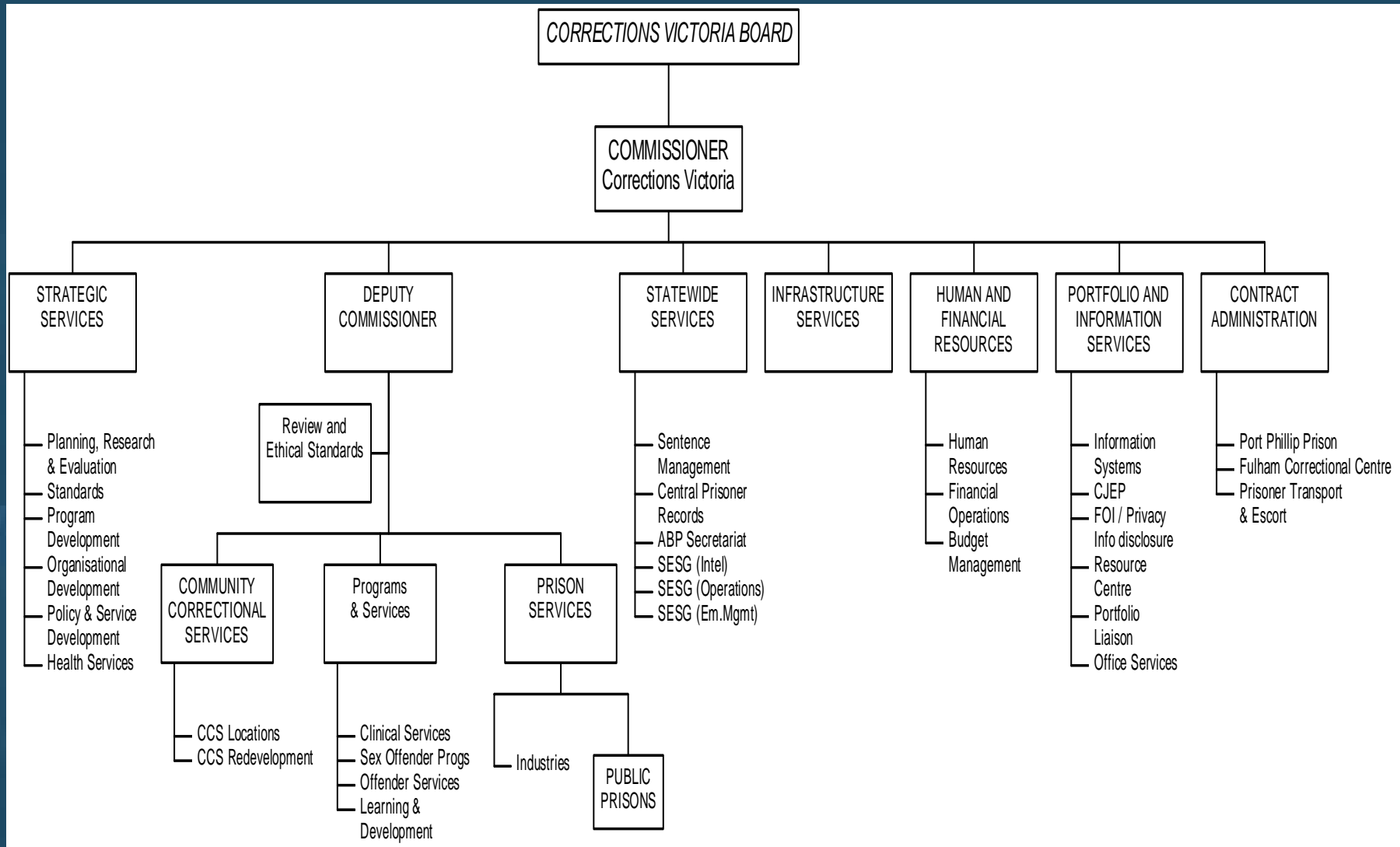


Corrections Victoria - Case Study: ‘Policy and Procedural Changes for Sentence Management

**Criminal Justice Modelling Conference -
Brisbane 11-12 Nov 2003**

Corrections Victoria Structure



Why move towards a new system?

- Currently operating with a policy based and ‘subjective/discretionary’ system of classification
- **Practices not empirically based**
- Concerns that we may be overly risk adverse in classification and the impact resulting cost/social implications.
- **Improvements to transparency & accountability**

What we wanted to achieve

- Phase 1 (Jan 02 - Sept 02)
 - provide advice to the Commissioner on the options available for developing an actuarial tool for Victoria
 - examine what the systems in place in other jurisdictions and their relevance to Victoria
- Phase 2 (Nov 02 - current)
 - Develop a pilot instruments for testing
 - Trial and revise the pilot instruments according to relevant stakeholder feedback.
 - Develop, plan and implement activities to ensure reliability and validity of the instruments.
 - Recommendations to the Commissioner regarding the final instrument and the means by which it should be integrated into other assessments undertaken in the correctional system.

What we learnt from Phase 1

- 5/8 Australian adult correctional jurisdictions still operated with 'subjective' systems
- Comparatively, Victoria currently has 'excessive' rates of Maximum and Medium rated prisoners (25% & 54% respectively)
- **In accordance with best practice, females should have a separate classification system and we should also consider classification of the remand population.**
- 12 month minimum for a new system to be developed, tested, validated and implemented.

What we are experiencing during Phase 2

- Difficulties in managing the sample size (600/150)
- Developing 'trust' in the instrument - cultural issues
- **Over use of discretionary overrides and creation of new over-ride categories (ie. staff accounting for 'instincts')**
- Staff uncertainty over policy/genuine non discretionary overrides vs. long term practices not based in policy
- **Lack of distinction between security rating and facility placement decisions**
- High number of basic errors in tool administration

Challenges into the future

- Convincing stakeholders in a risk adverse environment
- Quality control system
 - correct administration
 - monitoring over-ride usage and unauthorised amendments to tools
- Making use of the data to inform future configuration needs
- Introducing new processes
 - impact on remand prisoner processing
 - override approvals by the General Manager