



Queensland Government
Department of **Corrective Services**

Learning & Development Strategic Plan



2006

Preamble

The Business Model Review of the Department of Corrective Services in 2004 identified that:

Continuous workforce improvement through structured initial training, updating and improving skills and the development of leadership capacity should be a priority for a dynamic organisation (BMR 11.50).

In pursuit of this culture of continuous workforce improvement, the report went on to recommend the establishment of a Departmental Learning and Development Board, chaired by the Director-General. The principal task of the proposed Board would be to provide leadership for a more comprehensive and targeted training and development function. It was envisaged in the Business Model Review Report that this would be achieved specifically through the Board's oversight of the development of a five year training and development strategic plan that linked to the Department's workforce planning strategy.

This strategic plan is the fruit of the deliberations of the Learning and Development Board and provides a clear vision of an organisational learning environment that will provide the Department with the workforce capability to achieve its purpose of "community safety and crime prevention through an integrated correctional services system delivering humane containment, supervision and interventions for offenders".

Purpose

It is essential that the Department's Learning and Development Strategic Plan links closely with its overall Strategic Plan. For that reason, the purpose of the Learning and Development Strategic Plan is guided by the need to bring about the *Vision* that is encapsulated in the Departmental Strategic Plan. Therefore, the *Purpose* of the Learning and Development Strategic Plan is:

To develop the Department's workforce capability in order to enable its people to become leaders in corrections and partners in criminal and social justice by:

- *providing structured initial training;*
- *updating and improving skills on a structured and continuous basis;*
- and*
- *developing leadership capacity.*

Vision

In aligning with the Department's vision, the Learning and Development Plan reflects:

A public sector human services organisation with a demonstrable commitment to continuous workforce capability improvement.

Values

The *Values* that drive the Learning and Development Strategic Plan are the same *Values* that underpin the Department's Corporate Strategic Plan.

INTEGRITY

We seek to act ethically, honestly, impartially and in the best interest of the community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are prepared to be held publicly accountable for our actions.

WORKING TOGETHER

We value working in collaboration with our colleagues, stakeholders and the community.

LEARNING

We value creativity, innovation, flexibility and continual improvement in the pursuit of excellence.

DIVERSITY

We treat all people with respect and value differences.

Issues

If a strategic plan is going to be a useful and relevant tool to guide an organisation's activity, it must respond to the various issues that influence the organisation's business environment. The following issues are some of the more critical ones that impact on the operations of the Department and need to be addressed through the learning and development strategic planning process.

Development of leadership capability

A number of factors, external to the specialised nature of the industry, have led to the Department experiencing great difficulty in attracting suitable candidates for senior operational positions from outside sources. Strong, competent operational leadership is a critical element in any success the Department might achieve in relation to delivering on its overall strategic purpose and achieving its vision. In the short to medium term, this means that a priority must be given in the learning and development planning process to the growth of leaders from within the workforce of the Department.

The external image of the Department

The Department is often perceived from the outside as an organisation that engages in an undesirable activity, in an undesirable environment, with an undesirable client group. This generally unfavourable perception of the Department causes particular difficulties in attracting large pools of high calibre applicants for the challenging work of a correctional officer in a correctional centre. The learning and development planning process needs to develop strategies for the positive portrayal of the correctional officer in a modern correctional institution as a highly skilled individual, in terms of both interpersonal and technical skills.

Community lack of awareness of the full range of correctional services

Along with stereotypical understanding of the correctional officer as a "turn key", the community at large is generally unaware of the many facets of the activities undertaken by the Department to ensure community safety and crime prevention. Once again, this causes difficulty in attracting large pools of high calibre applicants for the plethora of occupations that make up the Department. The learning and development planning process needs to address the rebranding and marketing of the Department as a public sector human services organisation to ensure that a more balanced and attractive picture of the many challenging and fulfilling activities that are undertaken within the numerous vocational occupations that exist within the Department are portrayed, to the community at large and to the employment market in particular, in a more positive light.

The highly competitive employment market

For a long period of time now, the unemployment rate in Queensland has hovered at the historically low figure of at or under 5% and it is not expected to rise to any great extent in the foreseeable future. This presents a problem for all employers in that individual workers have a greater range of choice of occupation and employer. This in turn can make for skill shortages for certain occupations within the Department. The Department's learning and development planning process

needs to address this reality in the way that positions within the Department are marketed and recruited and in the way that existing staff are encouraged to remain with the Department through the incentive of ongoing development.

Relative attractiveness of like agencies

In a related vein to some of the preceding issues, the Department often finds itself at an apparent disadvantage in the recruitment process because like agencies can appear to be relatively more attractive to the employment market because of their perceived enhanced status or because of an advantage in remuneration (eg. Qld Police Service, Qld Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, Department of Child Safety, Department of Communities). This relative attractiveness not only impacts on the Department's recruitment ability, but it also sees skilled officers recruited away to these other agencies. The learning and development planning process needs to identify ways for mutually advantageous arrangements to be developed between the Department and these other agencies.

Low levels of Indigenous recruitment

While the Department has enjoyed a greater degree of success than other agencies with regard to Indigenous recruitment, it has for many years attempted unsuccessfully to increase the proportion of Indigenous employees within its ranks. Because of this failure to significantly increase the numbers of Indigenous employees, the Department has missed out on the advantages that a more diverse workforce would bring, particularly in light of the over-representation of Indigenous offenders that are managed by the Department. The learning and development planning process needs to identify ways that the Department can increase the intake of Indigenous employees and provide suitable training opportunities to support them in their careers to encourage their retention.

Ongoing growth in prisoner numbers

Queensland has seen a 142.6% increase in prisoner numbers since July 1993 and it is expected that there will be a 90% growth over the next ten years. It will be imperative that the Department recruit, train and develop large numbers of officers to cater for this trend. Even if the expected rate of growth is reduced by diverting offenders into community based supervision, there will be the same imperative in the community area for recruitment, training and development. The learning and development planning process needs to take account of this need to be able to attract, recruit, then retain a rapidly growing workforce. It also needs to account for the need for training to facilitate movement from the custodial to the community environments.

Geographically dispersed workforce

More than 1300 of the Department's staff live outside the south east corner of the state. This presents a major challenge to the Department in the delivery of broad based staff training. It can also mean that staff working in regional areas require a broader range of skills than those in the metropolitan area. The learning and development planning process needs to take particular account of the geographic dispersion of the workforce and ensure that the full range of training and development options are developed using a range of delivery modalities.

Whole-of-government approach

The Department's overall Strategic Plan incorporates the notion of "partners in criminal and social justice" in its *Vision* and there is an expectation by the government that whole-of-government approaches will be adopted in the delivery of government services. Therefore, the Department's workforce is required to work collaboratively with other government (and non-government) agencies in meeting the challenge of delivering community safety and crime prevention. The learning and development planning process needs to account for the development of collaborative skills and the understanding of broader government policy settings in other related agencies.

Conceptual Basis

The conceptual basis for the Learning and Development Strategic Plan centres on the notion that the Department of Corrective Services is a public service organisation providing community focused human services. It does so through enhancing the community's safety by fulfilling the responsibilities of an organisation working within the Criminal Justice System.

While there are many different vocational occupations within the Department, in broad terms, they can be divided into three functional groups or a mixture of the three functional groups – administrative, operational, professional.

Regardless of the functional group, or mix of functional groups, within which an occupation falls, the individual can be seen to be operating behaviourally within one of four levels – *service delivery, coordination, management, executive*.

Besides these behavioural competencies, the Learning and Development Strategic Plan is also underpinned by the competencies contained in the National Correctional Services Training Package from Certificate II level up to Advanced Diploma level. These two underpinning bases provide the Learning and Development Strategic Plan with a very strong competency based platform for delivering its purpose and achieving its vision.

At the individual level, the Learning and Development Strategic Plan will be directed at providing all staff with the opportunity to progress along a path of individual development based on the assessment of skill gaps. This provision of personal development opportunity for the motivated is designed to encourage staff to remain with the Department rather than feeling the need to pursue career development goals elsewhere.

Key Result Areas

1. MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Goal 1: Establish DCS as an employer of first choice for individuals seeking work in a contemporary community focused human services organisation.

Strategies

- Generate a greater community awareness of the full range of activities of correctional services
- Rebadge the Department's services to make functions more obvious to the community
- Develop and undertake a media promotion campaign aimed at raising the employment market's awareness of opportunities
- Promote the people in the Department and their functions in media products

Goal 2: Develop collaborative partnerships.

Strategies

- Participate in career promotion activities
- Establish and maintain relationships with armed service exit guidance sections
- Establish articulation arrangements with universities
- Participate in curricula development with universities
- Participate in university-sponsored mentoring programs
- Promote existing relationships with related agencies (QPS/DES)
- Establish and maintain relationships with employment agencies

Goal 3: Ensure that DCS is recruiting the best and most professional people required to meet the challenges of a contemporary correctional system.

Strategies

- Review recruitment processes for all areas of the Department
- Develop multi media recruitment materials for use in information initiatives
- Establish specific recruitment e-portal

Goal 4: Ensure that DCS workforce profile reflects the diversity of the offender population.

Strategies

- Profile the diversity of the offender population taking account of regional differences to establish workforce profile benchmarks
- Establish links with representative community based Indigenous, ethnic and cultural organisations

2. ENTRY LEVEL TRAINING

Goal 1: Ensure all new employees are equipped with the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to meet their responsibilities and challenges within the Qld Public Service.

Strategies

- Develop and implement DCS Induction Program for all new staff
- Develop platforms for state wide delivery of Induction Program
- Enhance learning practices by careful sequencing of theory, application and practice approaches
- Promote on the job coaching and mentoring

Goal 2: Provide industry standard training to enable custodial correctional officers, community correctional officers and professional stream officers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Strategies

- Review and enhance Entry Level Training Programs conducted within the department
- Develop and implement Entry Level Training Program for professional stream corrective services officers
- Enhance learning practices by careful sequencing of theory, application and practice approaches
- Promote on the job coaching and mentoring

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for administrative officers to develop recognised knowledge and skills relevant to public sector administrative functions.

Strategies

- Conduct campaigns to advertise Public Sector Package training available under EB agreement
- Move responsibility for support of Public Sector Package from administration area to professional development area

3. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Goal 1: To enable experienced custodial officers to further develop, and have acknowledged, skills and knowledge appropriate to their operational role within the correctional industry.

Strategies

- Support the delivery of Certificate IV in Correctional Practice (Custodial)

Goal 2: To enable professional staff to further develop, and have acknowledged at a post-graduate level, skills and knowledge appropriate to their operational role within the correctional industry.

Strategies

- Develop and implement vocational graduate certificate qualification for community correctional officers and professional stream corrective services officers
- Provide ongoing training in the delivery and facilitation of the full range of offending behaviour programs

4. MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Goal 1: To enable the Department to identify future managers and leaders for targeted developmental training.

Strategies

- Engage organisational development experts to develop a succession planning instrument and program to provide the Department with an objective process for identifying future managers and leaders

Goal 2: To develop a leadership framework for the Department which includes a clear definition of leadership and management and the necessary capabilities required to support a robust management structure.

Strategies

- Engage organisational development experts to assist with the design of a Departmental Leadership Framework
- Incorporate training for ongoing cultural improvement, particularly in regard to behaviour, as part of the Leadership Framework
- Liaise with other government agencies to gain added insight for the leadership Framework

Goal 3: To provide newly-appointed front line supervisory and base management staff and staff identified through succession planning as appropriate for the supervisory/management role with a developmental program.

Strategies

- Deliver Early Management Program to target group officers

Goal 4: To provide experienced supervisors and management staff and staff identified through succession planning as appropriate for higher supervisory/management role preparation with a developmental program.

Strategies

- Develop and implement Management Program for target group officers

Goal 5: To provide staff appointed to and those identified through succession planning as possible appointees to senior and executive managerial positions with a developmental program.

Strategies

- Develop Senior Management Program
- Develop Executive Leadership Program in cooperation with universities
- Implement Leadership Program for target group officers
- Negotiate articulation to post graduate university courses

5. RETENTION

Goal 1: To create an employment environment that encourages valued employees to remain with the Department.

Strategies

- Support “Honouring our heritage, acknowledging our achievements” project
- Review and enhance the exit interview process to harvest industry knowledge

Goal 2: To enable professional staff to maintain professional standing and/or registration.

Strategies

- Quantify requirements and identify organisations offering professional supervision options
- Incorporate cost effective brokerage assistance into L & D Program Framework
- Enable prioritised attendance at relevant professional development initiatives

Goal 3: To provide staff who have a special interest in an aspect of the delivery of correctional services with an opportunity to explore that interest through workplace research.

Strategies

- Continue and promote Advanced Diploma by research qualification
- Liaise with the Department’s Research Committee to develop a process for meaningful dissemination of research
- Promote linkages with other bodies such as universities and related agencies

Goal 4: To provide identified staff with a supportive program to enhance their abilities to enable progression within the Department.

Strategies

- Develop and fund a career development program
- Facilitate intra-departmental movements and project opportunities for participants in career development program
- Publicise the Educational Development Program (SARAS) to all work areas

Goal 5: To provide front line supervisors and management staff with the skills and knowledge that can be used effectively to support workplace learning and development of staff for whom they bear responsibility.

Strategies

- Deliver appropriate units of Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAA)
- Source appropriate coaching, mentoring and performance management training opportunities

Goal 6: To ensure the maintenance of a pool of accredited workplace assessors and trainers.

Strategies

- Deliver appropriate units of Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAA)
- Enhance assessor support systems
- Investigate reward and recognition systems to acknowledge assessors' extra contribution to the Department's operations
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for Departmental trainers
- Maintain Australian Quality Training Framework compliance



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