

## Leadership in Prisons

Emma Cassar  
General Manager

## Prisons.... Overview...

- Corrections Victoria has 11 prisons across Victoria
  - 9 male prisons
  - 2 female prisons
- 2 Private prisons
- 1 transition centre (male)

## Women's Prison Region - Overview

- 2 prisons
  - Dame Phyllis Frost Centre  
300 bed Maximum Security Prison  
Located at Laverton
  - Tarrengower Prison  
74 bed Minimum Security Prison  
Located at Maldon
- Over 235 Staff and contractors
- Children...

## Services in prison

- Health Centre
- Commercial Industry ( 4 factories/hort)
- Commercial Kitchen/Laundry
- Stores – Internal
- Re-integration service
- Clinical Service (prisoner treatment)
- Finance
- Education

## What about prisoners.....

- Age range 18 – 84
- 1<sup>st</sup> times and the very experienced
- Mental Illness
- Intellectual disability/cognitive impairment
- Drug/alcohol withdrawal/treatment
- Mainstream and Protection
- Groups/gangs/cultures – who can mix with who...

## Leadership...



## So what about Leadership...

- Prison Management and Leadership requires:
  - Finance and Budget expertise
  - OH & S
  - HR and EEO
  - Politically sound
  - Rosters
  - Change agents – for culture

- Dynamic Manager
  - Assertive leader
  - Offender treatment – practices and principles
  - Privacy
  - Human rights
  - Industrial Relations
  - Emergency Management
  - Security (staff and systems)
- .... The ability to think on your feet and make the right decisions.... Every time (or almost every time)

## Prison Leadership

- Understand the environment – Command and Control
- Ability to influence the culture – by increasing your bandwidth of leadership skills
- Driving towards “team leadership”
- Knowing how to:
  - Command in 2010
  - Control large number of staff (and prisoners!)

## Effective Leadership...

- Setting clear strategy and clear objectives – with targets
- Making decisions, based on robust evidence – to direct resources to deliver the objectives
- Setting the “WHAT” but allowing key business areas to determine the “HOW”
  - key to promoting innovation and continuous improvement
- Monitor performance at all levels

## The Culture....

- Old school vs. New school
  - Custodial vs. Non-custodial
  - Old heads vs. young heads
- .... Leading significant cultural change requires:
- persistence ... Persistence...persistence
  - Clear vision
  - Strategy
  - guts and determination
  - ability to performance management

## Strategy....

- Leadership requires – knowing how you (your business area) can add “value” to the business
- Develop business plans – but also strategic plans (for the longer term...)
- Know the risk areas – and get them covered
- Politics... Politics
- Media
- Have a clear governance system/function

## Its all about Teamwork....



## Team Leadership

- People work best in teams
- Great teams – have great results
- Prison leadership – as Team Coach!
- Considerations..... Team sizes... Who leads and when.....meetings (what for!)... When to consult vs. decisions

## Executive team...

- Team of 9
- Role knowledge
- Prison leaders – at all times
- Who makes what decision (GM vs. Managers)
- Consistent Leadership of staff
- Know your team – individual strengths and weaknesses
- Supervision – the solution

## Supervision = Consistent leadership

- A solid and consistent supervision timetable will ensure that the prison follows direction
- Supervision / Coaching
- Knowing you team
- Working with individual strengths/styles and allowable weaknesses
- Supervision – is then passes “down the line!”

## Team Leadership Qualities.. The must haves

- Know your staff
- Get out there
- Solve the problems with the right people
- Integrity
- Honesty
- RISK MANAGEMENT!
- Performance management

## Personal qualities... The must haves..

- Friendly.. Firm and fair
- Transparency (when/when not)
- Decisions / assertiveness /accountability
- Integrity
- Approachable – but keep the hierarchy!!
- Dare to be different (but not to different)
- Challenge others – but know your limits...

## Performance Management - good leadership... Or good luck...

- Individuals and team
- Engage staff as much as possible – so they align with your/location goals
- Clear measures / team measures
- Individual performance plans – with explicit links to goals
- Performance reporting – keep it simple!

## Prisoner Leadership...

- Firm... Fair... Friendly...consistent
- Staff as “role models”
- Integrity
- Ensuring staff understand our role and function – to drive prisoner management
- Listen.... Look... Get a sense of what is going on!

## Summary.... Leadership

- Great leaders don't need content skills
- Have a big tool kit
- Learn more
- Your people are your key to success – invest in them
- Get ahead of your risks
- Your budget is your best friend

## Questions.....

