

Developing an  
Objective  
Classification  
System in NSW  
Department of  
Juvenile Justice

# Why an Objective Classification System?

- Proliferation of US and Canadian research in the area of objective classification in the correctional field in the 1980's and 1990's.
- Growing criticism of subjective classification systems in the 1980's (Forcier 1988) due to classification-related mistakes or failures resulting in damage awards.
- Courts overseas have ruled in favour of inmates that the subjective systems were based on unfounded assumptions
- Subjective systems over-classified
- Empirical research indicates that statistical predictions out-perform intuitive or clinical predictions (Gottfredson, 1987).
- Research studies indicate a number of positive outcomes associated with objective classification:
  - ✓ ● data that are useful in planning
  - ✓ ● improved security and control of detainees by identifying and providing surveillance for the appropriate group

- ✓ assistance in more efficient use of staff based on an understanding of detainees' differential programming and security needs
- ✓ information for use in monitoring and evaluating program goals
  - ✓ provision for a consistent and equitable decision making process
  - ✓ assistance in reducing numbers in custody by identifying those detainees who may be eligible for various release programs
- ✓ No matter the size and complexity of a detention facility, its primary responsibility is to safely and securely detain all individuals in its custody.
- ✓ Objective classification is an essential management tool for performing this function

- **Department Executive Committee Approval**
- **Timeliness, case management, programs and risk assessment**
- **Formation of Classification Steering Committee**
- **Establishment of a working Subcommittee**
- **Engaging of consultants recognised as world foremost authorities on objective classification**
- **Initial Classification Instrument**
- **Reclassification Instrument**
- **Offence Severity Scale**
- **Disciplinary Scale**
- **Case Study Trial (40 Detainees)**
- **Case Study Trial (150 Detainees)**
- **Communication Process**

Benefits for DJJ

- Provision of a clear and transparent system
- Emphasis on safety and community protection
- Reduction in violence
  - ✓ Detainee on Detainee
  - ✓ Detainee on Staff
- Provides a safer working environment for DJJ and DET staff
- Decreases inappropriate maximum security placements
- Reduces inappropriate transfers
- Integrates classification with risk assessment

Benefits for DJJ

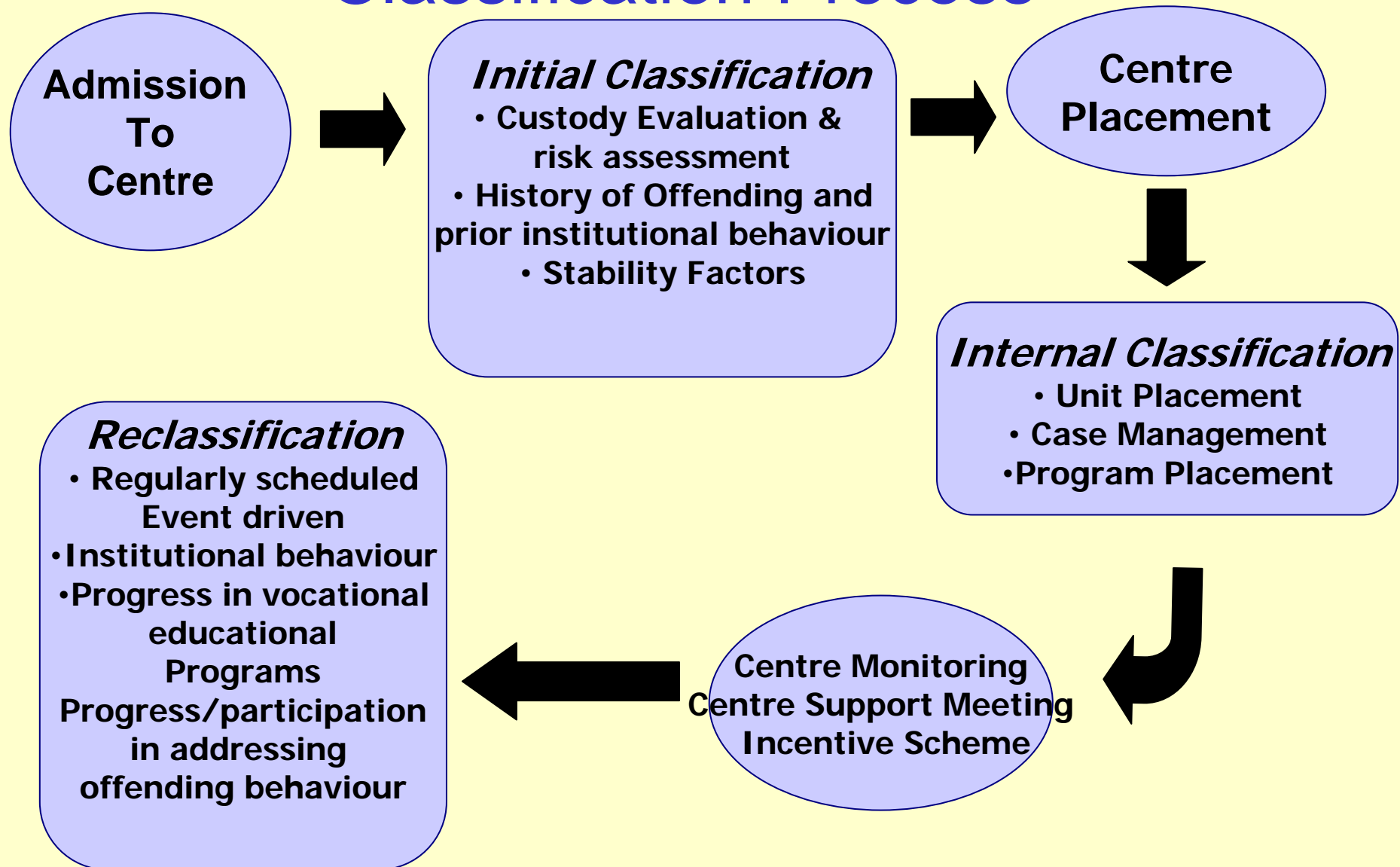
- Provides detainee motivation for change and positive institutional behaviour by linking classification to programs and case management
- Scientific, transparent system which will stand up to challenges by civil libertarians and courts.



Placements

- **Kariong JJC (over 16) will accommodate only A1 and Reiby JJC (under 16) will hold all categories.**
- **All other centres will (Keelong JJC will not accommodate A2) accommodate the remaining classification categories**
- **Keelong JJC will accommodate B category detainees**
- **Yasmar JJC will accommodate ALL categories and ages of detainees.**

# Overview of the proposed Classification Process



**Approval for a Dedicated staffing structure that provides:**

- **System integrity**
- **Independent, neutral and standardised decision making**
- **No room for informal or subjective decisions**
- **No competing priorities**
- **Central monitoring**
- **Consistency**
- **6 equivalent full-time positions for 9 centres**

- **Instruments**

- **February/March 2004**

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# Placements

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