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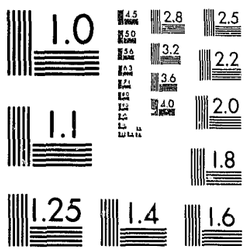

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United States Department of Justice
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SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

VICTORIA

Policy & Planning Unit. Occasional Paper No. 1.

INTERSTATE COMPARISONS OF PRISON ESCAPE AND OFFENCE RATES, AND THE COMPARITIVE COSTS OF IMPRISONMENT.

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Melbourne
April 1977.

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ACQUISITIONS

Part I Prison escapes and offences

This paper, prepared by the Victorian Social Welfare Department presents interstate comparisons of prison escape and offence rates, and the comparative costs of imprisonment.

1. Problems in calculating an escape rate

A number of problems were encountered in calculating a comparable escape rate for each of the Australian States.

a) Criteria for an escape

The term "escape" connotates the idea of a person scaling over or tunnelling through or otherwise forcing his way out of custody, and historically, this is correct. However, with the advent of a range of less rigorous custodial prison regimes, and the introduction of work release, weekend imprisonment and community service orders, the term "escape" is now generally applied to any convicted person who is illegally at large whether this was achieved by force, guile or abuse of trust.

However, not all offenders illegally at large are regarded as prison escapees. Among those groups generally not regarded as prison escapees although illegally at large are juvenile offenders, the criminally insane and offenders who escape from police custody. Whether or not an escape is classified as a prison escape is determined by which department is responsible for the custody of the individual, and this is by no means uniform between the States.

Not only is there a lack of uniformity between the States as to what is regarded as a prison escape but not all types of escapes can be regarded as comparable. There are obvious differences between an "escape" from a maximum security prison, from an open prison, and failing to report for weekend detention or a community service order.

Currently, no uniform distinction is made between these various types of "escaping" in the Australian States. In order to make valid interstate comparisons, a uniform system of classifying escapes must be developed and adopted.

An example of the current ambiguous position is that two States could have an "escape" rate of 5%. However, this does not necessarily mean that the States are experiencing the same problem. The escapes in one State may be predominantly from open institutions (which says more about classification than security), while the escapes in the other State may be predominantly from maximum security prisons (identifying the problem of security rather than classification).

In order to accurately identify the problems and make valid inter-state and longitudinal comparisons, a three category system of classifying "escapes" into -

- forced escapes
- absconding
- failure to report or return

must be developed and adopted.

b) Comparative base figure

An annual total of five escapes from Tasmanian prisons is obviously not the same as an annual total of five escapes from New South Wales prisons, because of the greater number of prisoners involved in New South Wales. At present, the base figure most generally used for determining prison escape rates is the daily average prison population. For example, five escapes from a daily average prison population of 100 prisoners is shown as an escape rate of 5%.

An escape rate calculated in this manner is understood by those working in the field, but is often misinterpreted by others, particularly the press, who assume that a 5% escape rate based on the daily average prison population means that 5% of the prisoners have escaped.

This of course is not so, as the following two examples show :

	Prison I	Prison II
daily average prison population	100	100
prisoners handled	100 long term prisoners	400 prisoner for 3 months each
number of escapes	5	5
escape rate based on daily average prison population	5%	5%
escape rate based on prisoners handled (i.e. proportion of prisoners who escaped)	5%	1.25%

The ambiguity of using the daily average prison population to produce a percentage escape rate is shown by the example of Thursday Island prison in the Queensland Annual Report, 1976.

Thursday Island had a daily average prison population of three, and during the year had six escapes. That is an escape rate of 200% when expressed as a percentage and would seem to imply that twice as many prisoners escaped as were in the prison during the year. The Thursday Island escape rate would be better expressed as 200 escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment.

The escape rate based on the number of prisoners handled is a more accurate and less ambiguous figure because it relates the actual number of escapes to the number of potential escapees.

However, the number of prisoners handled is not readily available, and it should not be confused with the number of prisoners received which is readily available. The figure for prisoners received is considerably larger than the figure for prisoners handled because the same prisoner is counted each time he changes status within the prison system. He is counted once when he is remanded in custody, and counted again when convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Further, if he goes to a high security psychiatric hospital, he is counted again at each transfer, although he remains the same potential escape risk.

New South Wales is the only State which bases its prison escape rate on the number of prisoners handled, but as this figure is not available for other States, in this study the escape rate has been based on the daily average prison population. This rate, however, is better expressed as "the number of escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment" than as a "percentage of escapes per daily average prison population", as the Thursday Island example shows.

2. Victorian trends in prison escapes and offences over the decade 1967 to 1976.

Table 1 shows the annual daily average prison population; the proportion of prisoners in maximum, medium and minimum security prisons; the number of offences committed in prison; the number of escapes; the prison offence rate and the escape rate per 100 man-years of imprisonment for Victoria from 1966/67 to 1975/76.

The daily average prison population reached a peak of 2,389 in 1970/71 and has since declined quite rapidly to 1,651 prisoners in 1974/75 before levelling out. (See Table 1). This drop in daily average prison population between 1970/71 to 1975/76 represents a 33% reduction over the five year period.(1)

The proportion of prisoners held in Victorian prisons of different security ratings has not changed markedly over the decade considered. About two out of every three prisoners are held in maximum security, one in four are held in medium security, and the smallest proportion, about one in six are held in minimum security prisons. In the last two years there has been a slight decline in the proportion of prisoners held in minimum security prisons.

The rate of prison offences has fluctuated considerably over the last decade. From thirty-nine offences per 100 man-years of imprisonment in 1966/67 it levelled off to just under fifty offences per 100 man-years imprisonment over the period 1966/67 to 1971/72. It then rose dramatically to eighty offences per 100 man-years during the prison riots of 1972/73 and remained relatively high for two years after the riots, before dropping to forty-seven offences per 100 man-years in 1975/76. A graph of the offence rate is shown in Figure 1.

The escape rate from Victorian prisons has more than trebled in the last decade from 0.9 to 3.3 escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment, (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Reasons given for this include the changing composition of the prison population as indicated by the results of the Prison Census described in Trends in Prison Population in Victoria. There has also been an increase in the proportion of young violent offenders serving sentences of five years or more, who consider they have little to lose by escaping. At the same time there has been a decline in the proportion of drunks and vagrants imprisoned for short terms who posed no great security threat.

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(1) Corresponding with, and largely as a result of this decline in prison population, there has been a pronounced change in the composition of the prisoners held. The 1970 Victorian Prison Census showed that 25% of convicted prisoners were held for "offences involving violence", and 41% for "breaking and larceny". By 1975, this had changed to 40% of convicted prisoners held for "offences involving violence" and 30% for "breaking and larceny". (See Trends in Prison Population in Victoria, 1976, Social Welfare Department, Victoria).

TABLE 1 VICTORIAN TRENDS IN PRISON OFFENCES AND ESCAPES - 1966/67 to 1975/76

Year			1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76
Daily Average Prison Population			2,111	2,233	2,315	2,283	2,389	2,366	2,107	1,870	1,651	1,604
Proportion of prisoners	IN	Maximum Security	66%	61%	59%	59%	60%	60%	58%	59%	62%	64%
		Medium Security	18%	23%	24%	24%	24%	24%	26%	25%	25%	25%
		Minimum Security	16%	16%	17%	17%	16%	16%	16%	16%	13%	11%
Prison Offences dealt with	BY	Prison Governor	787	906	1,120	1,014	1,074	1,011	1,404	978	1,108	702
		Visiting Magistrate	36	38	49	58	63	145	413	203	88	52
Prison offence rate per 100 man years of imprisonment.			39	42	50	47	48	49	86	63	72	47
Number of Prison Escapes			20	26	27	29	48	54	59	53	57	53
Escape rate per 100 man years of imprisonment.			0.9	1.[illegible]	[illegible].2	1.3	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.8	3.5	3.3

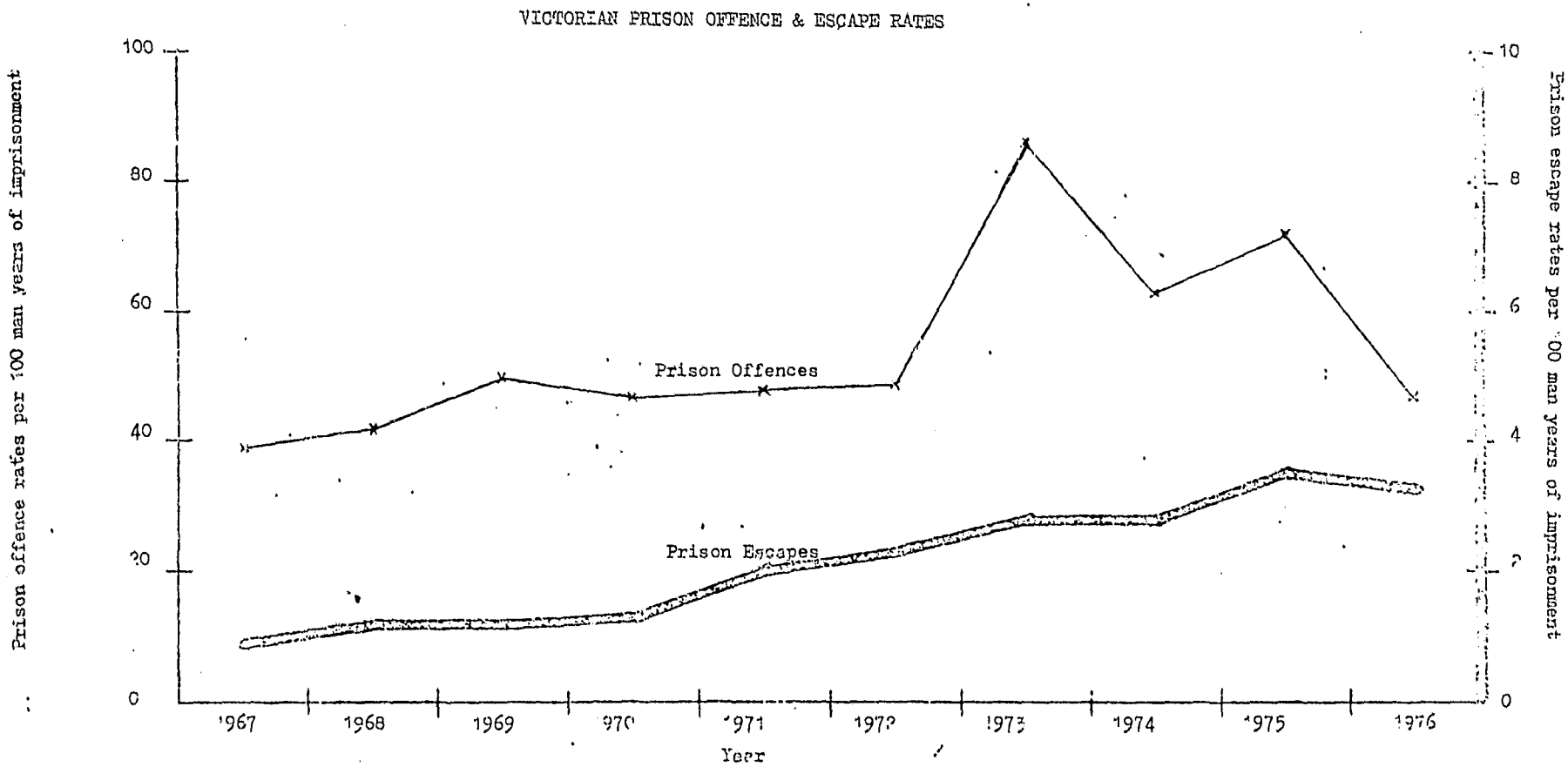


Figure 1 Victorian Prison Offence & Escape rates per 100 man years of imprisonment 1966/67-1975/76

3. Interstate comparisons

This comparison is based on the figures provided by the respective Prisons/Corrections Departments, and published in their annual reports. However, the problems outlined below must be kept in mind when comparing the interstate figures.

a) Differences in recording procedures

There are a number of State differences in recording procedures which throw considerable doubt on the accuracy and validity of interstate comparisons on prison escape and offence rates. These differences are :-

i) Daily average prison population

There is some ambiguity as to what constitutes a "prisoner". Some States include persons held in security psychiatric hospitals, police lock-ups, police gaols, persons serving weekend detention and community service orders as "prisoners" while others do not. The daily average prison population figures used in this study were those provided by the respective Prisons/Corrections Departments in each State. No attempt was made to correct this figure for differences in recording procedures and any discrepancy would tend to be minor.

ii) Escapes

Similarly there is no uniformity between the States as to what constitutes a prison escape. Some States include absconding or failing to attend weekend detention centres, failing to report for community service, escapes from police cells and lock-ups, from courts, and from security hospitals as well as attempted escapes, while others do not. The determination of whether or not an escape is classified as a prison escape is generally dependent on which department has responsibility for that person. All figures used were those published by the respective Prisons/Corrections Departments.

iii) Offences committed while in prison

Differing methods of counting prison offences are used between the States. Some States include minor breaches of prison regulations as offences, while others only count those offences which result in loss of remission.

b) Comparative escape rates

In 1974/75 the escape rates per 100 man-years of imprisonment ranged from 2.19 in South Australia to 11.78 in Western Australia, as shown in Table 2, and graphically in Figure 2. Victoria, at 3.45 had the second lowest escape rate or 2.13 lower than that for the All States figure.

Western Australia's escape rate of 11.78 per 100 man-years of imprisonment was almost twice as high as any other State. Reassuringly, only 3% of the escapes (that is 0.39 escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment) were from maximum security prisons. This compares quite favourably with the comparable Victorian figure of 0.61 escapes from maximum security prisons per 100 man-years of imprisonment, and a rate of 0.29 for New South Wales. Comparable figures for other States are not available.

A note on the escape rate from maximum security prisons :

This escape rate is based on the daily average prison population for all prisons within the State, rather than the daily average prison population for only maximum security prisons, which would be the more appropriate measure, because the proportion of prisoners in maximum security will affect this particular escape rate. However, only Victoria and Western Australia have these figures available. Using the proportion of offenders in maximum security as the base figure, Victoria had 0.98 escapes per 100 man-years of maximum security imprisonment compared to Western Australia's 1.05 escapes per 100 man-years of maximum security imprisonment. This shows the effect that inappropriate measures can have on results, where Victoria and Western Australia have now reversed their order in the rate of escapes from maximum security prisons. The discrepencies between the two figures for the maximum security escape rates for the two States relates to the fact that in 1974/75 62% of Victoria's prisoners were in maximum security prisons, compared to only 37% for Western Australia.

In 1975/76 the Victorian escape rate of 3.3 escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment was the lowest of all the States, and was slightly more than half that for All States which was 5.77 escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment. (See Table 3 and Figure 3.) Once again the very high rates of escapes from Western Australia prisons at 12.85 escapes per 100 man-years of imprisonment was more than double that of All States. This would seem to indicate any one of, or combination of, the following :

TABLE 2 INTERSTATE COMPARISON OF PRISON OFFENCES AND ESCAPES 1974/75

		N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ALL STATES
Daily average prison population		3,397	1,651	1,526	731	1,027	342	8,674
Proportion of Prisoners IN	Maximum Security		62%	78%		37%		
	Medium Security		25%	22%		63%		
	Minimum Security		13%					
Prison Offences		1,864	1,196	1,129	328	443		4,960 *
Prison Offence rate per 100 man years of imprisonment		54.87	72.44	73.98	44.87	43.14		57.18 *
Number of Prison Escapes		198	57	70X	16	121	22	484
Escape rate per 100 man years of imprisonment.		5.83	3.45	4.59X	2.19	11.78	6.43	5.58

* does not include Tasmania

X includes attempted escapes

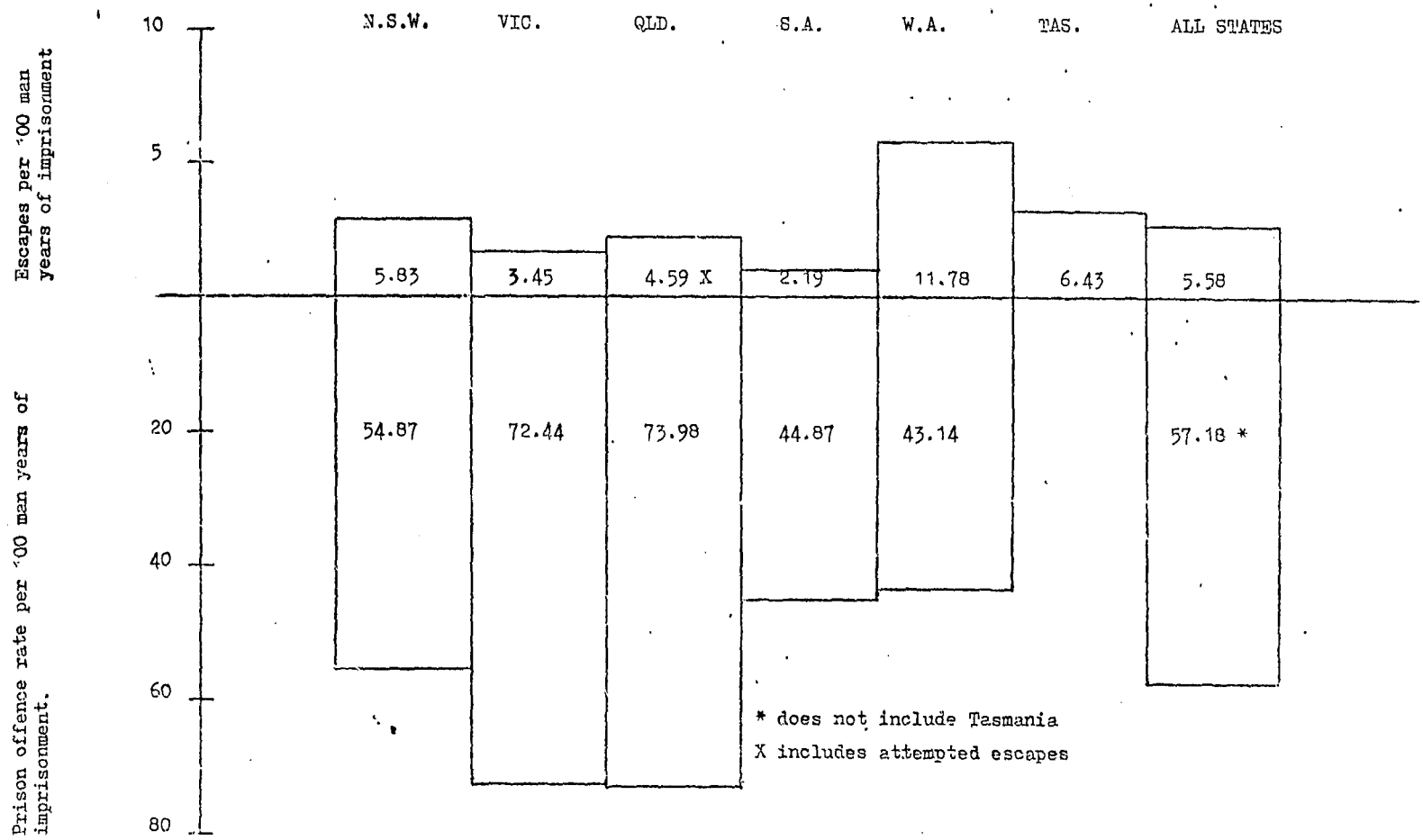


Figure 2 Interstate comparison of prison offences and escapes per 100 man years of imprisonemtn 1974/75

- poor security;
- inappropriate classification;
- a community tolerance of a high escape rate in preference to a strict custodial prison regime;
- a different criteria for "escapes"; or
- a wider area of responsibility for the Department of Corrections.

c) Comparative prison offence rates

In 1974/75 the Victorian prison offences rate at 72.44 offences per 100 man-years of imprisonment was the second highest of all the States, being only marginally surpassed by Queensland, and was half as much again as the All States (except Tasmania) figure of 57.18 offences per 100 man-years of imprisonment.

By 1975/76, however, the Victorian prison offence rate had dropped to 47.01 offences per 100 man-years of imprisonment - a drop of 35% from the previous year. The Victorian prison offence rate for 1975/76 was 12% below the All States (except Tasmania) figure of 53.24 offences per 100 man-years of imprisonment, while Queensland's rate had further increased to 86.53.

It is interesting to note in Figures 2 and 3 that Western Australia has the lowest prison offence rates, but the highest escape rates for both years.

TABLE 3 INTERSTATE COMPARISON OF PRISON OFFENCES AND ESCAPES 1975/76

		N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ALL STATES
Daily average prison population		3,252	1,604	1,433	713	996	309	8,307
Proportion of prisoners IN	Maximum Security	49%	64%	79%	32%	40%		
	Medium Security	51%	25%	21%	57%	60%		
	Minimum Security		11%		11%			
Prison Offences		1,507	754	1,240	366	391		4,258 *
Prison Offence rate per 100 man years of imprisonment		46.34	47.01	86.53	51.33	39.26		53.24 *
Number of prison escapes		185	53	74X	28	128	11	479
Escape rate per 100 man years of imprisonment.		5.69	3.3	5.16X	3.93	12.85	3.56	5.77

* does not include Tasmania

X includes attempted escapes

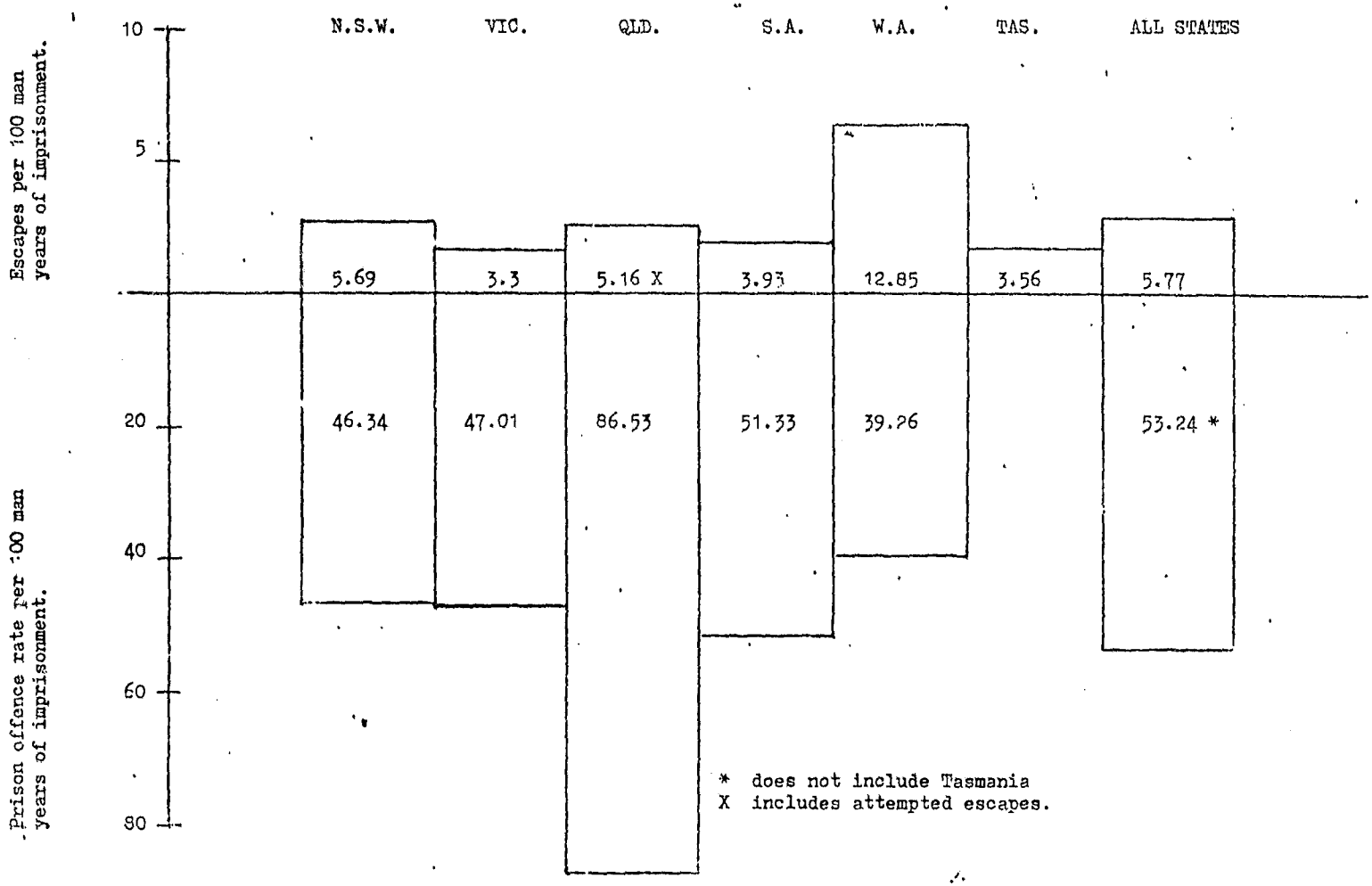


Figure 3 Interstate comparison of prison offences and escapes per 100 man years of imprisonment 1975/76

Part II Comparative costs of imprisonment

1. Expenditure and revenue

The cost of imprisonment for the financial year 1975/76 was compared between the Australian States. Two methods of comparison were used - the annual cost per prisoner and the annual cost per head of State population. Each State was then compared to the All States expenditure (calculated by the total expenditure in all the States divided by the number of prisoners in all the States). The All States expenditure was considered a more appropriate index than a State average as it gives proportionate weighting to the number of prisoners and expenditure involved in each State. That is, the New South Wales results have a greater proportional influence than the Tasmanian results because New South Wales has a greater number of prisoners, and a greater prison expenditure. If a State average had been used, each State would have had the same weighting irrespective of differences in the number of prisoners and expenditure involved.

A number of problems were encountered in ensuring that the items of expenditure were comparable. In order to achieve comparability, discussions were held with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and relevant departmental officers in each of the States.

The following items were included for each of the States :-

a) Recurring expenditure

Salaries and wages
Prisoners earnings
Maintenance and working expenses
Administration expenses
Research and statistics
Cost of prison industries
Training of prison officers.

b) Capital Expenditure

This included expenditure on buildings, site works, plant, equipment and machinery and is referred to in some States as "Works and Services", "Loan Funds" or "Capital Expenditure". As the capital expenditure can fluctuate greatly from year to year, a five year average of capital expenditure from 1971/72 to 1975/76 was used.

c) Revenue

This included production value of work done by prison labour, both for internal prison consumption (such as bread, meat and vegetables) and for external non-prison consumers. Other revenue such as payments

by the Federal Government for prisoners from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory is shown where applicable, but is not included in the value of production in prison industries.

2. Adjustments to expenditure

In order to obtain comparability between States adjustments were made to the various State expenditures in the following way :-

a) New South Wales

The estimated cost of probation and parole ($3,750,000) was subtracted from the Department of Corrections total recurring expenditure.

b) Victoria

In Victoria, the Prisons Division is one of seven divisions in the Social Welfare Department. An estimate was made of the proportionate work load of Prisons Division within the Department, (based on the proportion of salaries and general expenses - 37%) and adjustments were made by adding on this proportion of the cost of Central Administration, Research and Statistics, and Training to the expenditure of Prisons Division (a total addition of $797,000).

c) Queensland

In Queensland, the cost of the security Mental Hospital is borne by Prisons. This cost (estimated at $980,000) was subtracted from the prisons expenditure. The cost of operating the prison industries ($950,000) was added to the prisons expenditure.

d) South Australia

In South Australia, as in New South Wales the cost of probation and parole is borne by the Department of Correctional Services. The estimated cost of South Australia's probation and parole ($565,000) was subtracted from the Correctional Services recurring expenditure.

e) Western Australia

No adjustments were required for the expenditure of the Western Australia Department of Corrections.

f) Tasmania

The cost of operating the Tasmanian prison industries ($516,000) was added to the recurring prisons expenditure.

TABLE 4

RECURRING EXPENDITURE - PRISONS - 1975/76

		N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ALL STATES
Prisons Expenditure		$24,952,300	$11,624,100	$10,878,800	$5,935,400	$10,295,000	$2,641,800	$66,325,400
Daily Average prison population		3,252	1,604	1,433	713	996	309	8,307
Annual expenditure per prisoner	Recurring expenditure	$7,673	$7,246	$7,592	$8,325	$10,336	$8,550	$7,984
	$ ± All States	-$311	- $738	- $392	+ $341	+ $2,352	+ $566	-
	% ± All States	- 4%	- 9%	- 5%	+ 4%	+ 29%	+ 7%	-
Annual per capita expenditure on prisoner	Recurring expenditure	$5.10	$3.11	$5.19	$4.72	$8.89	$6.50	$4.90
	$ ± All States	+ $0.20	- $1.79	+ $0.29	- $0.18	+ $3.99	+ $1.60	-
	% ± All States	+ 4%	- 37%	+ 6%	- 4%	+ 81%	+ 33%	-

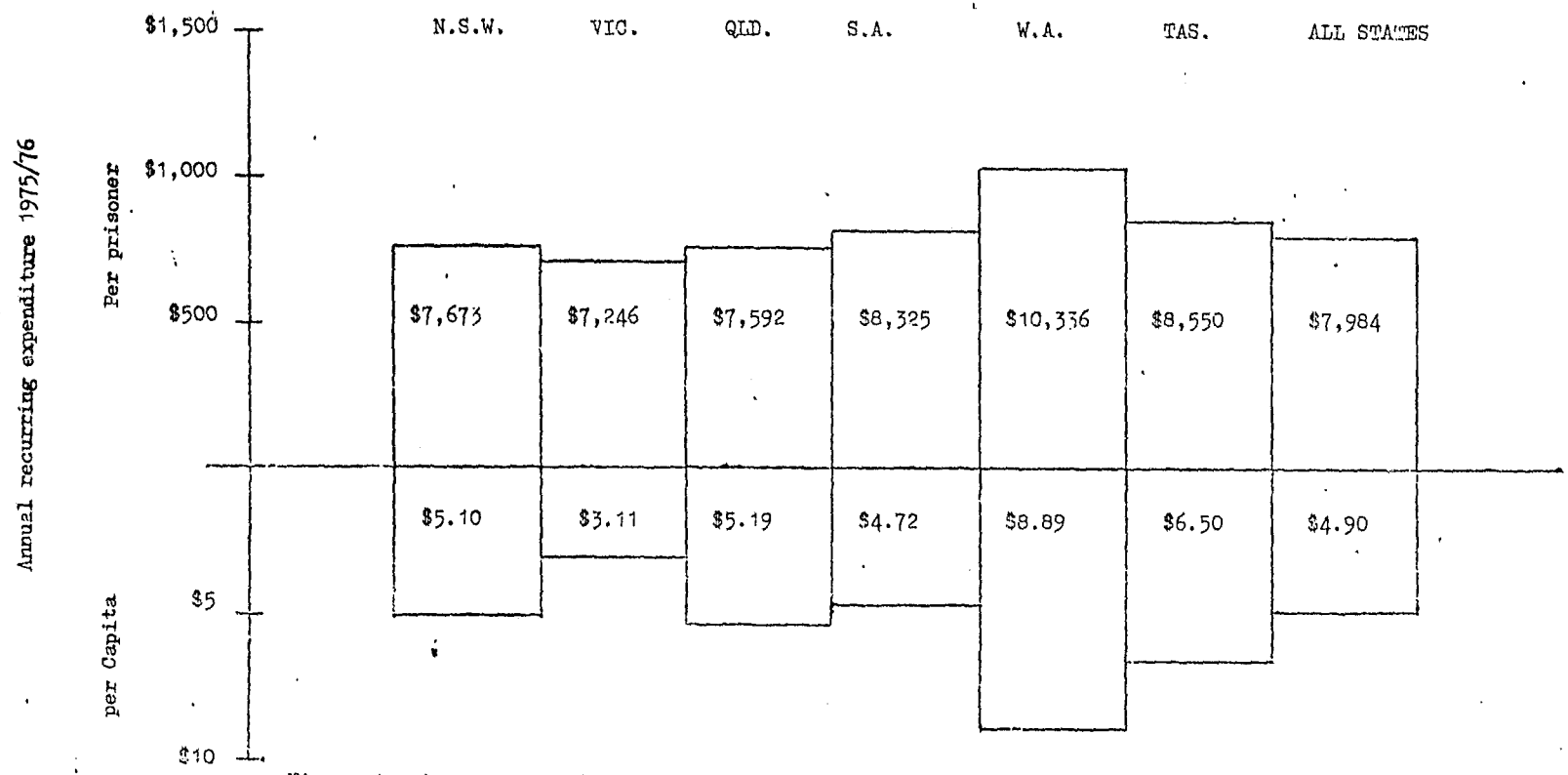


Figure 1. Annual recurring expenditure on prisons per prisoner and per capita for the Australian States, 1975/76

3. Recurring Expenditure 1975/76

Having made allowances for the above factors, the resulting comparable prisons expenditure for each State is shown in Table 4.

For comparative purposes, two analyses were conducted on the comparable State prisons expenditures. The first is based on the annual recurring expenditure per prisoner according to the daily average prison population for the year; and the second is based on the annual expenditure on prisons per head of State population. These results are also presented in Table 4, and shown proportionately in Figure 4.

In Table 4 it can be seen that the recurring expenditure per prisoner ranges from $7,246 to $10,336 per annum a range of $3,090 per prisoner per year.

Taking the All States value of $7,984 per prisoner per year as the base, the State recurring expenditure per prisoner falls in the following order :-

	Annual expenditure per prisoner	$ ± All States	% ± All States
Western Australia	$10,336	+ $2,352	+ 29%
Tasmania	$ 8,550	+ $ 556	+ 7%
S.A.	$ 8,325	+ $ 341	+ 4%
ALL STATES	$ 7,984	-	-
N.S.W.	$ 7,673	- $ 311	- 4%
QLD.	$ 7,592	- $ 392	- 5%
VIC.	$ 7,246	- $ 738	- 9%

The annual recurring expenditure per head of State population shows an even greater proportionate range from $3.11 to $8.89 - a range of $5.78 per capita per year.

The rank ordering and differences are as follows :-

	Annual expenditure per capita	$ ± All States	% ± All States
W.A.	$8.89	+ $3.99	+ 81%
TAS.	$6.50	+ $1.60	+ 33%
QLD.	$5.19	+ $0.29	+ 6%
N.S.W.	$5.10	+ $0.20	+ 4%

	Annual expenditure per capita	$ ± All States	% ± All States
ALL STATES	$4.90	-	-
S.A.	$4.72	- $0.18	- 4%
VIC.	$3.11	- $1.79	- 37%

Note that the rank ordering and proportional differences between the States expenditure varies between the per prisoner and per capita analysis. This is due to the differing imprisonment rates in each State. (See Australian Prison Trends, monthly circular produced by Australian Institute of Criminology).

4. Capital Expenditure

As the capital expenditure on prisons can fluctuate greatly from year to year, a five year average of capital expenditure from 1971/72 to 1975/76 was used. The amount spent on capital expenditure (also called "Works and Services" or "Loan Funds") was provided by the Prisons/Corrections Department in each State for the five year period, and is presented in Table 5. The average capital expenditure over the five year period is also shown for each State in Table 5, as are the results of the two analyses relating the average capital expenditure to the prison population and the State population. It can be seen that the average capital expenditure per prisoner ranges from $366 to $1,849 - a range of $1,483 per prisoner per year. The proportional differences are shown in Figure 5.

The high capital expenditure for Queensland in relation to the other States is due to a large rebuilding programme which has been running for some years.

Taking the All States capital expenditure of $799 per prisoner per year as the base, the State capital expenditures per prisoner fall in the following order :-

	Annual expenditure per prisoner	$ ± All States	% ± All States
QLD.	$1,849	+ $1,050	+ 131%
S.A.	$ 864	+ $ 65	+ 8%
ALL STATES	$ 799	-	-
N.S.W.	$ 637	- $ 162	- 20%
TAS.	$ 587	- $ 212	- 27%
VIC.	$ 469	- $ 330	- 41%
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

TABLE 5

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON PRISONS

			N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ALL STATES
Financial Year		71/72	$ 1,494,100	$ 371,600	$ 1,835,300	$ 680,000	$ 188,500	$ 197,500	$ 4,767,000
		72/73	1,997,200	775,500	2,780,900	262,000	551,000	112,600	6,479,200
		73/74	1,456,000	553,900	2,886,900	700,000	517,000	256,100	6,369,900
		74/75	2,378,600	1,153,700	2,828,900	777,000	264,000	222,000	7,624,200
		75/76	3,034,100	909,300	2,913,900	662,000	302,000	119,400	7,940,700
		Total	$10,360,000	$ 3,764,000	$13,245,900	$ 3,081,000	$ 1,822,500	$ 907,600	$33,181,000
Average over 5 years			$ 2,072,000	$ 752,800	$ 2,649,180	$ 616,200	$ 364,500	$ 181,520	$ 6,636,200
Average annual Capital expenditure on prisons	Per Prisoner	Capital expenditure	$637	$469	$1,849	$864	$366	$587	$799
		$ ± All States	-$162	-$330	+$1,050	+$65	-$433	-$212	
		% ± All States	- 20%	- 41%	+ 131%	+ 8%	- 54%	- 27%	
	Per capita	Capital expenditure	$0.42	$0.20	$1,26	$0.49	$0.31	$0.45	$0.49
		$ ± All States	-$0.07	-$0.29	+$0.77	-	-$0.18	-$0.04	
		% ± All States	- 14%	- 59%	+157%	-	- 37%	- 8%	

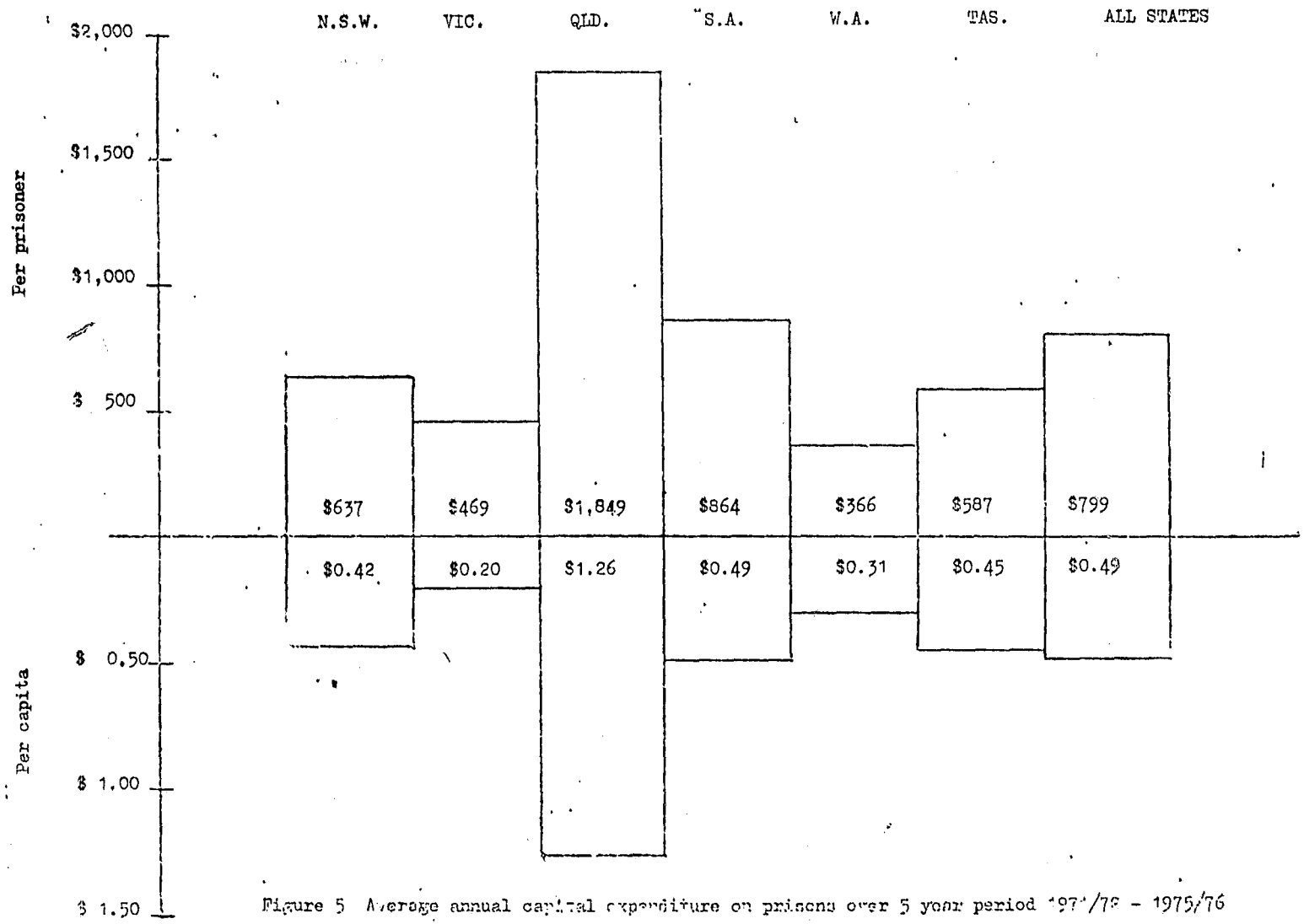


Figure 5 Average annual capital expenditure on prisons over 5 year period 1971/72 - 1975/76

The annual capital expenditure per head of State population shows an even greater proportionate range from $1.26 to $0.20, - a range of $1.06.

The rank ordering and differences based on per head of State population are as follows :-

State	Annual expenditure per Capita	$ ± All States	% ± All States
QLD.	$1.26	+ $0.77	+ 157%
S.A.	$0.49	-	-
ALL STATES	$0.49	-	-
TAS.	$0.45	- $0.04	- 8%
N.S.W.	$0.42	- $0.07	- 14%
W.A.	$0.31	- $0.18	- 37%
VIC.	$0.20	- $0.29	- 59%

Note again the change in rank ordering between the two types of analyses.

5. Total expenditure

The total expenditure on prisons for each State is calculated by taking the sum of the recurring expenditure for 1975/76 and the average capital expenditure for the five year period 1971/72 - 1975/76 (see Table 6).

The table shows that the total expenditure per prisoner ranges from $7,715 to $10,702 per annum - a range of $2,987 per prisoner per year. These results are presented proportionately in Figure 6.

Using the All States value of $8,783 per prisoner per year as the base, the State total expenditures fall into the following order :-

State	Total expenditure per prisoner	$ ± All States	% ± All States
W.A.	$10,702	+ $1,919	+ 22%
QLD	$ 9,440	+ $ 657	+ 7%
S.A.	$ 9,189	+ $ 406	+ 5%
TAS.	$ 9,137	+ $ 354	+ 4%

TABLE 6

TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON PRISONS (RECURRING EXPENDITURE PLUS AVERAGE OF 5 YEARS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE)

		N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	ALL STATES
Total expenditure 1975/76		$27,024,300	$12,374,900	$13,527,980	$6,551,600	$10,659,500	$2,823,320	$72,961,600
Total expenditure per prisoner	Total expenditure	$8,310	$7,715	$9,440	$9,189	$10,702	$9,137	$8,783
	$ ± All States	- $473	- $1,068	+ $657	+ $406	+ $1,919	+ $354	-
	% ± All States	- 5%	- 12%	+ 7%	+ 5%	+ 22%	+ 4%	-
Total expenditure per capita	Total expenditure	$5.52	$3.31	$6.45	$5.21	$9.20	$6.95	$5.38
	$ ± All States	+$0.14	-$2.07	+$1.07	-$0.17	+$3.82	+$1.57	-
	% ± All States	+ 3%	- 38%	+ 20%	- 3%	+71%	+ 29%	-

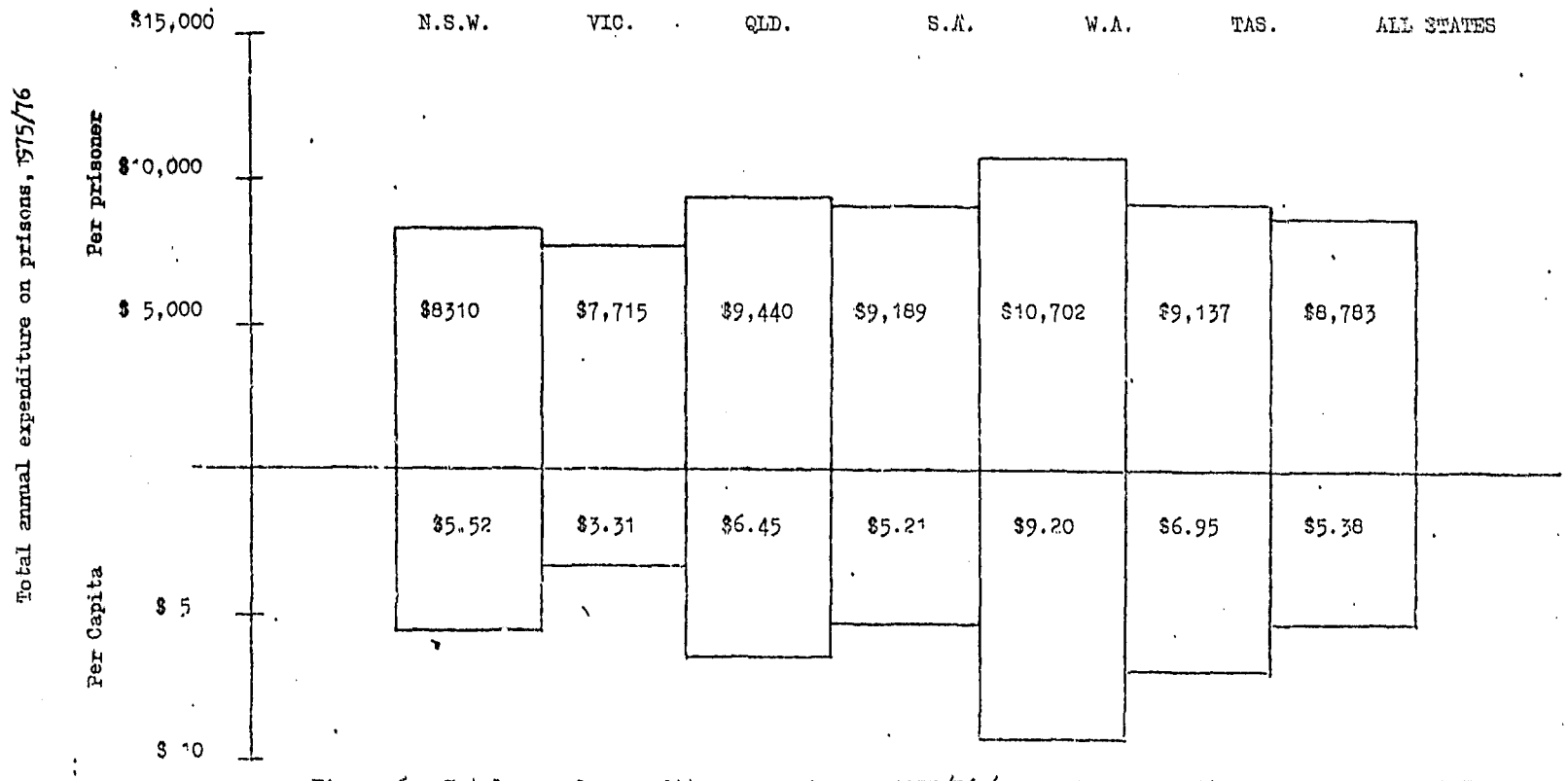


Figure 6 Total annual expenditure on prisons, 1975/76 (recurring expenditure plus average of 5 years capital expenditure) per prisoner and per capita for the Australian States.

State	Total expenditure per prisoner	$ ± All States	% ± All States
ALL STATES	$ 8,783	-	-
N.S.W.	$ 8,310	- $ 473	- 5%
VIC.	$ 7,715	- $1,068	- 12%

The total expenditure per head of State population shows an even greater proportionate range from $3.31 to $9.20 - a range of $5.89 per capita per year. The rank ordering and differences based on per head of State population are as follows :-

State	Total expenditure per capita	$ ± All States	% ± All States
W.A.	$9.20	+ $3.82	+ 71%
TAS.	$6.95	+ $1.57	+ 29%
QLD.	$6.45	+ $1.07	+ 20%
N.S.W.	$5.52	+ $0.14	+ 3%
ALL STATES	$5.38	-	-
S.A.	$5.21	- $0.17	- 3%
VIC.	$3.31	- $2.07	- 38%

Again note the change in rank ordering of the States between the two types of analyses.

6. Overall effect

Although the monetary amounts shown in the tables relating the State expenditure to the All States expenditure are relatively small, it must be remembered that they are to be multiplied by the number of prisoners or the State population as the case may be. This shows how much each State was over or under spending in relation to the All States figure. This amount above or below the All States expenditure is shown below for recurring, capital and total expenditure per prisoner and per capita for each of the States.

		Per prisoner $ ± All States	Per Capita $ ± All States
N.S.W.	recurring	- $1.0 million	+ $1.0 million
	capital	- $0.5 million	- $0.3 million
	Total	- $1.5 million	+ $0.7 million

		Per prisoner $ ± All States	Per Capita $ ± All States
VIC.	recurring	- $1.2 million	- $6.6 million
	capital	- $0.5 million	- $1.1 million
	Total	- $1.7 million	- $7.7 million
QLD.	recurring	- $0.5 million	+ $0.6 million
	capital	+ $1.5 million	+ $1.6 million
	Total	+ $1.0 million	+ $2.2 million
S.A.	recurring	+ $0.2 million	- $0.2 million
	capital	+ $0.03 million	-
	Total	+ $0.3 million	- $0.2 million
W.A.	recurring	+ $2.3 million	+ $4.6 million
	capital	- $0.4 million	- $0.2 million
	Total	+ $1.9 million	+ $4.4 million
TAS.	recurring	+ $0.2 million	+ $0.6 million
	capital	- $0.07 million	- $0.02 million
	Total	+ $0.1 million	+ $0.6 million

7. Value of prison production

The value of prison production is not recorded uniformly in all States. Both South Australia and Western Australia only keep records of production for non-prison consumption, and some difficulty was experienced in obtaining the value of produce for internal consumption in Victoria.

Table 7 shows the total production value (not commercial value) of prison industries for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania; and the value of production of goods for external consumption for South Australia and Western Australia. No All States value can be given as comparable data are not available for each State.

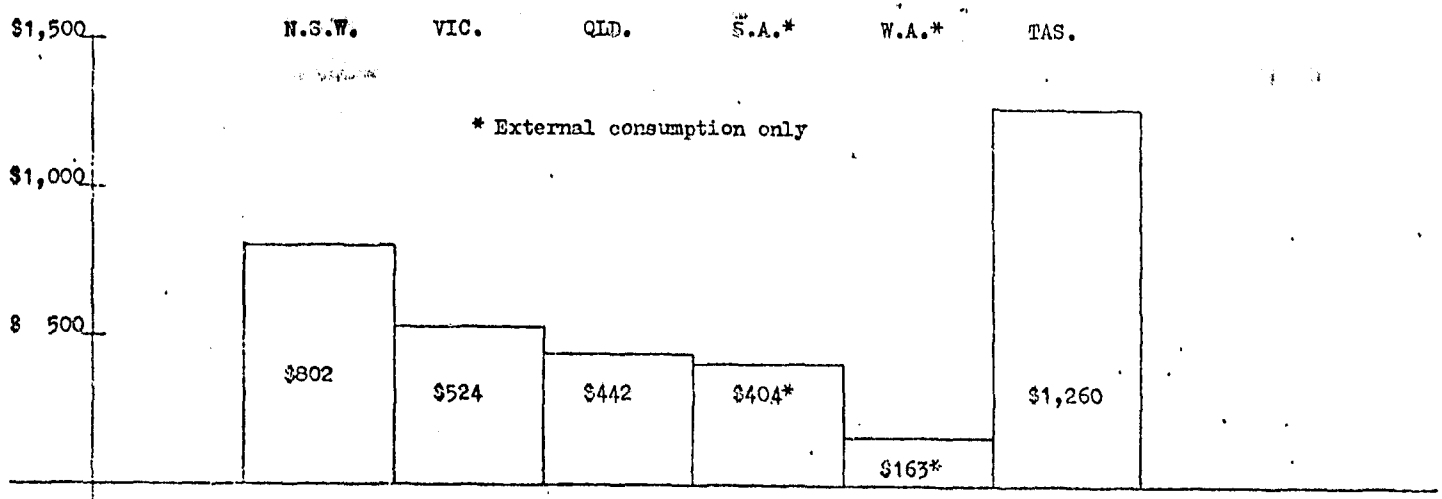
The annual value of production per prisoner for the four States which do have comparable figures ranges from $422 to $1,260 per prisoner per year. The percentage of recurring expenditure recovered through prison industries ranges from 6% to 15%. (See Table 7 and Figure 7.)

The rank ordering for prison production for the four States which have comparable figures is :-

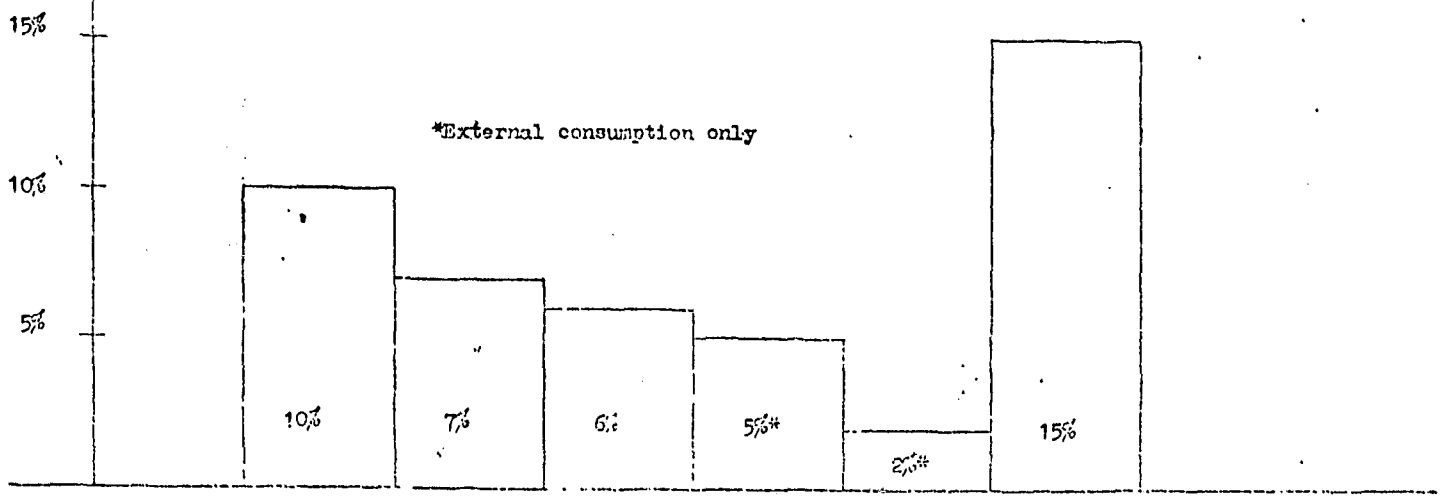
TABLE 7 PRISONS REVENUE AND PRODUCTION 1975/76

		N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.
Total value of production and other revenue		$3,942,000	$841,000	$632,700	$683,800		
Other Revenue mainly (Commonwealth Prisoners)		$1,334,200	Nil		$395,400		Nil
Production value of prison industries	External consumption		$419,600		$288,400	$162,000	
	Internal consumption		$421,400				
	Total	$2,607,800	$841,000	$632,700			$389,300
Annual value of production per prisoner		$802	$524	$442	$404*	$163*	$1,260
Percentage recurring expenditure recovered by prisoner production		10%	7 %	6 %	5 % *	2 % *	15%

* External consumption only



Annual value of production per prisoner



State	Prison production per prisoner per year	% recurring expenditure recouped by prison product
TAS.	$1,260	15%
N.S.W.	$ 802	10%
VIC.	$ 524	7%
QLD.	$ 442	6%

There is a strong positive correlation between the value of prison production per prisoner and the recurring expenditure per prisoner for the four comparable States - correlation is +0.92. However, comparable data on prison industries for Western Australia and South Australia would be required to substantiate this trend. In Western Australia, the high recurring expenditure per prisoner would tend to weaken the correlation unless it was balanced by an extremely high value of production from prison industries. This seems unlikely as the value of produce for external consumption at $163 per prisoner per year does not point towards a high level of productivity.

8. Closing Comments

This brief study on the comparative costs of imprisonment has highlighted two main areas of concern. The first is the difficulty of obtaining comparable data on the cost of imprisonment for each of the States, and the second is the large differences in the expenditure on prisons in each State - whether measured as the cost per prisoner or per capita.

The difficulty in obtaining comparable data is no doubt one of the main reasons for the paucity of published information in this area. A study by Anatole Kononewsky of the Australian Institute of Criminology entitled "The Costs of Criminal Justice: An Analysis" is one of the first Australian studies on the comparative costs between States of the Criminal Justice System. However, there was a time lag of three years between the time the data was collected and the publication of the study which would affect its value in a planning sense. Further, the data was obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics which uses information supplied by State Governments. As outlined earlier this information needs to be adjusted, in many cases, before it can be considered to be comparable.

Information on the comparative costs of imprisonment should be available to Directors of Prisons/Corrections on an annual basis before the date on which submissions are made for the respective State Budgets. The Australian Institute of Criminology is in the best position to prepare and distribute this information.

No interpretation can be made of the large differences in the cost of imprisonment in each State without taking into account the particular problems confronting each State's prison system.

Factors influencing costs might include: population, size of the State, imprisonment rate, length of prison sentences, the wealth of the State, the facilities and services provided, and a number of political factors.

It is not the purpose of this paper to advance speculative reasons as an explanation of the different costs of imprisonment in each State nor to make recommendations as to what prison expenditure should be - these can best be discussed at a Prison Directors conference or at a State level. The aim of this paper is simply to show what these differences are - basically that Western Australia spends the most on its prison system both per prisoner and per capita, that Victoria spends the least, and that on the data available, Tasmania has the most efficient prison industries.

END