementation plan but highlighted key timeframes and recommendations that should be considered “critical” or “quick wins”. While the implemented order of priorities generally aligned with these suggested timeframes, not all these initiatives have been completed within the set deadlines. An assessment of the timeliness of these six key recommendations is listed in Table 9 below.

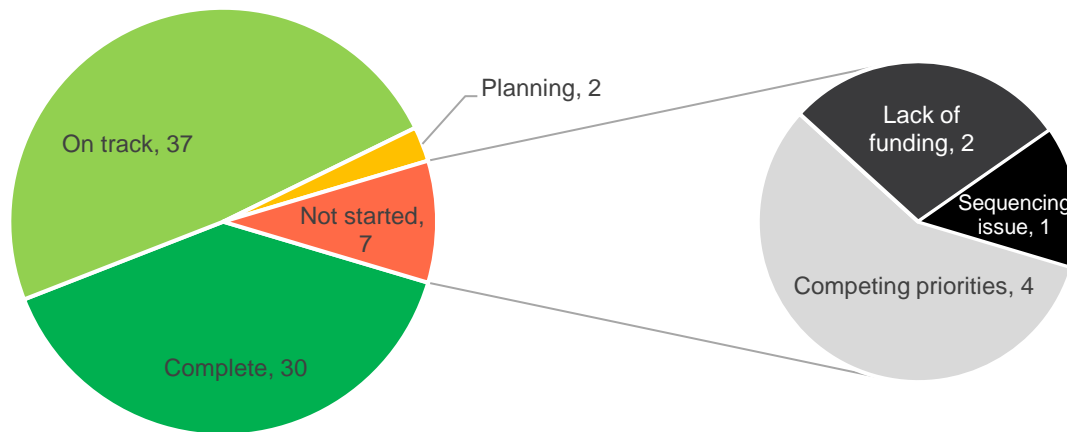
Table 9 – Assessment of timeliness of six key recommendations in the Blueprint Committee Report

Priority Status	Recommendation	Assessment
Critical	1 Increase Staff	<p>The Blueprint Committee Report suggested that an external expert should be engaged within 6 months, and that staffing should increase by 10 per cent in the first year of the program, and then as per the post analysis for the next three years.</p> <p>While an external provider was engaged within 6 months, there were significant delays with the delivery of their external review. This impacted the ability to rely on the review to determine future staffing numbers in the following years. Initially, based on the approved budget, staffing resources increased by 5 FTE in the 2022-23 financial year. This was later increased to twelve FTE, with an additional fifteen FTE in the 2023-24 financial year.</p>
	5 Organisational Restructure	<p>The Blueprint Committee Report suggested that new leadership roles should be established within 4 months, with the new structure fully established within 18 months.</p> <p>The organisational restructure was implemented as a key priority, meeting these timeframes. However, the review of delegations, roles and responsibilities which also formed part of this recommendation faced significant delays. This work has subsequently been absorbed into BAU activities with feedback opportunities for staff in regular forums.</p>

Priority Status	Recommendation	Assessment
		The Blueprint Committee Report cited smoking as a major safety risk at the AMC but noted that the implementation of a smoking plan would need to be well planned.
	9 Smoking cessation	The implementation of smoke-free was a comprehensive Project which involved consultation with AMC staff, WorkSafe ACT, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate Work Health and Safety, union representatives and ACT Cancer Council. Smoke-free was implemented mid-way through 2023 and has been largely seen as a considerable success.
		The Blueprint Committee Report noted that a lack of equipment and ill-fitting uniforms were compromising staff safety, operational effectiveness and dignity.
	2 Uniforms & safety equipment	Budget was allocated to PPE and equipment in the first Blueprint budget, and a plan of strategic priorities was quickly developed. New PPE and other equipment were bought in a timely manner, contributing to staff safety. Comparatively, the uniform project was marred by considerable challenges, turning it from a hopeful “quick win” into a longer complex project that incorporated extensive staff consultation.
		The Blueprint Committee Report suggested that access to internet and an increased number of computers could be achieved within 6 months. A review of de-briefs was also expected to be a “quick win” for improving staff trust.
Quick Wins	3 Internet & positive debriefs	Internet access was quickly re-established for staff. Increased access to computers took longer to implement, but there were 20 new laptops available for staff by September 2023. Despite being cited as a “quick win”, the debrief review had not commenced as of February 2024 due to competing priorities. Subsequent work has been undertaken to improve the debrief process with recent anecdotal evidence suggesting this has been successful.
		Reinstating monthly staff meetings was seen as a quick avenue to give staff meaningful engagement opportunities.
	4 Two-way communication	While regular 20/40 and 10/20 meetings (time for information provision, and double the time for questions and feedback from staff) were established following the Committee’s report, a lack of established structure meant that these eventually slowed and stopped again due to competing priorities, staff departures, and increased operational workload. They have been reintroduced in 2024 and anecdotal feedback indicates they have been well received by staff.

As part of the Project Delivery Support Team’s regular reporting, a status has been assigned to each of the program initiatives. As of 12 February 2024, 88 per cent of initiatives are either ‘complete’ or ‘on track’. Several of the ‘on track’ initiatives are ongoing initiatives that should eventually be incorporated into BAU, meaning that they will never be ‘complete’, and will always require further action. Noting the Blueprint Committee Report suggested the recommendations could take up to three years to be implemented, this puts the Program in an excellent position to deliver the majority of initiatives within this period.

Figure 4 – Current status of initiatives by volume



When particular initiatives have commenced, have these been delivered against agreed milestones?

When particular initiatives have begun, they have been scheduled and monitored by the Project Delivery team. While program reporting indicates most initiatives have been delivered against agreed milestones, there have been notable exceptions such as the roster and uniform projects which were subject to significantly amended timeframes. Where initiative have been reported as 'not started' this has been due to re-prioritisation based on ongoing staff feedback, to sequencing issues where other related initiatives are required to be undertaken first, and to initiatives being unfunded or only partially funded.

Blueprint program timeliness - overall summary

Overall, the Blueprint program has been delivered on time against agreed delivery milestones. Activities have met the key deadlines and priority of implementation outlined by the Committee, and individual initiatives have generally been delivered against agreed milestones.

Question and sub-question	Overall findings
<p>Timeliness</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint been delivered on time against agreed delivery milestones?</p> <p>To what extent have activities met the key deadlines and priority of implementation outlined by the Committee?</p> <p>When particular initiatives have commenced, have these been delivered against agreed milestones?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the activities and outcomes of the Blueprint program have occurred within appropriate and expected timeframes, with ongoing work underway to continue to strengthen areas that have yet to be finalised.</p> <p>Priority of implementation has generally aligned with the Blueprint Report. Most initiatives are set to be delivered within deadlines and timeframes set by the Committee, and have been delivered against agreed milestones.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation focuses on the extent to which the program has achieved its intended outcomes.

The outcome evaluation of the Blueprint for Change program is split into seven evaluation domains:

- Security of the work environment
- Safety of the work environment
- Wellbeing of custodial officers
- Effective leadership
- Workforce capability
- Organisational culture
- Commitment to the organisation and its goals.

Security of the work environment

The security of the work environment refers to the extent to which the physical security of CTU and AMC has improved since the implementation of the Blueprint program. The following evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint led to a secure work environment?
 - To what extent have the physical working environment been improved to prioritise safety and wellbeing?
 - To what extent has a smoke-free work environment been achieved?

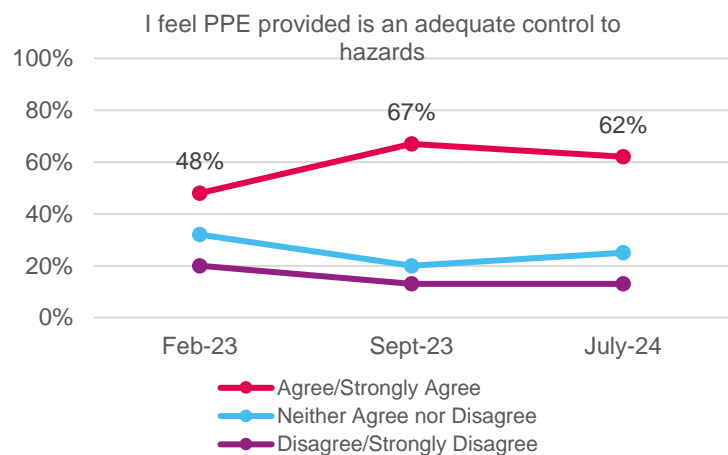


Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint led to a secure work environment?

To what extent has the physical working environment been improved to prioritise safety and wellbeing?

Anecdotally, the security of the physical working environment has significantly improved since the commencement of the Blueprint Program. Amongst COs, investments in personal protective equipment (PPE) are widely seen as the most important physical security change. Combined with new vests and belts, the introduction of OC spray was regularly cited as having a significant impact on security. Staff noted that OC spray has changed the dynamic between staff and detainees, which has contributed to the prevention of incidents. Between February 2023 and July 2024, 14 per cent more surveyed staff felt that PPE provides an adequate control to hazards. Staff also report that the introduction of body-scanner and a K9 unit has also improved the ability to detect contraband.

Figure 5 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I feel PPE provided is an adequate control to hazards”



At the same time, COs and other ACTCS staff recognise that there are still substantial improvements which can be made to improve physical security. In particular, increased CCTV coverage, improved fencing, personal duress alarms, and body-worn cameras were all cited as changes that were still needed to prevent unlawful detainee behaviour and protect COs both preventatively and during incidents.

As a further indicator of the security of the work environment, the number of reactive maintenance requests completed monthly was reviewed. This has remained similar to levels at the time of the Blueprint Committee review in 2021. Since February 2023, the monthly job completion rate has remained above 80 per cent. Nevertheless, without funding for the recommended sustainable facility repair and management program, there is still a sense that facilities are run down, and maintenance is predominantly reactive rather than proactive. In addition, despite a fencing review being completed, no funding has been made available for the implementation of upgrades as recommended. This presents a significant, ongoing risk to the security of the centre (and indeed the safety of COs) along with incidence response and management capability.

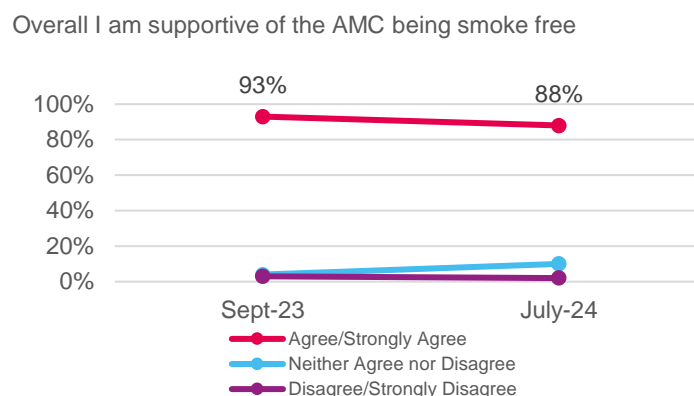
To what extent has a smoke-free work environment been achieved?

Smoking cessation was identified as a critical priority recommendation in the Blueprint report. The transition to a smoke-free work environment is widely considered a success. Several additional supports were put in place prior to its implementation, including provision of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), Cancer Council training for staff and detainees, activities, sensory items, and access to information, clinical resources and supports. The availability of these supports immediately prior to the implementation of Smoke-free of the Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) Policy and a detainee behavioural management program, are cited as having been key to supporting the smooth implementation of the project.

NRT has been widely taken up, with 30 per cent of detainees currently holding NRT recipient status. When comparing smoking and NRT status in the pre-Blueprint period (January 2018 to December 2020), and post-Blueprint period (January 2021 to January 2024), there has been a 29 per cent reduction, from 1445 alerts to 1030.

COs are also highly supportive of the change and understand why it has been implemented. Despite a slight increase in 'neither agree nor disagree' since its initial implementation, 88 per cent of surveyed COs are supportive of the AMC becoming smoke free. Ninety four per cent also understand the health benefits of working in a smoke-free environment. A smaller, but still significant percentage of COs believe the AMC has become a healthier place to work since becoming smoke free (64 per cent) and have experienced health improvement in themselves since the AMC has gone smoke-free (49 per cent).

Figure 6 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “Overall I am supportive of the AMC being smoke free”



Security of the work environment - overall summary

Evidence available to this evaluation indicates that the Blueprint program has led to a more secure work environment. The physical working environment has been improved to prioritise safety and wellbeing, and a smoke-free work environment been achieved.

Question and sub-question	Overall findings
<p>Security</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to a secure work environment?</p> <p>To what extent has a smoke-free work environment been achieved?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall, the physical security of CTU and AMC has improved since the implementation of the Blueprint program, largely resulting from investment in fit for purpose training, protective equipment and the cessation of smoking.</p> <p>Investment in personal protective equipment (PPE) has improved the security of the environment for staff. Some gaps in physical security remain, such as CCTV coverage and fencing improvements. These gaps present ongoing risks to the security and safety of the centre. Training has improved COs sense of security, including increased emphasis on relational security. Overall, the implementation of Smoke-free has been seen as a success. Anecdotally, some issues relating to NRT-misuse and property damage remain, noting work is underway to help address NRT misuse, for example changing the clinical model.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Very Good Evidence: Some evidence</i></p>

Safety of the work environment

The safety of the work environment refers to outcomes of policy and management actions intended to improve the safety of the working conditions. The following evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint led to a safe work environment?
 - To what extent have policy settings been changed to better manage the detainee population (overcrowding, positive engagement, relocation)?
 - To what extent has sustainable rostering and management of overtime been achieved?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint led to a safe work environment?

To what extent have policy settings been changed to better manage the detainee population (overcrowding, positive engagement, relocation)?

Policy changes

COs feel the introduction of the IEP Policy has provided an effective tool to more effectively manage the detainee population. While less influential than the IEP Policy, the introduction of the Detainee Property Policy and the Discipline Policy has also contributed to a greater feeling of detainee control amongst COs.

The IEP policy has introduced a structure around privileges and rewards available to detainees, whereby pro-social behaviour is rewarded and anti-social behaviour leads to a reduction in access to desirable activities and entitlements. Staff and detainees report this policy has helped shift the power dynamic between COs and detainees and given COs an extra lever to change detainee behaviour. However, over two years since the introduction of the policy, there is continued work required to ensure the policy remains effective. This includes:

- Ongoing management of status levels to ensure status levels fairly and accurately reflect behaviour, and to prevent the perception that “everyone is now advanced” or that detainees cannot drop back down. The collection of high quality case notes is key to supporting this, along with an assurance process to review the operation of the policy and its ongoing fairness.
- Ensuring incentives are available and remain relevant to promote positive behaviour. There was a shared view between COs and detainees that after two years, the incentives of the IEP were beginning to become stale and provided less motivation for detainees. This requires updates to IEP rewards, and a research-based, best practice approach to upkeeping an IEP program.

The success of these policies has been tempered somewhat by some concern from COs that their recommendations for IEP status changes are overturned by more senior staff who engage in negotiations with detainees around their behaviour. This is felt to undermine the authority of the CO managing the detainee on a day-to-day basis, and detainees and COs reported that a lack of consistency around detainee behaviour management is a source of tension for detainees, reducing certainty around access to privileges and rewards and leading to disruptive behaviour in response.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that detainee interactions have also improved through better and increased training. COs reflected it is often relational security, with an understanding of detainees and their environment, which provides the greatest amount of safety in their day-to-day jobs. Most staff feel the introduction of new training which focuses on this type of security, such as the Five-Minute Intervention (FMI) training, is beneficial, if not for them then for their colleagues.

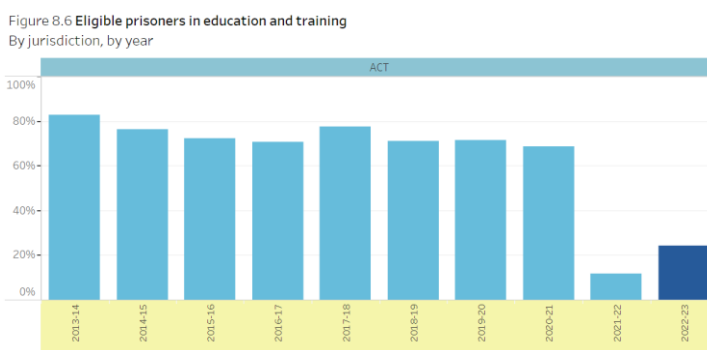
Detainee activities

Detainee tension is a key safety risk for the AMC. Detainees report increased anxiety and reduced pro-social behaviour associated with boredom and a lack of purposeful activity. The Blueprint Committee Report highlighted the lack of a ‘structured day’ for detainees, with not enough meaningful activities, including work, to keep detainees occupied. While some work has been undertaken to review and improve the structured day, more comprehensive change is still required. While recognising the limitations of the AMC site, COs, detainees and advocates all recognise the need for more industries, programs and facilities for detainees.

Prisoner employment, defined in the Annual Report on Government Services (ROGS) as the number of prisoners employed as a percentage of those eligible to work, has continued to rise since the implementation of

the Blueprint Program. However, as shown in Figure 7, education and training, defined as the number of prisoners participating in one or more accredited education and training courses, as a percentage of those eligible to participate, has markedly reduced in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years¹⁴. This is associated with the discontinuation of the previous education provider's contract in September 2021 with no new provider in place. The ACT Inspector of Correctional Services identified this as a matter of grave concern¹⁵.

Figure 7 – Productivity Commission data showing detainee engagement in education and training in the ACT



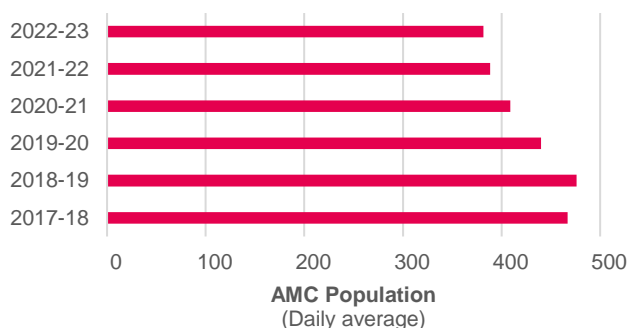
Total time out-of-cells per day, defined as the average number of hours in a 24 hour period that prisoners are not confined to their cells or units, is associated with reduced incidents and reduced anti-social behaviour¹⁶, improving the safety of the facility. Time-out-of-cells has remained relatively consistent, and is currently 1.4 hours more than the national average within similar secure facilities¹⁷. At the same time, detainees in the AMC are in lock-down for an hour each day while COs have a lunch break. Better practice would remove daily lock-ins and use a relief roster which enables adequate staffing for COs to take appropriate breaks without disrupting detainee activities. This would allow COs to leave the site for their lunch breaks but would also result in a one hour per shift reduction in pay, so is unlikely to be supported by custodial staff.

Changes in the detainee population

The Blueprint Committee Report recommended the AMC establish a maximum capacity and explore options for reducing overcrowding and deploying mitigation strategies in event of reaching critical capacity. Due to funding priorities and falling numbers in the detainee population, recommendations relating to detainee overcrowding and relocation have not been prioritised through the Blueprint program.

The Blueprint Committee noted when the AMC originally opened, it was built to house a total of 300 detainees. At this point, it was expected separation requirements (between security classifications; remand and sentenced; and male and female) would mean the facility would rarely reach 300 detainees. By the 2018-19 financial year, the average detainee population had peaked to 476 and two additional accommodation units had been built to address detainee crowding. In the years following, there has been a reduction in total detainee population, with the population in 2022-23 20 per cent less than the 2018-19 peak. Some COs suggested that this could potentially be attributed to the temporary impact of government COVID community-based movement restrictions on criminal activity, and were wary that another increase could be coming. Initial data from 2024 does suggest there has been a change in trend, with 17 more detainees on 1 January 2024, compared to 1 January 2023. Recidivism has however continued to decline over the last 6 years, from 44.2 per cent in 2017-18 to 34.1 per cent in 2022-23.

Figure 8 – AMC daily population average



Separation requirements still present a significant challenge to the AMC, with the demographic of the detainee population only becoming more diverse since the beginning of the Blueprint program. While the medium security population has decreased, there has been a significant increase in the maximum and minimum security detainee cohorts. For example, the maximum security cohort jumped from 19 in 2021, to 60 in 2022. The remand population also now represents an all-time high proportion of the AMC, making up 47 per cent of the

¹⁴ Australian Government, Productivity Commission. (2023). Report on Government Services. Retrieved from:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2023/justice/corrective-services>

¹⁵ ACT Inspector of Correctional Services. (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Retrieved from:

https://www.ics.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2296483/11680-ACT-ICS-Annual-Report-2022-23_FA-tagged.pdf

¹⁶ Australian Government, Productivity Commission. (2023). Report on Government Services. Retrieved from:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2023/justice/corrective-services>

¹⁷ Ibid

total AMC cohort on 1 January 2024. Two years prior, this was only 34 per cent. The size of the female population has remained relatively consistent, but still presents a significant management challenge, with the facilities at AMC inadequate to enable the female population of detainees to access equitable services and activities to address the different risks and needs of women.

Figure 9 - AMC No. of detainees over time

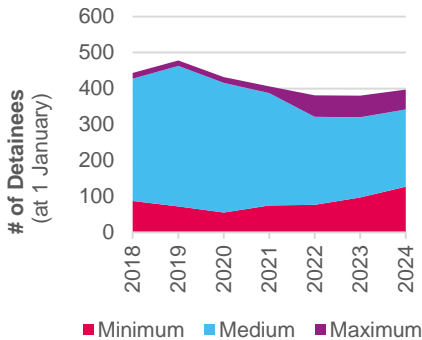


Figure 10 – AMC No of detainees by type

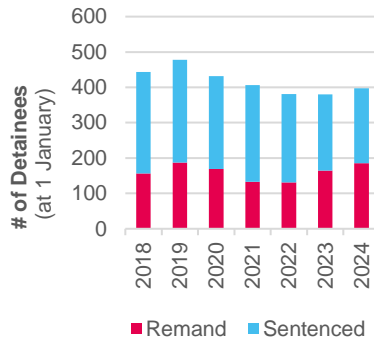
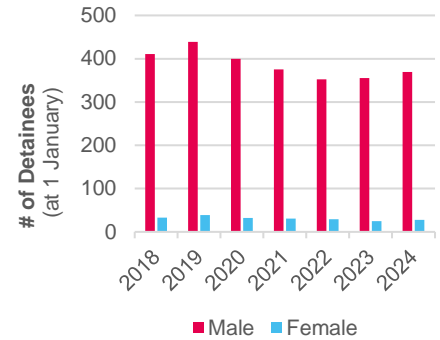


Figure 11 – AMC No. of detainees by gender



Matters relating to the physical constraints of the AMC in managing the various populations of detainees have generally been directed towards longer term solutions as part of the JACS master planning process. While long-term changes appear inevitable, Blueprint would benefit from exploring shorter-term solutions that look to improve detainee (and therefore CO) conditions in the interim. Detainee delegates suggested that delegate meetings could be used to identify shorter term or ‘light touch’ solutions to ensuring access to activities, education and services are prioritised. Detainees and advocates reported that despite some infrastructure improvements, the AMC remains not fit-for-purpose for operating above the 300 detainee expectation when the facility opened. This is principally due to the one-site facility (and fencing deficiencies) presenting ongoing classification and association challenges, and the lack of sufficient dedicated industry facilities and associated VET programs as part of a structured day.

Feelings of safety and reported incidents

Most staff (51 per cent) feel as though incidents at the AMC and CTU have reduced since the beginning of the Blueprint Program. While staff identifying as safe in the workplace increased from 55 per cent to 72 per cent in 2023, this has reduced to 64 per cent midway through 2024. In consultations for this evaluation, many staff acknowledge that the operating environment, whether CTU or AMC, is inherently unsafe and they often feel themselves to be at risk of physical or psychological injury.

Figure 12 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I feel safe in the workplace”

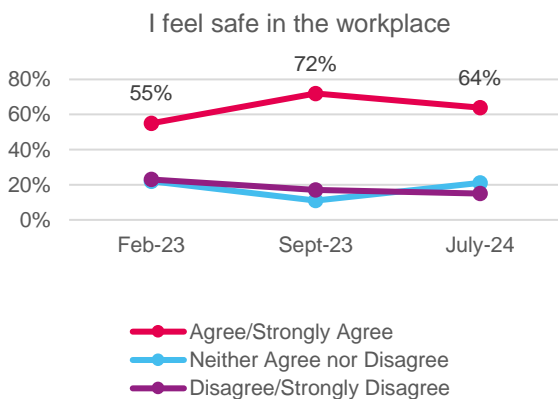
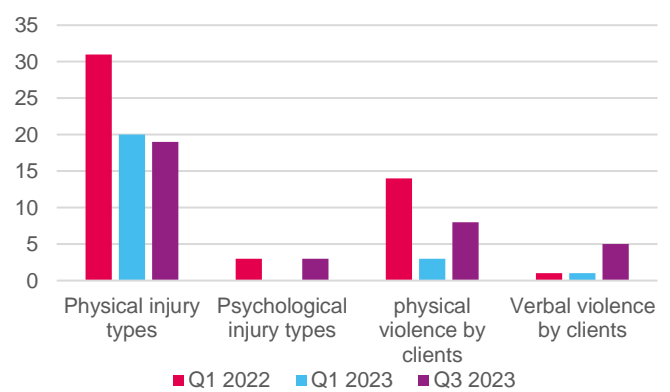


Figure 13 – CO WHS reported incidents



The data indicates that there has been a general downward trend in reported WHS incidents since 2021. Incidents with less than 1 day lost of work has steadily increased since 2020. Incidents with more than 1 day lost has decreased after peaking in 2022. With the number of successful workers compensation claims has stayed relatively consistent before and after the beginning of the Blueprint Program, the total cost of workers compensation has significantly dropped, after peaking in 2020.

Reports of harassment and workplace bullying have changed since 2021 (although the reported numbers are generally quite low). In the ACTPS 2023 Survey (including all ACTCS Custodial Operations staff), 41 per cent of

respondents reported that in the last 12 months, they personally experienced bullying at work. This represents a 16 per cent increase compared to 2021.

Overall, while data suggests an improvement in the safety of the AMC and CTU operating environments, and staff reflect that this has improved since before the Blueprint program was introduced, staff still report feel unsafe. In the AMC context in particular, chronic staff shortages due to unplanned leave resulting in areas being short on coverage and support were the key factor cited for this.

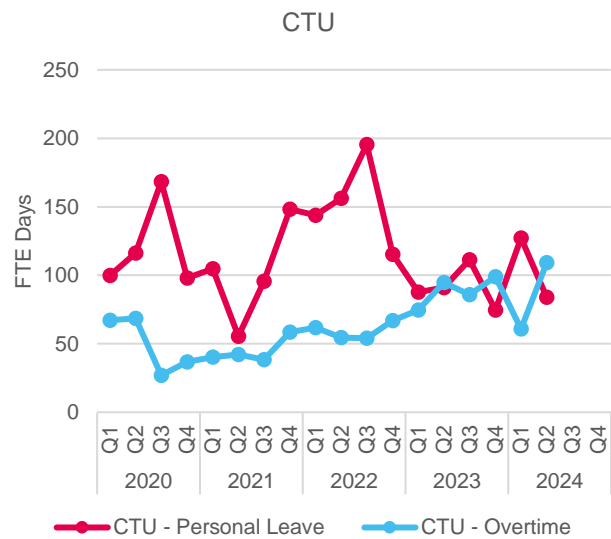
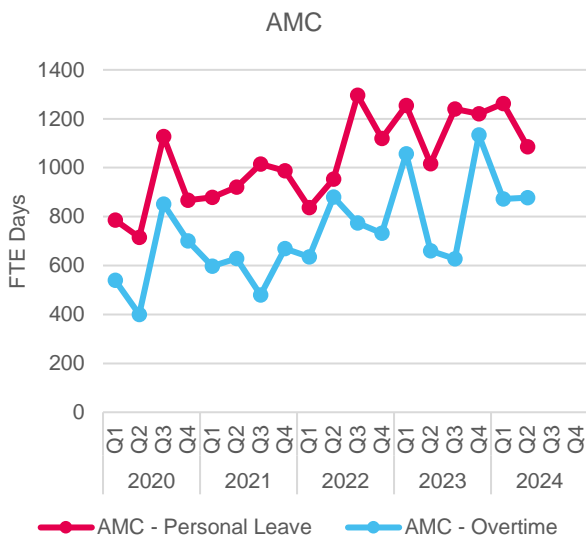
To what extent has sustainable rostering and management of overtime been achieved?

The Blueprint report recommended a rostering solution be designed for both AMC and CTU which enables regular and sustainable staff access to training, and regard to improving the safety of the AMC through reduced use of overtime and increased staffing to meet operational demand. Two years since the Committee’s report, the current roster and management of overtime remains unsustainable. At the time of this report, the roster project has presented a range of roster options to facilitate additional training hours and posts, however to date, surveyed staff indicated a lack of support for those new options. The Correctional Officers Enterprise Agreement requires 50%+1 of impacted COs agree to a new roster for implementation. The roster vote is currently in progress, however is anticipated to be unsuccessful anecdotally due to staff wariness of a change to their current routine.

Total annual leave balances have also risen each year since 2020. Staff with excess balances (more than 2.5 years) steadily increased between 2020 and 2023 but has reduced significantly in 2024 (48 per cent reduction). Payroll data indicates that issues identified with overtime have not been resolved. In fact, total overtime across AMC and CTU have continued to trend up since 2020. There have not been notable changes in personal leave usage data across the CTU or AMC, with these remaining relatively stable as FTE has grown over time.

Figure 14 – AMC records of personal leave and overtime

Figure 15 – CTU records of personal leave and overtime



Staff across CTU, AMC and 2CA generally recognised that current staffing levels are not sufficient. This is for several reasons:

- Despite improvements in recruitment, the cohort still faces a historical under-staffing issue, which means the CO cohort still operates below the necessary levels of required staff.
- Available overtime means staff can work excessive hours, and face burnout. This can become cyclical, with staff working overtime, and then needing to take more time off on unplanned leave. Staff fatigue also impacts decision making capability, particularly during times of heightened stress such as responding to detainees with challenging behaviours and incident management.
- There are concerns that this system is being exploited. With limited disincentives, there was anecdotal evidence that some COs will purposely take unplanned leave for the day, knowing they can work an overtime shift on their upcoming rostered day off and be paid a higher amount in overtime rather than ordinary rostered hours. The extent to which this actually occurs is unclear, however this was frequently raised as an issue of concern by COs in consultations for this report.

Understaffing creates a number of negative consequences, which intersect with many of the goals of the Blueprint Program. This includes:

- Preventing training due to staffing shortages
- Negatively affecting the culture, and sense of team spirit
- Reducing the ability of staff to take planned leave
- Creating a less safe working environment
- Causing increased lockdowns, worsening detainee tension and safety
- Preventing detainee activities, worsening detainee tension and outcomes.

Creating a sustainable roster and management of overtime will require multifaceted changes and require careful consideration in the context of employment law and collective bargaining. Recent structural changes to the operating model are promising, with the recent creation of senior management roles at AMC focused on culture and wellbeing each having a role to play in managing issues around the use of overtime and unplanned leave. These should be considered a high priority given the array of flow on effects of poor staffing levels and practices.

Safety of the work environment - overall summary

Evidence available to this evaluation indicates that while the Blueprint program has led to a safer work environment for CTU and AMC staff, there are still notable weaknesses in this area. While some policy settings have been changed to better manage the detainee population, sustainable rostering and management of overtime has not yet been achieved.

Question and sub-question	Findings
<p>Safety</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to a safe work environment?</p>	<p>To what extent have policy settings been changed to better manage the detainee population (overcrowding, positive engagement, relocation)?</p> <p>To what extent has sustainable rostering and management of overtime been achieved?</p> <p>Summary: Overall an increase in relational security has improved the safety of the work environment at both AMC and CTU, however issues with staff numbers, detainee boredom and unsustainable overtime remain of serious concern.</p> <p>While policy changes at AMC have improved detainee behaviour management, detainee separation requirements are a barrier to managing tension and boredom through meaningful activity.</p> <p>At the same time, many staff at AMC continue to feel unsafe and outnumbered due to under-staffing. The roster project has been significantly delayed due to availability of reliable data, time taken for Treasury outcomes on FTE/posts, and the consequent impact this had on the consultant's ability to deliver roster designs within the scheduled timeframes. The roster remains a vexed issue because of mistrust and the procedural difficulty of change. While staff appreciate access to overtime, there are reports that this is misused. Historical under-recruitment (due to the challenge of finding suitable candidates) has had ongoing impacts on total staffing numbers.</p> <p>Merit: Adequate Evidence: Some evidence</p>

Wellbeing of custodial officers

The wellbeing of custodial officers refers to the impact that Blueprint Program initiatives have had on the overall health, happiness, and productivity of employees, including physical and mental health, work-life balance, job satisfaction and social wellbeing. The following evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint led to strong CO wellbeing?
 - To what extent do staff have a positive work/life balance?
 - To what extent do staff have access to supports that contribute to staff health and wellbeing?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint led to strong CO wellbeing?

To what extent do staff have a positive work/life balance?

CO's perception of work/life balance is heavily connected to the roster. At the AMC, staff appreciate the periods of time off that the current roster permits. At the CTU, shorter workdays than the AMC, and a consistent working week contributes to a sense of work/life balance. Of surveyed COs, 78 per cent agreed that their current rostered days off give them sufficient time to recover, and 86 per cent believe their role enables them to balance work and life commitments. This is similar to Fortem Survey results, where 82 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their work-life balance.

Figure 16 – Survey results for COs agreeing to the statement “My current rostered days off are sufficient for me to adequately recover”

My current rostered days off are sufficient for me to adequately recover

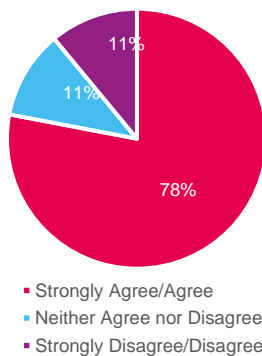
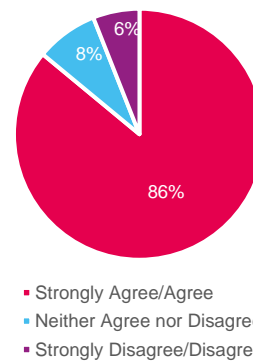


Figure 17 – Survey results for COs agreeing to the statement “My role enables me to balance my work and life commitments”

My role enables me to balance my work and life commitments



The roster, however, also negatively impacts work/life balance for the time that COs are at work. As outlined previously, the levels of short staffing limit the ability to access training and negatively impacts safety and culture. In the ACTPS 2023 Survey (including all ACTCS Custodial Operations staff), “staff shortages” was cited as the main cause of work-related stress, closely followed by the “mental demands of the job” and the “physical environment”. The new roster designs provide access to significant additional training hours and additional posts to cover training activity separate to the centre’s posts. Staff however have not supported the new designs to date, and recruitment to ensure that all FTE positions are filled remains critical to effective implementation.

Table 10 – CO survey results for main causes of work-related stress

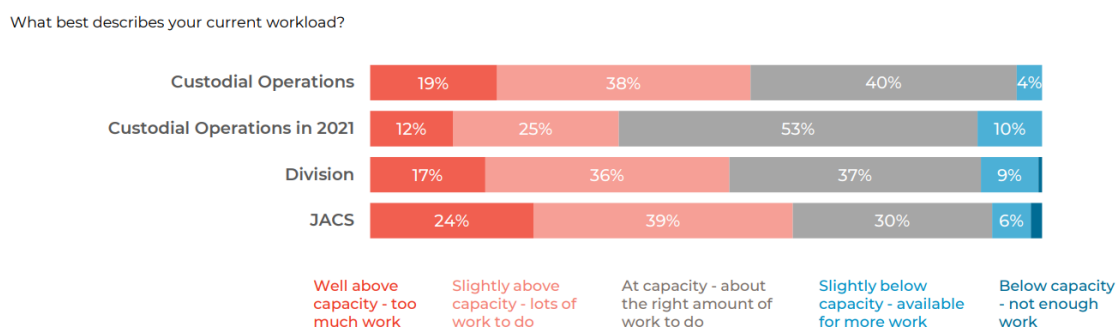
What are the main causes of your work-related stress?	Percentage
Staff shortages	49%
Mental demands of the job	45%
Physical environment	43%
Incivility, bullying, harassment or discrimination	41%
Dealing with customers, clients or stakeholders	35%

Survey questions on workload management were, however, one of the very few areas of the ACTPS 2023 Survey that ACTCS Custodial Operations outperformed the JACS average. They recorded better responses for the questions:

- How satisfied are you with the work-life balance in your current job? (76 per cent positive, 10 per cent more than JACS average)
- The workload I have is appropriate for my role (59 per cent positive, 3 per cent more than JACS average)
- I have enough time during my work hours to do my job effectively (57 per cent positive, 6 per cent more than JACS average)
- I have unrealistic time pressures (43 per cent never/rarely, 8 per cent more than JACS average).

Nevertheless, only 26 per cent of respondents never or rarely felt burnt out from work in the last 3 months, and a large portion of respondents expressed that their current workload was above capacity.

Figure 18 – ACTPS 2023 Survey of COs, response to “What best describes your current workload?”



To what extent do staff have access to supports that contribute to staff health and wellbeing?

The Blueprint Program has made considerable investments into the health and wellbeing supports available for COs, including:

- Creation of a dedicated ACTCS Wellbeing Team
- Access to on-site EAP psychologists for staff (additional to the EAP service provided to ACT public servants)
- Trialling wellbeing services from Fortem, an external provider
- Upgrade of gym facilities at the AMC
- Regular coffee-cart providing free beverages at AMC and CTU.
- Creation of a dedicated wellbeing space at the AMC and CTU.

Generally, interviewed COs were all highly appreciative of these supports, and recognised them as having been an important improvement for a front-line service like corrections.

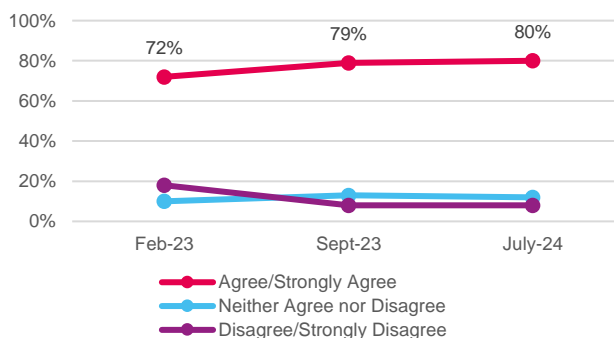
Take-up

Nevertheless, there were still some questions regarding the take-up of these services. COs generally knew that the services exist, with 80 per cent of surveyed COs agreeing that they know where to find EAP and other wellbeing supports.

Figure 19 – Survey results for COs agreeing to the statement “I know where to find EAP and other wellbeing supports”

At the same time, interviews with COs indicated a hesitation or unwillingness to use these services. In line with broader literature about CO help seeking and mental health stigma¹⁸, COs expressed the view they appreciated the existence of these services for their colleagues, but they were not something they would use personally. This attitude was reflected in Fortem’s wellbeing survey, where only 28 per cent of respondents said they were willing to seek mental health support. This is despite only a small percentage of respondents rating their own mental health as excellent (18 per cent) or very good (14 per cent).

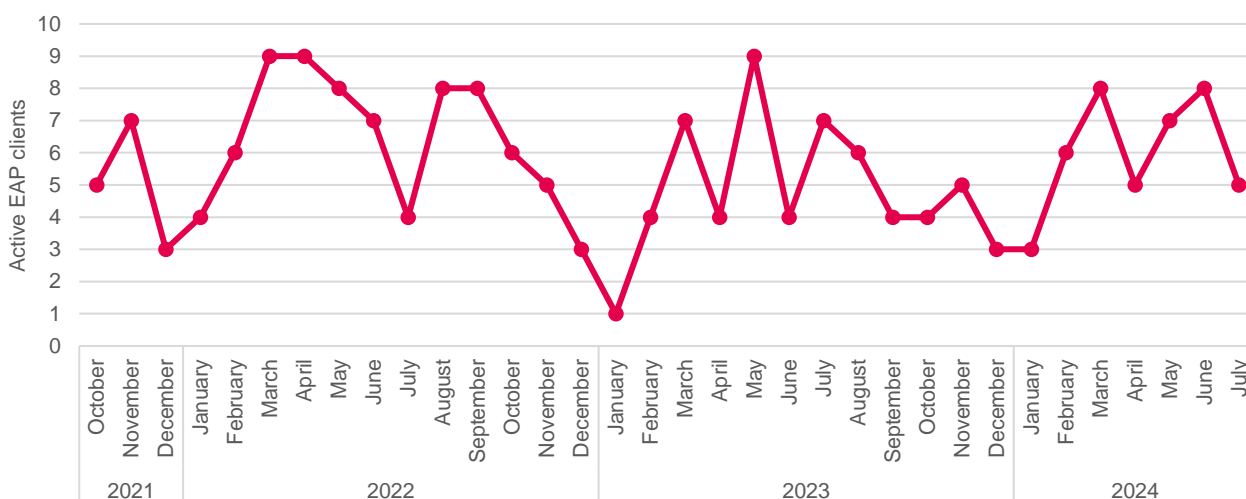
I know where to find EAP and other wellbeing supports



Fortem ran over 40 wellbeing activities over 12 months with a total 751 individual registrations (42 per cent being custodial staff and families)¹⁹. Registration for the activities occurred via the Fortem ACTCS webpage, where events were advertised monthly. Fortem reflected that registrations rates for events scheduled outside of workplaces were high. The main barriers for engaging with activities focused around “work,” “timing issues,” “work commitments,” “current workload,” “kids,” “other priorities,” or “lack of interest.” Fortem also distributed learning modules, which had just over 500 views across 124 users. Fortem received consistent feedback from staff that there was an organisational need to support staff access to these learning modules.

Over the last 3 years, active EAP clients have remained relatively low, peaking with 9 clients in March and April 2022, and May 2023. Clinicians are also undertaking informal ‘walk and talk’ contacts with staff, where wellbeing and supports are discussed. While not formally recorded in the data, anecdotally, staff are positively engaging in these contacts. Other reflections from staff consulted were that the EAP service was not considered by COs to have a strong understanding of the corrections operational context which may explain the low take up of this support.

Figure 20 – EAP clients over time



While the peer support program is not directly an outcome of the Blueprint Program it also fits within the broader ACTCS Wellbeing strategy. The peer support program was not widely supported by staff. Staff found it difficult to trust peer support, and expressed the view that if they were to share problems with their peers, they would confide in the people closest to them.

Impact – improvement in wellbeing?

¹⁸ Wills, C et al. (2021). Barriers to help-seeking among correction officers: examining the influence of institutional culture and structure. *Criminal Justice Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/barriers-help-seeking-among-correction-officers-examining-influence>

¹⁹ Fortem Australia. (2024). ACT Corrections Organisational Resilience & Wellbeing Program – 12 Month Evaluation Report, December 2022 – December 2023.

Results from the ACTPS 2023 Survey (including all ACTCS Custodial Operations staff) indicate that there has been a notable improvement in wellbeing. For example, there was 20 per cent increase in positive responses to the statement “I am satisfied with the policies/practices in place to help me manage my health and wellbeing”. This, however, still remains 14 per cent below the Community Safety Division average, and 16 per cent below the JACS average. There were still serious concerns with mental health, particularly regarding support for staff off work (either for health or disciplinary reasons). Some staff expressed concern that officers under investigation after an incident are stood down for long periods without proper regard to their welfare or timely attention to the issue under review. It was also noted that other front-line, community-safety professions (i.e. fire and rescue, police, ambulance) have far more sophisticated mental health structures in place.

In a 12-month evaluation of the Fortem program (with the evaluation conducted by Fortem), there was a slight drop in the perceived importance of wellbeing compared to before the program began, however there was a slight increase in perceived organisational support for wellbeing, and confidence in managing one’s own wellbeing. For those who engaged in a Fortem activity, 71 per cent indicated that the activity strengthened their social network. Sixty per cent of respondents indicated that they had five or more supportive people around them. Forty per cent reported moderate to high resilience, 50 per cent responded neutral about their resilience and 10 per cent indicated low resilience.

Wellbeing of custodial officers - overall summary

Overall, evidence suggests that the Blueprint program has led to improvements in CO wellbeing. Staff report an increase in their work/life balance and now have access to supports that contribute to their health and wellbeing.

Question and sub-question	Findings
<p>Wellbeing</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to strong CO wellbeing?</p>	<p>To what extent do staff have a positive work/life balance?</p> <p>To what extent do staff have access to supports that contribute to staff health and wellbeing?</p> <p>Summary: Overall, the wellbeing of custodial officers has improved through Blueprint program initiatives focused on the physical and mental health of COs.</p> <p>There is a strong connection between work/life balance and the roster. While staff enjoy the amount of time off they currently receive, their time at work is negatively impacted by short-staffing, cancelled training and reduced connection to colleagues.</p> <p>While staff value the various wellbeing investments made (gym, Wellbeing team, psychologists, Fortem), some still question its take-up. There remains some cultural reluctance to talk about mental health. Some were concerned that support for staff on stress leave or under investigation may be inadequate.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good Evidence: Sufficient evidence</i></p>

Effective leadership

Effective leadership refers to the ability to influence and guide a team towards achieving common goals. This includes at an organisational and operational level. The following wellbeing evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint led to effective leadership?
 - To what extent are COs supported through effective policies, procedures and management?
 - To what extent is the current operating model fit-for-purpose, allowing for 2-way communication?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint led to effective leadership?

To what extent are COs supported through effective policies, procedures and management?

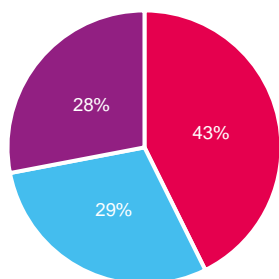
The Blueprint report found that a lack of management skills across AMC and CTU was promoting negativity among staff. Generally, COs recognised there has been an improvement in leadership since Blueprint was implemented. Shifts in senior leadership were often recognised as the most significant reason for this change. This is reflected in the differences in ACTPS survey results between 2021 and 2023. There was large improvement in all “leadership” and “change management” questions. However, once again, even with these vastly improved results, the ACTCS Custodial Operations still greatly underperforms compared to Community Safety Division and JACS averages.

There was a general consensus in interviews with COs and ACTCS stakeholders that management skills require additional investment. The current leadership training is heavily focused on public service management, compared to the unique requirements of corrections. Only 43 per cent of managers believe they receive the appropriate and necessary training and instructions to be effective leaders and managers. Discussions with senior staff indicated management training is under development and is a priority for both AMC and CTU.

This reflects the ACTPS survey results regarding “supervisor performance” and “supervisor support” where ACTCS Custodial Operations also considerably underperformed compared to the Community Safety Division and JACS averages. Only 42 per cent of supervisors feel equipped to manage performance, and only 23 per cent of staff feel that their supervisor manages underperformance well. Particularly at AMC, this is also a reflection of the shiftwork operating environment, with its understaffing issues, which does not allow for regular and consistent connections with a single manager. For example, ACTCS Custodial Operations performed 34 per cent worse on the statement “my supervisor frequently makes time to discuss my professional aspirations/development”. This is aggravated by the roster, and high use of overtime, which sees staff regularly working with completely different groups and under different managers. The proposed new AMC roster options all included improved team consistency and supervisor/management alignment; however those models were not supported by AMC COs in the roster options survey held in April-May 2024. The formal roster vote on a refined model is in progress with the result currently pending.

Figure 21 – Survey result for COs agreeing with the statement “I receive the appropriate and necessary training and instructions to be an effective leader/manager”

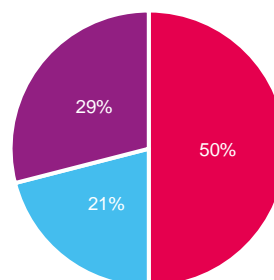
I receive the appropriate and necessary training and instructions to be an effective leader/manager (of those for whom this question was applicable)



- Strongly Agree/Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Strongly Disagree/Disagree

Figure 22 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement that “I receive constructive feedback from my manager”

I receive constructive feedback from my manager



- Strongly Agree/Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Strongly Disagree/Disagree

At the same time, Blueprint survey responses, and discussions at interview, indicate views of the effectiveness of supervisors have improved over time, however there is still room for improvement. In responses to the Blueprint survey only 50 per cent of COs reported receiving constructive feedback from their manager.

The operational environment also limits opportunities for feedback and a consistent manager, and managers are not empowered to manage unplanned leave. This is the case where regular short-term acting arrangements in leadership positions also contributes to a lack of strong, proactive, management of staff. When managers themselves are unaware of how long they will be in a particular position, they may have less commitment to the role, and be less able to make long-term improvements that may be required.

There is also some concern amongst staff regarding merit-based lists and promotion avenues. Perceived favouritism and mismanagement of the process for awarding higher duties has contributed to staff mistrust of leadership. Others expressed concerns the standard public service promotion process is not fit-for-purpose for corrections where unique “on-the-job” skills are more important than typical office skills. Process has been heavily relied upon to protect against claims of favouritism, but the process rewards written application skills over observed evidence of merit. More ways to test these skills (within the constraints of the ACTPS merit-based selection procedural requirements) should be explored to ensure promotions reflect the performance of COs, and the best people for the job are being promoted.

Staff and detainees also expressed the view there can be poor consistency across day-to-day decision making. This leads detainees to “officer shop”, knowing they may receive more favourable decisions depending on the CO they speak too. Detainees expressed the view this contributes to detainee tension, and they would rather have consistent decisions, providing greater certainty about “where they stand”. Staff also expressed the view that their superiors would often undermine their decisions and therefore authority, in order to maintain peace with detainees.

To what extent is the current operating model fit-for-purpose, allowing for 2-way communication?

Consultation

The re-introduction of regular staff meetings has been a strongly supported recent change. While some COs expressed hesitation to engage in this forum, many recognised it presents a worthwhile opportunity for staff to give feedback to managers, and be consulted on operational decisions.

Between 2023 and 2024, there has been a notable improvement in surveyed COs identifying that they feel supported following incidents. Most staff (61 per cent) also feel safe proposing ideas and feedback in the workplace, a 21 per cent increase from survey results in early 2023. Within the ACTPS survey however, the results regarding consultation have dropped since 2021 and are well below Division and JACS averages.

Figure 23 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I feel safe proposing ideas and feedback in the workplace”

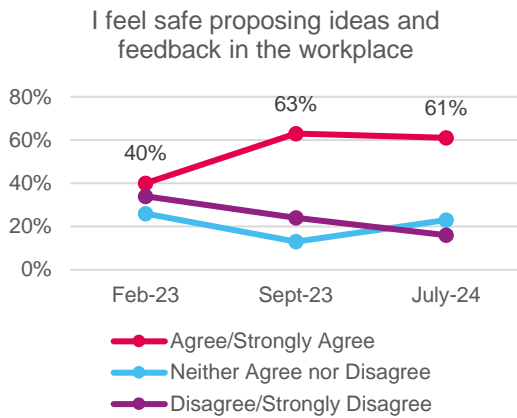
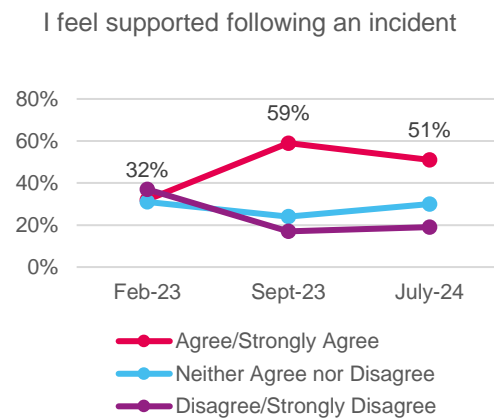


Figure 24 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I feel supported following an incident”



Communication

The Blueprint Program develops a bimonthly newsletter on achievements and the upcoming program of work, which is sent to all staff. 62 per cent of surveyed COs currently feel as though they are provided sufficient communication on the Program. This is slightly more than the 49 per cent of surveyed COs who believe they receive sufficient communication on organisational wide matters. There was a material increase in ACTPS results relating to “internal communication”, although again, ACTCS Custodial Operations is still significantly worse performing than Division and JACS averages.

Figure 25 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the question “There is sufficient communication provided to me on the Blueprint for Change Program”

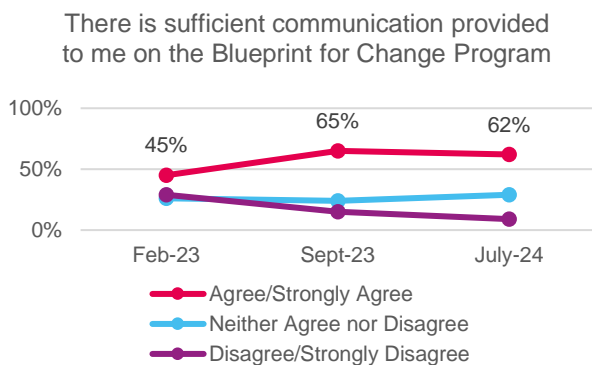
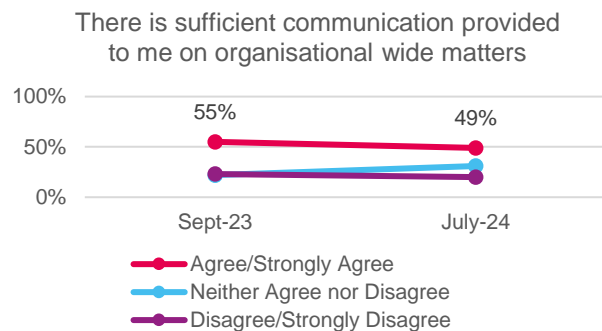


Figure 26 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the question “There is sufficient communication provided to me on organisational wide matters”



With communication and consultation identified as key failings of the AMC and CTU environments in the Blueprint report, uplifts in these areas are signs of positive change, demonstrating effective leadership in important day to day matters for staff. At the same time, consultations with staff indicated improvements are the result of the efforts of individuals in key management positions. While this effort and the positive results they are driving should be commended, this then introduces a risk when talented staff move on, the improvements they created are lost. Looking for ways to embed good practice into systems and procedures should be prioritised over the long term to ensure improvements are sustained.

Effective leadership - overall summary

Evidence suggests that the Blueprint program is associated with an increase in effective leadership, with some improvement in support to COs through effective policies, procedures and management. The operating model has become more fit-for-purpose, and 2-way communication has improved. However, gaps in leadership at the operational level are evident.

Question and sub-question	Findings	
<p>Leadership</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to effective leadership?</p>	<p>To what extent are COs supported through effective policies, procedures and management?</p> <p>To what extent is the current operating model fit-for-purpose, allowing for 2-way communication?</p>	<p>Summary: Overall leadership has improved since the Blueprint report, with 2-way communication and support provided post-incidents identified as key areas where progress is taking place. At the same time, leadership by operational managers was frequently raised in consultations as an area causing tension and mistrust, and strengthening operational management skills is an area requiring further attention.</p> <p>Shifts in senior leadership were frequently recognised as the most significant change occurring at the time Blueprint was introduced. At the operational level, perceived biases in merit-based lists and promotions continue to contribute to staff mistrust. The prevalence of short-term acting arrangements also undermines a proactive approach to leadership. This is aggravated by short staffing issues and the lack of an effective capability framework. The operational environment also limits opportunities for feedback and a consistent manager, and managers are not empowered to manage unplanned leave.</p> <p>Recent changes to the operational structure appear to be rectifying some of these issues. The return of regular staff meetings has been greeted with positive feedback. An emerging focus on engagement and support of COs taking unplanned leave is a positive development. At the same time, progress on initiatives is often reliant on the individual driving it, and systematising leadership improvements will require additional focus.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Adequate</i> Evidence: <i>Some evidence</i></p>

Workforce capability

Workforce capability refers to the skills, knowledge and behaviours of staff that enable them to perform their jobs effectively and contribute to the organisation's goals. The following workforce capability evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint led to an effective, capable and trained workforce?
 - To what extent does the workforce have access to training in line with clear role expectations?

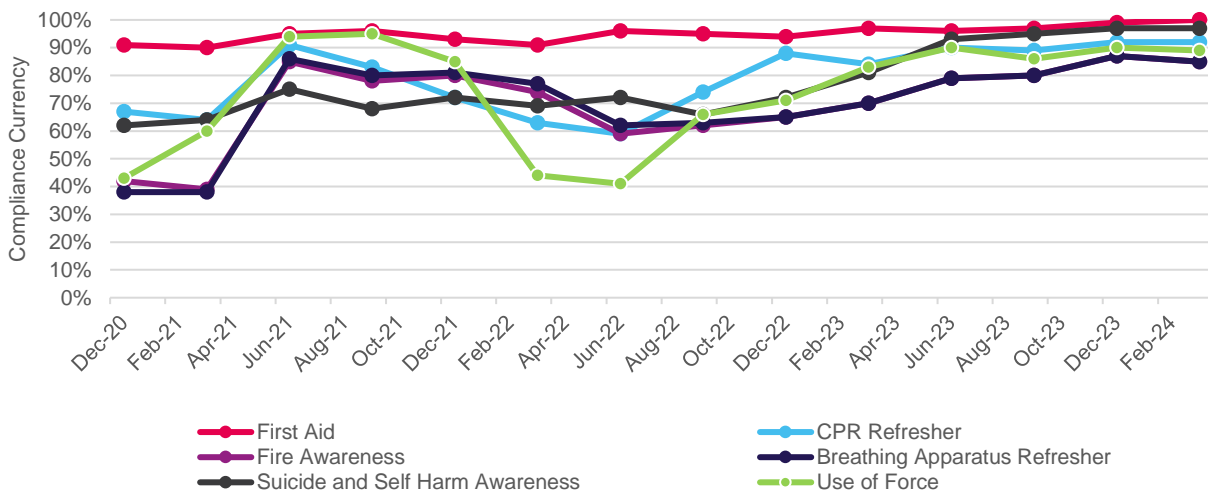


Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint led to an effective, capable and trained workforce?

To what extent does the workforce have access to training in line with clear role expectations?

The Blueprint Program has created a significant improvement in training offerings and uptake. There is a general understanding that CO training was at a relatively low-base, and this concentrated effort has brought ACTCS up to the expected standard of a professional organisation. This means there is now a compliance currency of 85 per cent or above for all six mandatory training topics. Blueprint has also seen the introduction of chemical agents and crowd control training (both now a part of the refresher training), as well as Five Minute Interventions training, focusing on relational security.

Figure 27 – Currency of CO compliance with mandatory training topics



Overall, COs and 2CA stakeholders agree that this has led to improvements in safety, security and staff confidence.

Unfortunately, there remains a logistical challenge regarding giving staff the time to attend training due to staff shortages, and a lack of dedicated training blocks within the current roster. This is reflected in the completion rate of scheduled training sessions which still sits below 85 per cent for several types of training. Operational requirements are consistently the biggest barrier to missing training, followed by unplanned leave.

Additional dedicated training hours/blocks and FTE coverage were key features of the proposed new roster options, which to date have not been supported by the majority of surveyed AMC COs. The formal roster vote is currently in progress.

Qualified assessors have also increased from pre-Blueprint (2020 = 2, 2021 =3), to 6 in 2022. In 2024 there are now 3, and 4 additional officers are currently undertaking formal qualification. While most training has increased since 2020, there are minimal differences between 2021 and 2023-24.

Surveyed COs mostly agree training makes them feel confident in responding to incidents (72 per cent), they can access the necessary training to effectively carry out their roles (65 per cent), their tasks and responsibilities are appropriate to their level (80 per cent), and there is appropriate training available to address their skills gap (58 per cent). This is also reflected in improvements in the ACTPS 2023 Survey when compared to 2021, in relation to questions on “jobs-skills match” and “learning & development”.

Figure 28 – ACTCS data showing reasons for CO non-attendance at training

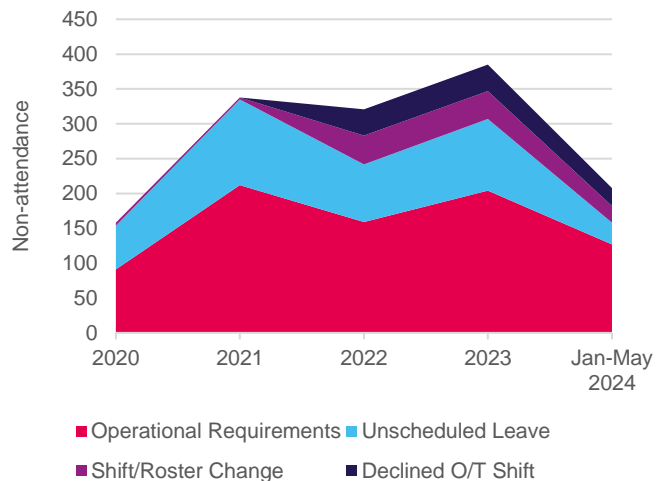
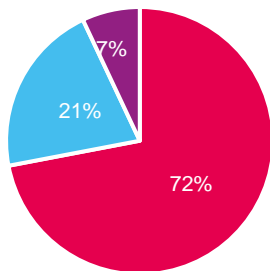


Figure 29 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the question “Training provided makes me feel confident in responding to incidents”

Training provided makes me feel confident in responding to incidents



- Strongly Agree/Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Strongly Disagree/Disagree

Figure 30 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the question “I can access the appropriate training to effectively carry out my role and responsibilities”

I can access the appropriate training to effectively carry out my role and responsibilities

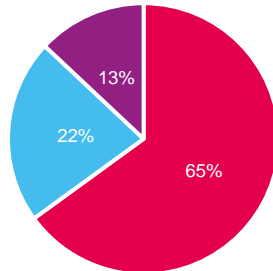
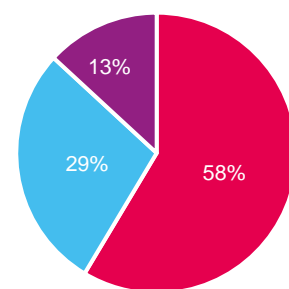


Figure 31 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the question “there is appropriate training available to address my current skills gap”

There is appropriate training available to address my current skills gap



However, there is still more work to be done in terms of having a clear capability framework, with expectations for different CO work levels. On top of the lack of development discussions between supervisors and their staff, Performance Development Plans (PDP) and career discussions are often seen as ‘tick-box exercises’. Making these more fit-for-purpose with the unique requirements of corrections will support improved workforce capability. Staff also mentioned that they lack the feedback and mentoring that would help them improve.

Workforce capability - overall summary

Overall, the Blueprint program has led to a much more effective and well-trained workforce. Access to training has improved greatly, however further clarity in role expectations through performance management arrangements would be beneficial to continue to drive strong capability across the CO workforce.

Question and sub-question		Findings
Capability To what extent has Blueprint led to an effective capable and trained workforce?	To what extent does the workforce have access to training in line with clear role expectations?	Summary: Overall workforce capability has been significantly improved since the Blueprint report, with a substantial increase in training in core skills. Blueprint has significantly increased the CO training offering and uptake, raising training levels to cover the core competencies required by COs. Overall, this has led to improvements in safety, security and confidence. At the same time, access to training remains hampered by under-staffing and the current roster. More could be done to strengthen capability building in performance management arrangements. A more mature Performance Development Plan (PDP) approach where COs work with managers to set and achieve their goals would assist in staff accessing training of direct relevance to their own skills and experience. Merit: <i>Very Good</i> Evidence: <i>Sufficient evidence</i>

Organisational culture

Organisational culture refers to the set of shared beliefs, attitudes and practices that characterise the organisation. The following culture evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent has Blueprint led to a positive organisational culture?
 - To what extent do staff feel trusted, engaged, and empowered to undertake their roles with confidence?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent has Blueprint led to a positive organisational culture?

To what extent do staff feel trusted, engaged, and empowered to undertake their roles with confidence?

Overall, COs and ACTCS stakeholder generally expressed the view that there has been an improvement in organisation culture, but from what was a very low baseline during 2020 and 2021. In absolute terms, this means that the culture still requires work. Various matters already discussed that impact culture include:

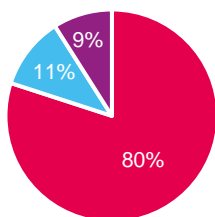
- Reports of bullying
- Reports of inappropriate use of unplanned leave and overtime
- Inconsistent operational decision-making causes detainees to “officer-shop”
- Potential misuse of absenteeism/overtime/unplanned leave.

Trust

There is still an ongoing issue with organisational mistrust within the CO cohort. Blueprint Survey results indicate that while a large portion of COs feel trusted in carrying out their everyday work (80 per cent), less trust decisions their manager makes (53 per cent) and even less trust their manager with personal and sensitive information (47 per cent). The ACTPS 2023 Survey results are reflective of a significant improvement since 2021, but still far from Division and JACS averages. There is a view that some of this mistrust is historical from previous upper management.

Figure 32 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I feel I am trusted in carrying out the work I do everyday”

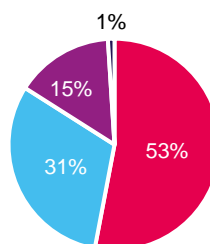
I feel I am trusted in carrying out the work I do everyday



- Strongly Agree/Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Strongly Disagree/Disagree

Figure 33 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I trust decisions my manager makes”

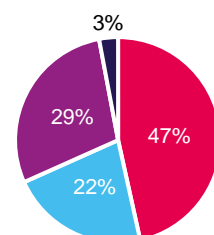
I trust decisions my manager makes



- Strongly Agree/Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Strongly Disagree/Disagree
- Not applicable

Figure 34 – Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement “I trust my supervisor/manager with personal and sensitive information”

I trust my supervisor/manager with personal and sensitive information



- Strongly Agree/Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Strongly Disagree/Disagree
- Not applicable

COs also indicated some fractures in the CO cohort, in both AMC and CTU environments, which is leading to a lack of trust at a peer-to-peer level. While COs recognised groups will naturally form in any working environment, there were reports of factions, which were becoming increasingly toxic and interfering with the ability to work effectively. In an extreme example, we heard of instances of the perceived abuse of staff integrity reporting tools to retaliate against day-to-day decisions to undermine those in the outgroup. If true, the effective

assessment of such staff reports and claims is essential to address this unacceptable conduct. The reluctance to use the peer support services is another indicator of the lack of trust at peer-to-peer level. This is a perception of a lack of a unified team spirit is particularly worrying for a workplace that requires high trust between colleagues in order to perform regular duties, particularly when rostering and staffing issues result in varying work teams.

Organisational culture - overall summary

The evidence available to this evaluation indicates that while the Blueprint program has led to an improvement in positive organisational culture, this remains an area requiring further sustained effort. Positive improvements in the extent to which staff feel trusted, engaged, and empowered to undertake their roles with confidence are seen, however a number of areas of tension are evident in the day to day operations of AMC.

Question and sub-question	Findings
<p>Culture</p> <p>To what extent has Blueprint led to a positive organisational culture?</p>	<p>To what extent do staff feel trusted, engaged, and empowered to undertake their roles with confidence?</p> <p>Summary: While the extent to which staff feel trusted and empowered to undertake their roles has greatly improved since the introduction of Blueprint, the overall culture of the operating environment requires further investment. A number of areas of tension were evident in consultations. These indicate that it is timely to move from the reparation and rebuilding process conducted through Blueprint towards a culture which focuses on the purposeful work conducted by COs on a day to day basis.</p> <p>Staff have been regularly consulted and engaged through Blueprint activities and regular staff meetings. At the same time, concerns with staff “factions”, misuse of integrity reporting tools, bullying, and “gaming the system” of unplanned leave were raised in consultations. There were reflections that inconsistent operational decision-making causes detainees to “officer-shop”. There are reports of a culture of absenteeism and exploitation of overtime and unplanned leave. These are indicators of poor organisational culture where further focus of effort is required, and largely relate to the AMC environment rather than to CTU.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Adequate Evidence: Some evidence</i></p>

Commitment to the organisation and its goals

Commitment to the organisation and its goals refers to the level of dedication and loyalty employees have towards the organisation and its objectives. The following commitment evaluation questions relate to this domain:

- To what extent are staff committed to the organisation and its goals?
 - To what extent are staff attracted and retained, with low turnover?



Key Evaluation Question: To what extent are staff committed to the organisation and its goals?

To what extent are staff attracted and retained, with low turnover?

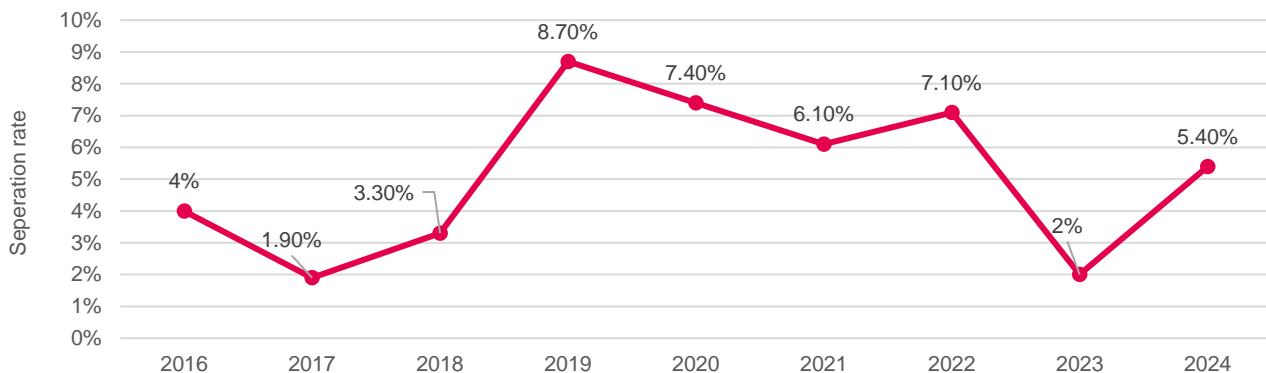
Attraction

The Blueprint Program developed a new Custodial Recruitment Strategy, of which 29 of 34 recommendations have been actioned. This has resulted in a reported increase in recruitment, in an effort to get staffing to an appropriate level to meet operational demands. There is a perception amongst COs that within the general public, corrections is still seen as 'inferior' or a 'stepping stone' to other types of front-line, community-safety professions, such as policing.

Retention

Corrections is widely recognised as an inherently challenging profession, which leads to an expectation of lower retention rates compared to other workplaces.²⁰ The separation rate averages 5.6 per cent over the past 5 years. This includes a sharp drop in 2023, but a bounce back up in 2024.

Figure 35 – Staff separation rate



From the ACTPS 2023 Survey, within the next two years, most respondents plan to either continue to work in their current workgroup (46 per cent) or continue to work in the organisation, but in a different workgroup (12 per cent). Others plan to leave the organisation to work elsewhere in the ACTPS (12 per cent), work elsewhere outside of the ACTPS (8 per cent), take up full-time study (4 per cent), retire (2 per cent) or leave for other reasons (17 per cent).

The most common reasons for staying in the organisation were for job security (53 per cent), continuing to work in a field of interest (34 per cent), and remuneration (31 per cent). The most common reasons for leaving the organisation were opportunities to broaden experience (36 per cent), and a lack of future career opportunities (27 per cent).

Staff feelings towards work and their role

Many COs interviewed demonstrated strong and deep commitment to the overarching goal of detainee rehabilitation. This was reflected in data from recent Blueprint and ACTPS surveys. As of July 2024, the majority

²⁰ Russo, J. (2019). Workforce Issues in Corrections. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/workforce-issues-corrections>

of surveyed COs rate their workplace as “Very good” or “Good” (64 per cent), which is a notable improvement from February 2023, when most COs rated the workplace as “Very poor” or “Poor” (66 per cent). Most COs also consider ACTCS a great place to work (56 per cent) and would recommend ACTCS as a place to work (60 per cent).

Most COs also feel motivated to come to work (60 per cent Agree, 15 per cent Disagree), and feel as though their role is important in contributing to the rehabilitation of detainees (61 per cent Agree, 12 per cent Disagree). While a considerable majority of COs are satisfied with their current role (74 per cent), less than half feel valued at work (45 per cent).

Figure 36 - Survey results for COs rating for "How do you rate your workplace?"

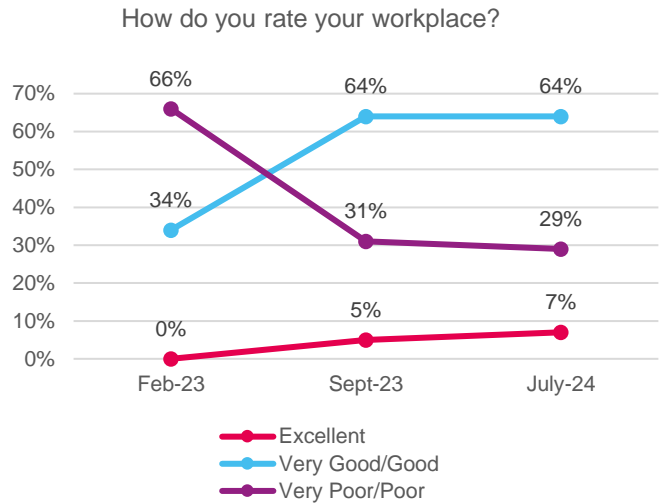


Figure 37 - Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement "I often feel motivated to come to work"

I often feel motivated to come to work

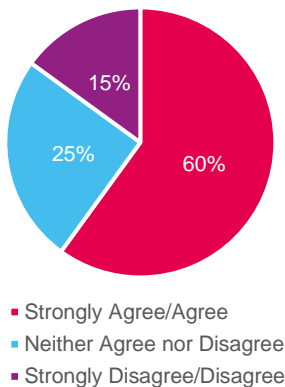


Figure 39 - Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement "I am satisfied with my current role"

I am satisfied with my current role

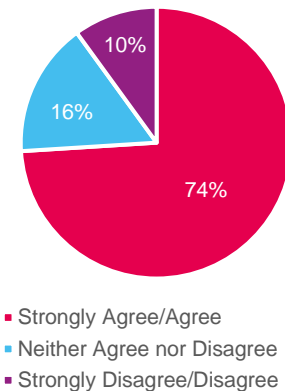


Figure 38 - Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement "I feel my role is important in contributing to the detainees rehabilitation journey"

I feel my role is important in contributing to the detainees rehabilitation journey

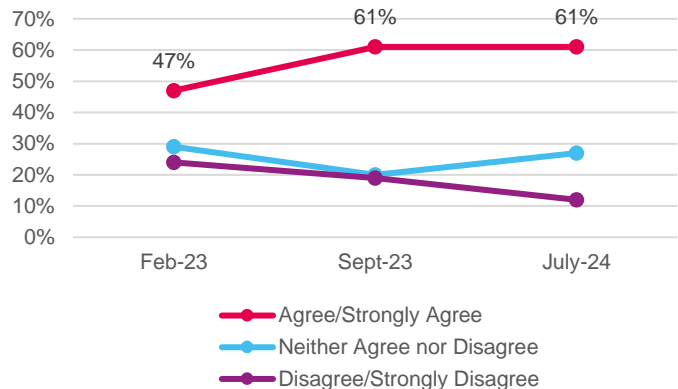
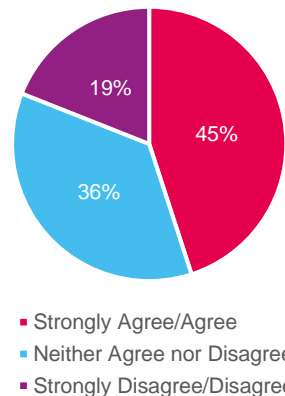


Figure 40 - Survey results for COs agreeing with the statement "I feel valued at work"

I feel valued at work



ACTPS 2023 Survey results regarding “Intrinsic Rewards” show fairly consistent results with the 2021 survey, but considerably worse results than Division and JACS averages. Regarding “Commitment and Loyalty”, Custodial Operations performed better in 2023 (compared to 2021) in statements relating to believing in the purpose and objectives of the organisation, recommending the organisation as a good place to work, and feeling as though organisational accomplishments are like a personal compliment. However, Custodial Operations performed worse in 2023 (compared to 2021) in regard to statements of feeling proud to work in the organisation and feeling a strong personal attachment to the organisation. Again, all of these results were lower than Division and JACS averages.

Commitment to the organisation and its goals – overall summary

Evidence from the evaluation indicates that there has been an uplift overall to the extent to which staff committed are to their organisation and its goals. Continued efforts to attract and retain staff should be sustained over the longer term.

Question and sub-question	Findings
<p>Commitment</p> <p>To what extent are staff committed to the organisation and its goals?</p>	<p>To what extent are staff attracted and retained, with low turnover?</p> <p>Summary: While staff attraction and recruitment have improved since the Blueprint report, alignment to organisational goals remains mixed, linked to findings in both the culture and leadership domains of this evaluation.</p> <p>Evidence from consultations and survey data indicate that staff feelings towards their work and their role have improved over time, with survey responses showing an uplift in some indicators of commitment and loyalty to the organisation. Many COs interviewed demonstrated strong and deep commitment to the overarching goal of detainee rehabilitation. At the same time, other issues raised throughout the evaluation, including issues with unplanned leave, indicate COs may not be aligned to organisational goals.</p> <p>Merit: <i>Good Evidence: Weak evidence</i></p>

Overall findings from this evaluation

Significant advancement has been made from a very low base

Significant effort has been invested to execute the recommendations of the Blueprint Committee, which has resulted in considerable progress since the Blueprint Committee's report in March 2022. It is important to note, however, morale, trust and safety were very low at the AMC and CTU at that time, and much of the work of the Blueprint program has been focused on lifting the operating environment up to meet an acceptable standard. The evidence available to this evaluation, which includes extensive consultation with staff at all levels, demonstrates an acceptable standard is now consistently in place, and across a number of domains, has been surpassed. The outlook is now far more optimistic, despite some ongoing issues and recent challenges.

Process evaluation findings reflect strong and effective management of the Blueprint program, by the Oversight Committee, the Program Board, and most vitally, by the team leading the program of work. The energy, commitment and stakeholder engagement skills brought to bear by the PMO, (and in particular the Project Director) have been widely commended by stakeholders, and are seen to be a key factor underpinning the progress made to date in improving the operational environment for COs.

While there are inherent challenges in the custodial work environment, the broad consensus is there has been a notable improvement in the safety, wellbeing, culture and capability of the custodial officer cohort. It is also evident numerous initiatives are underway which promise to yield benefits in the long term, even if this isn't immediately apparent in the current data.

The custodial work environment is characterised by high levels of physical and mental risk,²¹ with frequent exposure for staff to crisis situations and the risk of secondary trauma, particularly related to the impact of hearing about the criminal activity of detainees and the probable impact of this on victims of crime.²² In an operating environment focused on detaining and rehabilitating involuntary clients, significant psychological pressure is born by staff, and strong interpersonal skills are required.²³ In this context, the importance of the work of the Blueprint Program and the focus on COs working conditions in ACT is highlighted.

There are three areas where the operating environment at AMC and CTU has markedly improved since the introduction of the Blueprint program. The security of the work environment has greatly improved, notably in the introduction of key equipment such as OC spray, utility belts and safety vests. Alongside and interrelated with this successful investment in equipment has come a strong uplift in training, resulting in improved workforce capability and confidence in a suite of core skills.

The wellbeing of COs is also an area where deep investment has occurred since the Blueprint Committee's report, with a range of wellbeing supports on offer to staff both in and outside the workplace setting. While there remains some work to do to enhance the culture of mental health help seeking in this cohort, access to these supports has had a beneficial impact on the extent to which staff feel valued and supported in their roles.

Leadership and culture are a focus and should remain a high priority

There remain challenges in other domains of the operating environment, however feedback from staff suggests that each is continuing to meet an acceptable standard, and some elements of each of these are of a high standard. Challenges are seen in the safety of the work environment, largely associated with unplanned leave and short staffing. Indicators of organisational culture show that this continues to be a challenging area for the AMC and CTU, with reports of in-groups and some poor behaviour from disgruntled staff, and a lack of commitment to the workplace and each other displayed in observations that staff commonly exploit unplanned leave arrangements.

²¹ Ferdik, F, Smith, H. (2017). Correctional Officer Safety and Wellness Literature Synthesis. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250484.pdf>

²² Russo, J. (2019). Workforce Issues in Corrections. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/workforce-issues-corrections>

²³ Office of Correctional Health, American Correctional Association (2023). Staff Recruitment and Retention in Corrections – The Challenge and Ways Forward. *Corrections Today*. Retrieved from: https://www.aca.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Publications_Carla/Docs/Corrections%20Today/2023%20Articles/Corrections_Today_Jan-Feb_2023_Staff%20Recruitment%20and%20Retention%20in%20Corrections.pdf

Effective leadership remains an area for further development, being a key lever to drive performance and outcomes which is beginning to come to life. Recent changes to the operating model, including the introduction of key director roles focused on staff wellbeing and culture, are promising, and appear to have led to an immediate uplift across areas such as two-way communication with staff, engagement and support for staff with high levels of overtime or unplanned leave, and increased focus on debriefing and on the job coaching. These represent key areas requiring investment and focus going forward, with the uplift in security, capability and wellbeing support for staff now providing a strong basis from which to build a performance culture, where staff have a shared vision of the value of their roles and how these drive outcomes for detainees and the community.

The Blueprint report recommended investment in the operational management skills of senior staff, and a re-design of the performance management approach currently in place would be timely. Staff frequently raised concerns that they lack feedback and consistent oversight of their work, which is exacerbated by staff shortages and is associated with reduced morale and the reflection that in-group 'factions' lead to favouritism in management decision making. A clear framework and genuine investment in performance development would assist in setting a higher standard for behaviour and culture in the operating environment, and would help ensure COs are able to undertake management roles effectively, be they permanent, long term acting arrangements or simply performing a senior role for the day.

Alongside the need for ongoing investment in the leadership skills is a need to invest in the management data available to staff across AMC, CTU and 2CA. While recent changes to the operating model are promising, embedding improvements into systems will be necessary to avoid reliance on the aptitude of key personnel to drive culture and compliance. Data and reporting through to senior management oversight will be vital, and the effort required to provide data for this evaluation demonstrates that at present, this is not currently collected or utilised in a way that supports strong day to day decision making across the operating environment. Recent investment in a data and evaluation function at ACTCS is a promising development, and work to deliver a monitoring and evaluation framework to support management decisions at AMC and CTU should be a priority.

Where to next?

Overall, the Blueprint for Change program has led to a strong improvement to the working conditions of staff at AMC and CTU, and has been undertaken with strong processes and excellent stakeholder management. In this difficult operating environment, it is now time to build on the base which Blueprint has delivered, and work to lift the staff culture to one focused on values and outcomes for the Canberra community. Recent efforts and investments in this space should be commended and continue to be a focus in the long term.

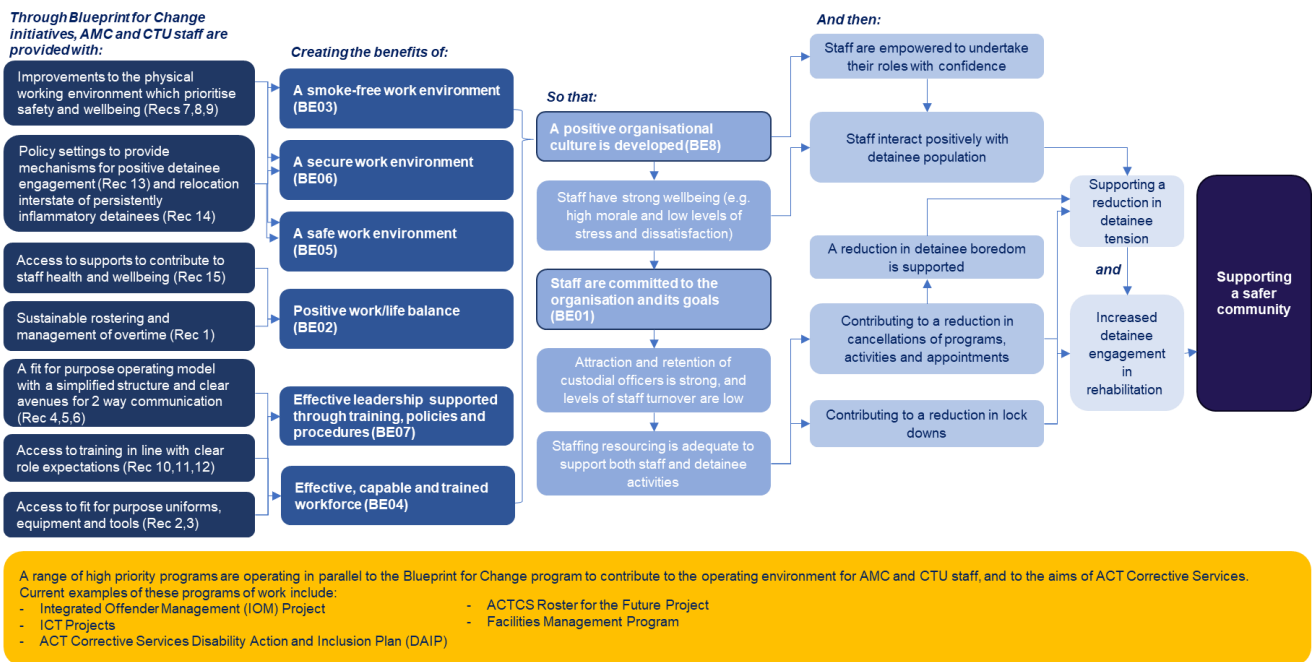
Appendices

Appendix A: Detailed Evaluation Methodology

Theory of Change and Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is underpinned by a Theory of Change (Figure 41), outlining the range of factors which impact the Blueprint Program. Each arrow of the theory of change represents causal logic between the different inputs, outputs and outcomes, evidenced by literature. The theory of change demonstrates how each outcome of the program acts as a driver that eventually leads to the ultimate aim of the AMC and CTU operating in a safe and effective corrections environment, supporting a safer community for the ACT.

Figure 41 – A Theory of Change



KEQs were developed with a focus on the key areas of the Theory of Change to help drive data collection and reporting for the evaluation. Data and information about these were used to develop an analysis of the success of the program, both from a process and outcomes perspective. Analysis of the data obtained to answer the Key Evaluation Questions was considered in line with the current implementation status of the Blueprint Program, acknowledging the program is still in an active delivery phase.

Ethics Approval

On the basis that the evaluation meets the National Health and Medical Research Council's definition of human research, the evaluation sought and obtained ethical approval from an appropriate Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). To meet HREC requirements, the project presented detailed documentation to guide the sampling strategy, consultation and survey methods, stakeholder communications and distress protocols supporting the project. Data management and storage protocols were also provided, along with draft informed consent forms for individuals participating in the research.

Data Collection

As outlined in the table below, the evaluation utilised a mixed-methods approach, synthesising results from both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the KEQs. To obtain the qualitative data, we undertook planning and scheduling activities in consultation with ACTCS to ensure we created minimal impact on the operational requirements of all staff and COs involved. All COs were invited to participate in a consultation.

Data sources	Types of data
Program data and reporting	<p>Access to ACTCS data used in the Blueprint for Change review. Program progress reporting, workforce data and incident data of relevance including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation reporting with detail over time of progress on Blueprint and wellbeing initiatives • Risk management data • Incident data • Employee leave data • Overtime and roster data • Recruitment, resignation and higher-duties data • Survey data regarding staff culture and morale
Consultations	<p>Consultation with Custodial Officers</p> <p>One-on-one semi-structured interviews and small group discussions with Custodial Officers covering all topics such as wellbeing and safety, training and professional development, management and governance, workplace culture and resourcing.</p> <hr/> <p>Consultation with ACTCS stakeholders</p> <p>Semi-structured conversations with ACTCS staff and stakeholders involved in the delivery and monitoring of the Blueprint for Change Program. These conversations focused on topics relevant to the stakeholder, including staff wellbeing and safety, training and professional development, management and governance, workplace culture and resourcing.</p> <hr/> <p>Consultation with AMC detainees</p> <p>One-on-one semi-structured interviews with detainees regarding wellbeing, safety, and experience with Custodial Officers in the CTU and AMC environment.</p>

Data Analysis

Across the various data sources, the evaluation utilised:

- **Descriptive techniques:** Insights into the data gained through analysis techniques including mean, median, mode, average, standard deviation and skewness (where appropriate).
- **Thematic analysis:** Identifying patterns across the qualitative data provided to us by stakeholders to understand the key themes and tension points.
- **Narrative analysis:** Participant stories shared in the consultation allowed us to analyse how stakeholders experience the Blueprint program.

Once we gathered individual results from each data source against each KEQ, we synthesised these, considering what the results said when taken together, how they complement and extend each other, and whether there are areas where they contradict each other.

As outlined above, a set of rubrics was used to determine the most appropriate interpretation of the data collected, and to explicitly demonstrate how this has been weighted to inform key decision makers. Similarly, a merit determination was made against each evaluation criterion, making it clear to decision makers how we have formed our evaluation judgement.

Appendix B: Document Register

Document Title	Date
ACTCS Blueprint for Change Program Board – Terms of Reference	2022, August
ACTCS Blueprint for Change – Program Brief	2022, November
ACTCS Custodial Operations – 2023 ACTPS Survey Results	2023, March
ACT Corrections Organisational Resilience & Wellbeing Program – 12 Month Evaluation Report	2023, December
ACT Wellbeing Framework	2020, March
A new future for custodial services – ACT Corrective Services Blueprint for Change	2022, March
Blueprint for Change Committee – Communique (x 9)	2021, April
	2021, May
	2021, August
	2021, November
	2022, January
	2022, March (x 2)
	2023, January
	2023, December
	2023, December
Blueprint for Change Oversight Committee – Minutes (x 2)	2023, January
	2023, December
Blueprint for Change Program – Communication and Change Management Strategy	2023, March
Blueprint for Change Program Newsletter – February 2024	2024, February
Blueprint for Change Program Status Report (x 14)	2022, November
	2023, January
	2023, February
	2023, March
	2023, April
	2023, May
	2023, June
	2023, July
	2023, August
	2023, September
	2023, October
	2024, February
	2024, March-May
	2024, March-May
Blueprint for Change Program Staff Survey Report (x 3)	2023, March
	2023, September
	2024, July
Thrive at Work – ACT Corrective Services Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy – 2023 to 2024	2023, November

Appendix C: Consultation List

Participant Title
Custodial Officers
Custodial Officer – Grade 1 (x 32)
Custodial Officer – Grade 2 (x 11)
Custodial Officer – Grade 3 (x 4)
Detainees
Detainees (x 6)
ACTCS Stakeholders
Deputy Director General – Community Safety
Commissioner – ACT Corrective Services
Assistant Commissioner – Custodial Operations
Senior Director - Operations
Senior Director – Court Transportation Unit
Senior Director – People & Culture
Senior Director – Information and Security Business Solutions Unit
Senior Director – Organisational Capability Unit
Director – People & Culture
Director – Wellbeing & Rosters
Director – Custodial Operations Training
Director – Facilities Management
Director – Intelligence
Director – Court Transportation Unit
Director – Policy and Risk
Former Director – Smoke Free Project
Executive Branch Manager - Corporate
Executive Branch Manager, Strategic Policy & Programs
External Stakeholders
Chair – Blueprint Oversight Committee
President and Human Rights Commissioner – ACT Human Rights Commission
Official Visitor for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Principle Consultant – Converge International
ACT Inspector of Correctional Services
ACT Ombudsman

Appendix D: Bibliography

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