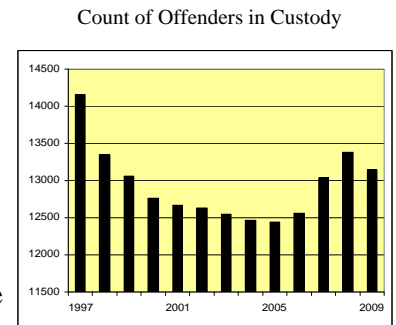


The Changing Federal Offender Population

Highlights 2009

Key Results:

- During the period 1996/97 to 2004/05 a number of changes to the federal offender custody population led to increasing challenges for the Correctional Service. There were increased proportions of offenders with shorter sentences, higher levels of risk in the population and mental health problems.
- These changes appear to have levelled off in the past four years so the period from 2004/05 to 2008/09 has not seen the dramatic increases of the earlier era.
- The federal population of men in-custody is still lower today that it was in 1996/97, (13,825 in 1996/97 vs. 12,649 in 2008/09), however, over the past five years, there has been a steady increase in the population (12,080 to 12,649).
- The federal population of women in-custody continued to increase from 2004/05 to 2008/09, (356 to 498) with a 50% increase from 1996/97 (from 333 to 498).
- From 1996/97 to 2008/09, the number of Aboriginal men in federal custody increased 22% (from 1,996 to 2,445) and new admissions remained stable (from 779 to 778). The trend has been for increases in the number of Aboriginal offender admissions, but there was a decrease in 2007/08 and 2008/09.



Changing Length of Sentence:

- More than 50% of new men offender admissions are now serving sentences of less than three years (from 34% to 51% since 1996/97), and the trend has remained stable from 2004/05 to 2008/09.
- 64% of new women offender admissions are serving sentences of less than three years (41% to 64%), since 1996/97 and that trend has continued from 2004/05 to 2008/09.
- In 2008/09, almost one quarter (24%) of men offenders in-custody are serving sentences of less than three years or life/indeterminate. The change in the percentage of short and life/indeterminate sentences, for those in custody, has been minimal since 2004/05.
- 39% of women offenders in federal custody are serving less than three years whereas about one-out-of-six (16%) are serving life/indeterminate sentences in 2008/09.

Changing Offence Categories:

- One-out-of-four (26%) men offenders in-custody are serving sentences for homicide, about one-third (31%) for robbery, one-sixth (18%) for sex offences and one-quarter (25%) for drug offences. The proportion of men homicide offenders has increased from 22% in 1996/97 to 26% in 2008/09, but has remained stable since 2004/05. The proportion of men sex offenders has decreased from 22% in 1996/97 to 18% in 2008/09, and this has been steady since 2004/05.
- More than one-quarter (27%) of women offenders in-custody are serving sentences for homicide, almost one-quarter (23%) for robbery, 3% for sex offences and about a quarter (26%) for drug offences. The proportion of women homicide offenders has decreased from 36% in 1996/97 to 27% in 2008/09. The proportion of women robbery offenders increased from 21% in 1996/97 to 23% in 2008/09. Women offenders have shown a steady increase in drug offences since 2004/05; however, there was a sharp decline from last year (from 31% to 26%).

Changing Initial Custody Level:

- More than one-out-of-ten new men offender admissions are initially rated as requiring maximum-security (12%) while more than one-in-three are rated minimum-security (36%). The proportion of maximum designations since 1996/97 more than doubled (6% to 12%), but there has been a slight decrease since 2004/05.
- 5% of new women offender admissions are initially rated as requiring maximum-security while less than two-thirds (60%) are initially rated as minimum-security. There has been a large decrease in women initially rated as maximum security over the past three years (from 11% to 5%).

Changing Criminal Associations:

- 15% of new men offender admissions have existing gang affiliations and has been steadily increasing since 1996/97 (11% to 15%). Of those in-custody, gang affiliation has increased to one-in-six since 1996/97 (12% to 17%).
- About one-tenth of new women offender admissions have gang affiliations and this has more than doubled since 1996/97 (5% to 12%).

Changing Mental Health:

- More than one-out-of-ten (13%) men offenders in federal custody have been identified at admission as presenting mental health problems and this proportion has almost doubled since 1996/97 (7% to 13%).
- 29% of women offenders in federal custody were identified at admission as presenting mental health problems and this proportion has also risen more than twofold since 1996/97 (13% to 29%).