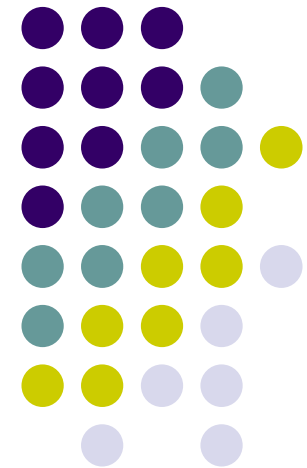


Post-release needs of Aboriginal women

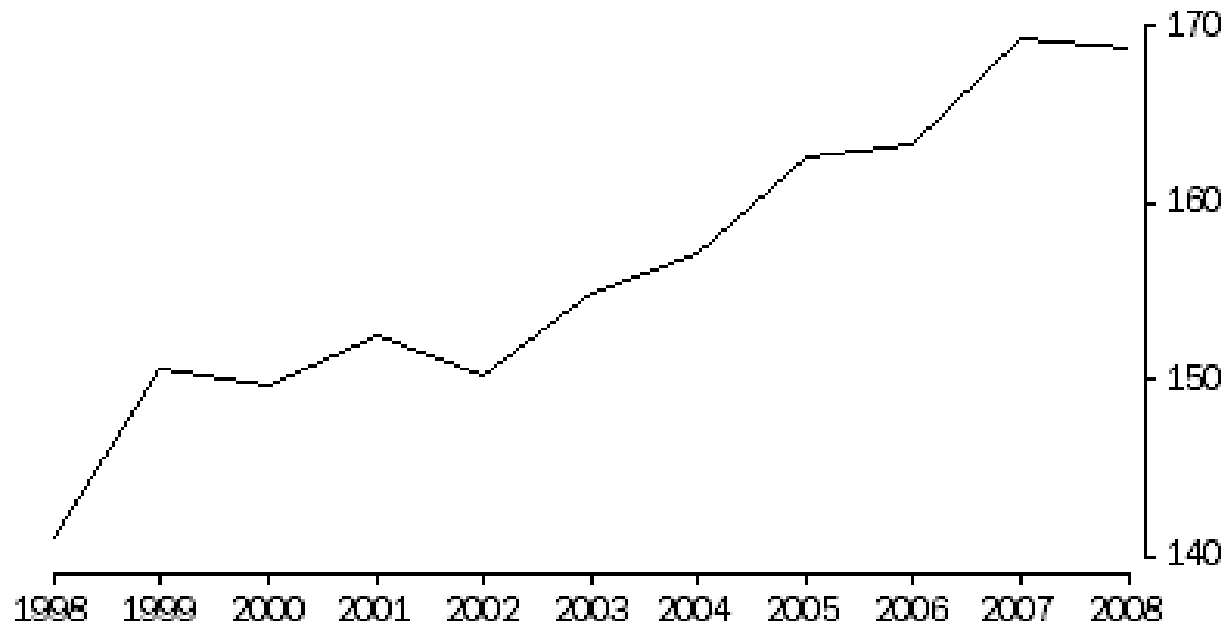
Eileen Baldry (UNSW)





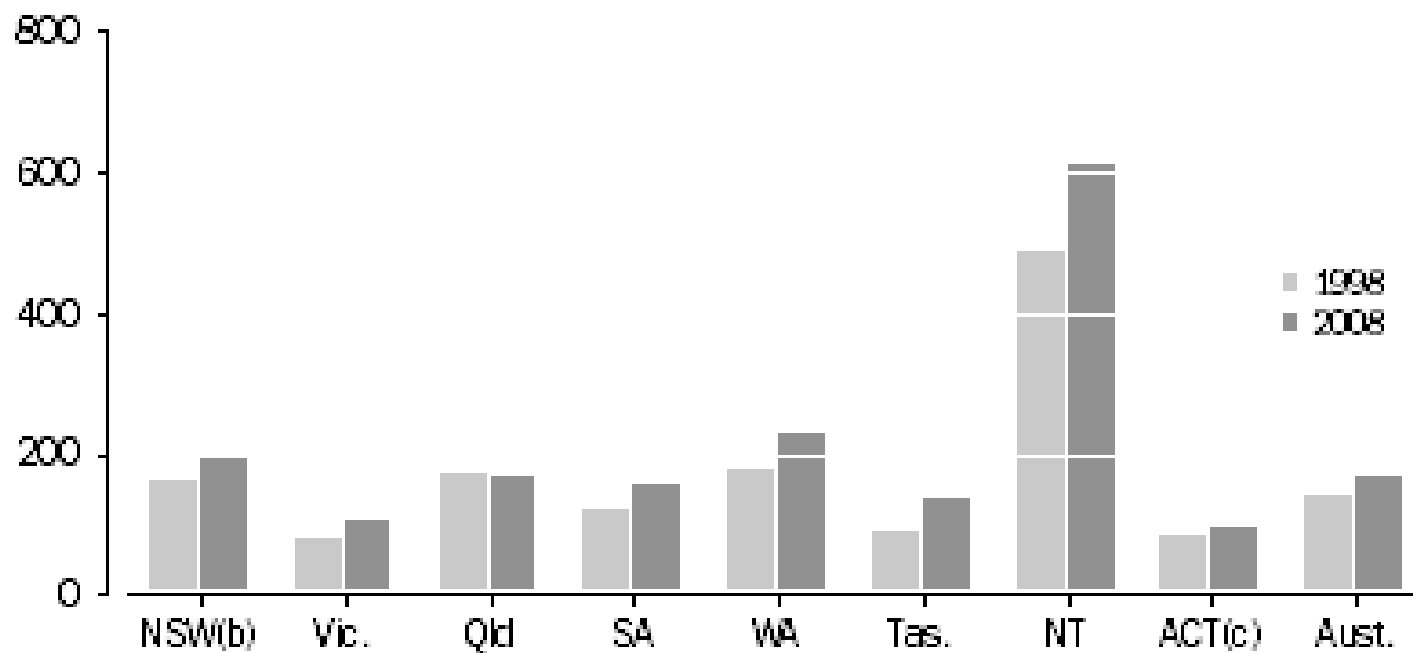
Background

Australian prisoner growth rate (ABS 2008)



(a) Rate per 100,000 adult population.

Change in imprisonment rates



(a) Rate per 100,000 adult population.

(b) Data for NSW exclude ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.

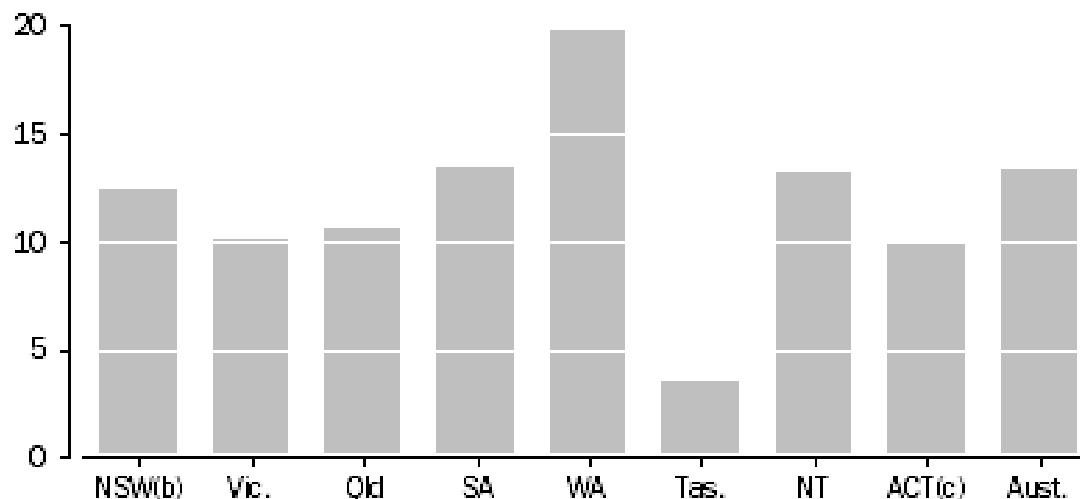
(c) Data for ACT include ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.



Indigenous prisoners

- 1998-2008 Indigenous prisoners from 16% prison population to 24%.
- The rate - 13 times more than non-Indigenous (age standardized rate).

**Ratio of
Indigenous to
Non-Indigenous
Age Standardised
Rates of
Imprisonment
(ABS 2008)**

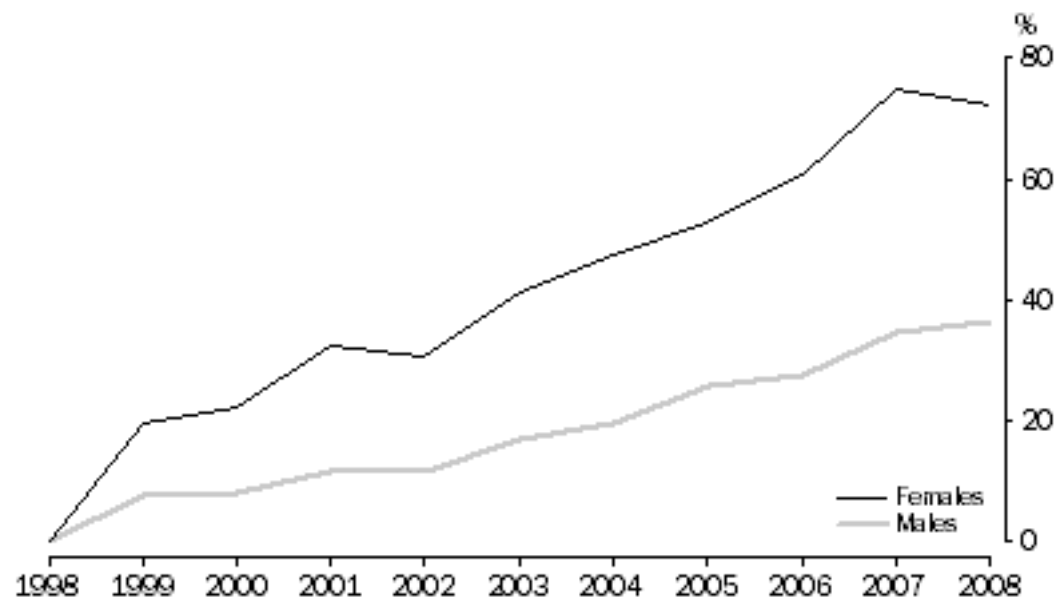


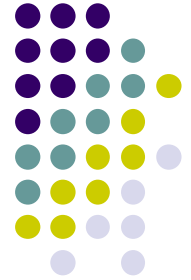
(a) Rate per 100,000 adult population.
(b) Data for NSW exclude ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.
(c) Data for ACT include ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.



Women

- 1998-2008 women prisoners increased by 72% compared with 37% for men
- Rate from 16 to 24 prisoners (per 100,000 adult women)





Women (cont)

- Much of increase accounted by Indigenous women
- **Indigenous women 21% in 1996 to 30% in 2006** of all women prisoners
- Rate: 364 per 100,000 of adult Indigenous females compared with 16 for non-Indigenous



Aboriginal women

- Aboriginal women experience
 - fastest rate of increase of all groups of prisoners
- Have
 - higher rates of return to prison,
 - higher numbers of dependent children
 - higher rates of social and physical disadvantage than their non-Aboriginal counterparts



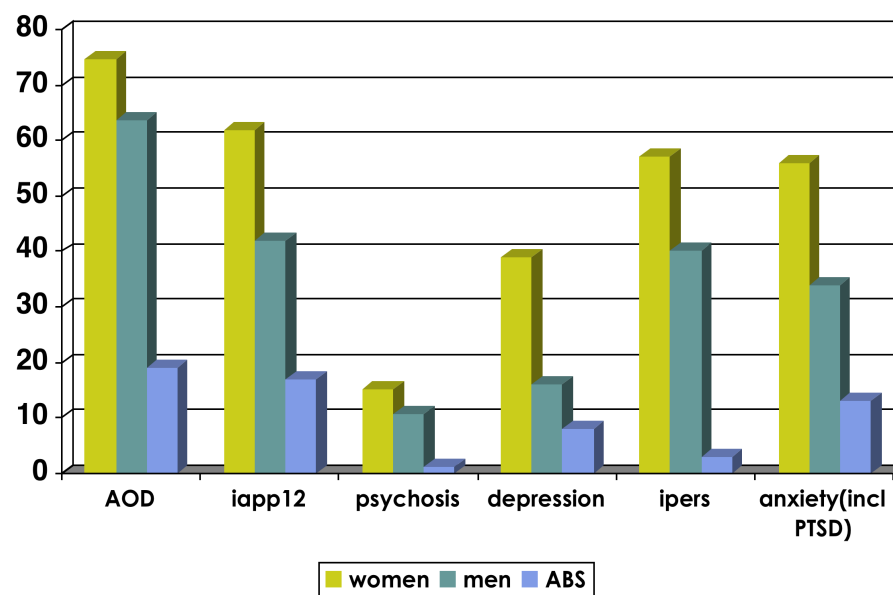
Background

- Current context:
 - Almost all Aboriginal women leaving prison have inadequate housing or are in primary homelessness
- Post-release supported housing crucial to reducing recidivism and assisting ex-prisoners to reintegrate into the community.
- Aboriginal women have specific, special housing and other needs not being met.



Mental Health

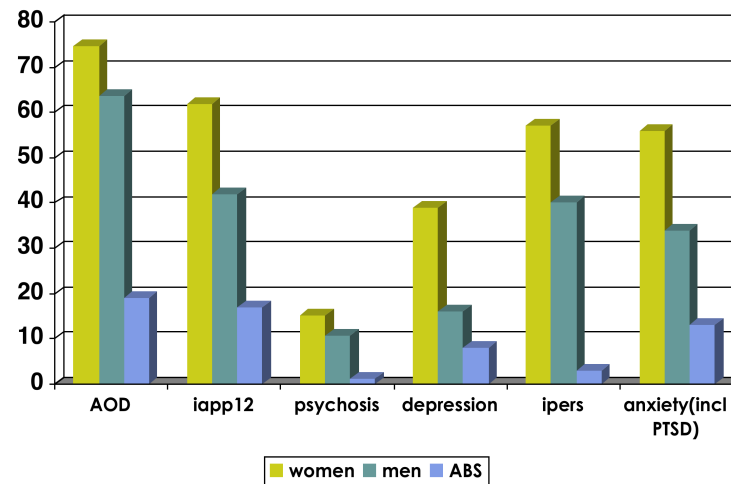
- 12 month occurrence any psychiatric disorder (psychosis, anxiety, affective, substance use, personality) 74% amongst prisoners (86% for females; 72% for males) compared to 22% in the general population.



Mental Health cont



- 50% reception inmates and 30% sentenced inmates had MHD (9% prisoners Vs 0.42% general population suffered psychosis, 22% Vs 6% affective disorder (eg bipolar, major depression), 43% Vs 10% anxiety disorder) in the 12 months prior to the survey





Cognitive Disability

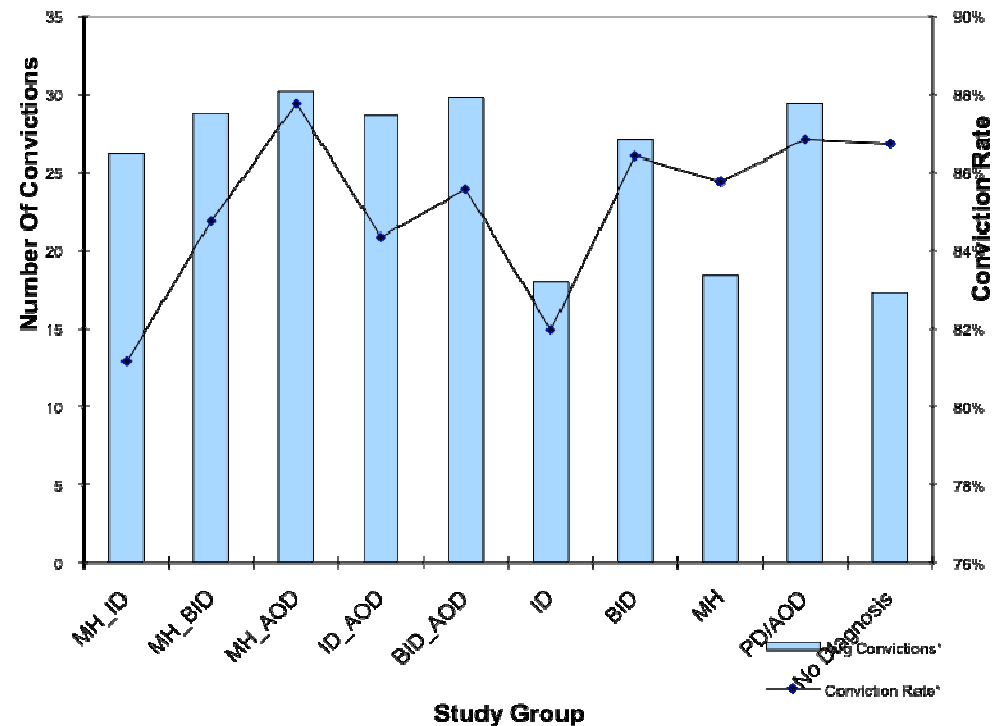
- Estimates between 2-12% have ID
- Much higher for borderline - ~44% in UK prison research borderline or full ID
- High Acquired brain injury (over 40% multiple serious TBIs Australia research)
- High co-occurring disorders - ID, BD, MH & AOD

Convictions for MHD&CD



- Significantly higher convictions for those with dual or co-occurring disorders (complex needs) than for those with a single diagnosis or no diagnosis
- Indigenous persons have a significantly higher number and rate of convictions than non Indigenous people

Number Of Convictions And Conviction Rate By Study Group



Convictions



- People with a history of substance use have a higher proportion of convictions than those with no history
- People with a borderline intellectual disability (BID) have a higher number of convictions than people without intellectual disability or those with an IQ < 70
- Indigenous women have significantly higher rates of convictions than non-Indigenous

Custodial episodes

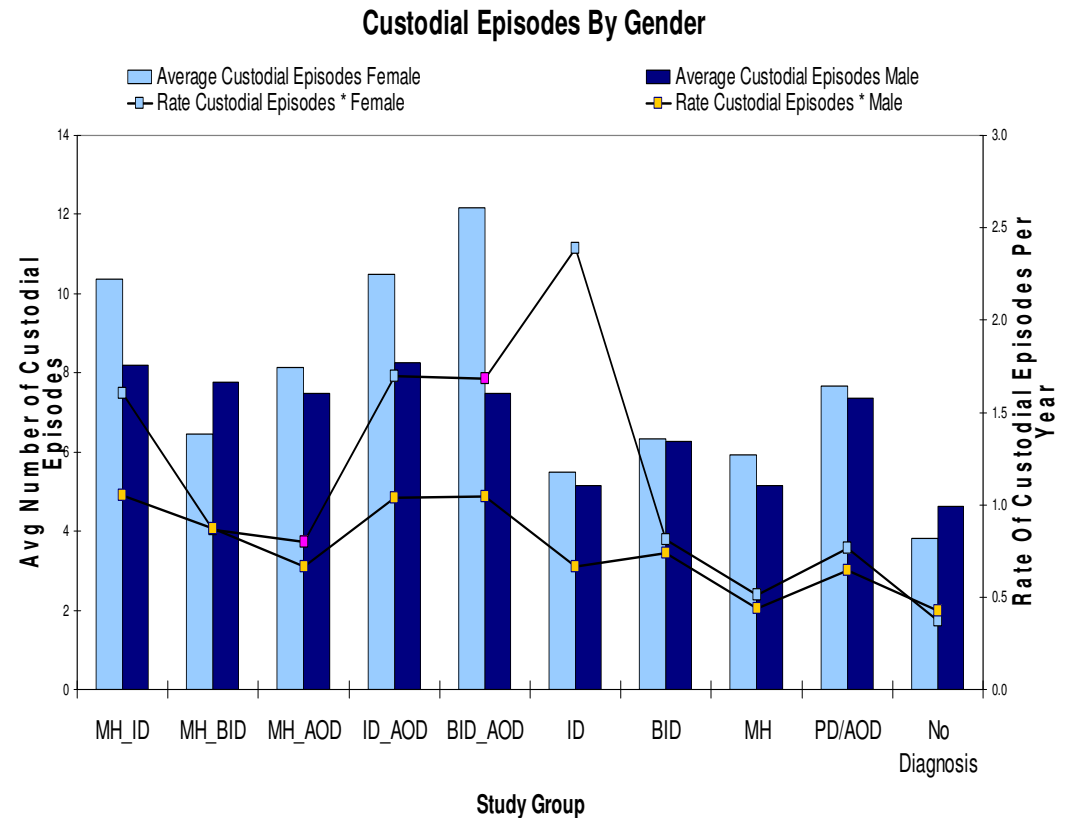


Individuals with complex needs have significantly higher number and rate of custodial episodes than those without complex needs

Women have a higher rate of custodial episodes per year than men

Women with complex needs (inc ID/BID) have a higher rate of custodial episodes than men

Indigenous women have the highest number & rate

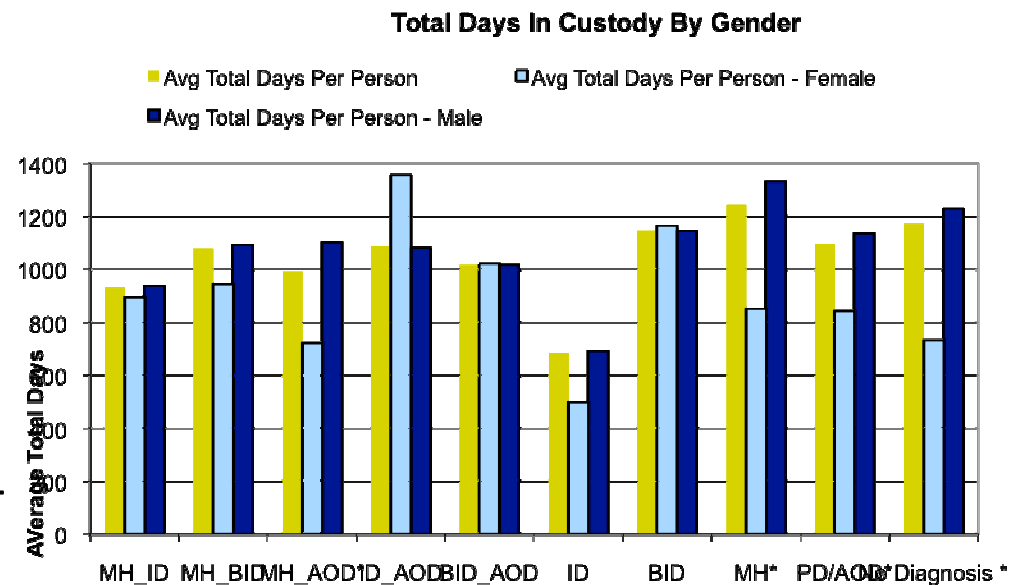


Time in custody



Men across the cohort categories spend a significantly **greater number of days in custody** than females in the cohort

So although **women** have **more custodial episodes** these are **shorter** in duration - greater rate of cycling in and out of prison for women with complex needs

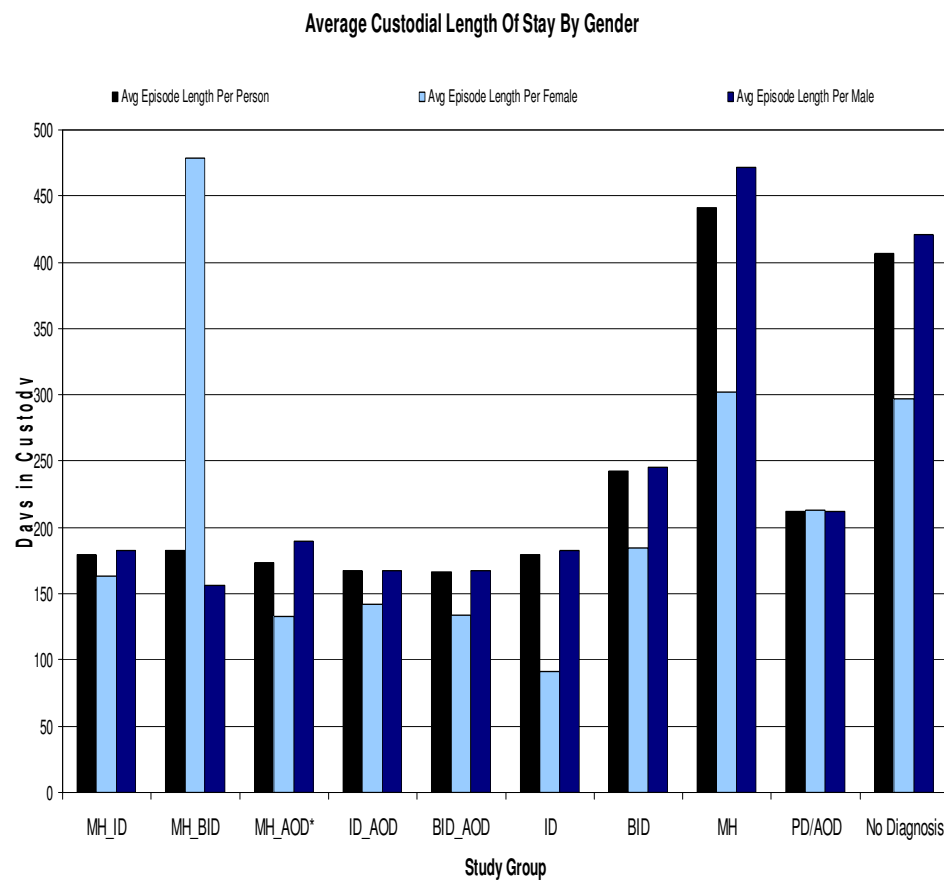




Days per custodial episode

Those with **complex needs** spend a significantly **shorter** time on each custodial episode than those with a single or no diagnosis

Although they have more episodes in prison, the av. length of stay for **Indigenous women** is sig. **shorter** than for non-Indigenous suggesting these may be remand episodes





**With this background
information in mind**

Study



- **Aboriginal women with dependent children leaving prison: needs analysis**
- **Baldry, Ruddock & Taylor 2008**
- **Auspiced by Homelessness NSW**
- **Commissioned by Western Sydney Strategic Plan Against Homelessness (WSSPAH)**



The Needs analysis

- informed by social inclusion, rehabilitative, strengths based, Indigenous cultural and women specific theoretical perspectives

Approach



- A qualitative method, employing purposive surveys of agencies and interviews with Aboriginal women prisoners, and a range of workers
- Risk and protective factors
- Service availability was compared with the needs evident from the analysis
- Literature search of possible models / support approach considered in light of results
- Multi-level approach

Service capacity and availability



- Agencies were broken into five categories based upon the information they provided.
 - 1. High-level support
 - 2. Medium-level support
 - 3. Occasional support
 - 4. Other
 - 5. For Children and young people



The women's views

- 17 Aboriginal women prisoners - experiences pre and post prison
- 6 themes in areas of highest concern : their dependent children; housing; family, friends and associates; alcohol and other drugs; their culture; and trauma.
- They stressed need for strong integrated services



Services / workers

- Community Correctional officers, Aboriginal correctional workers and Aboriginal legal service officers
- Tallied with women's views
- Unanimous in pinpointing lack of appropriate integrated service support.

Children



- No research on needs of this group of Aboriginal children
- Agreed by all that they have own set of needs and culturally appropriate services that recognize and address their often disrupted development, schooling and parenting are needed desperately.



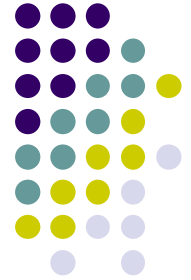
Results

- Western Sydney has strong base to build case managed supported accommodation
- Number of Aboriginal specific services: health, education, legal and personal support
- Major gaps: Aboriginal and women specific employment, AOD and mental health services.
- Lack of Aboriginal children's services of serious concern.



Suggested Model

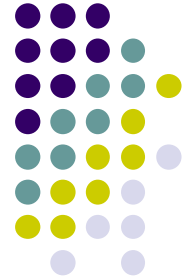
- Aboriginal women and children specific flexible housing model, with a continuum of support services and programs available to meet the women and their children's needs in their current circumstance. It has, at its heart, an Aboriginal managed continuum of service and stable, supported housing upon release.



Model

- A lead agency – housing manager/case management service –in collaboration with 4-5 key agencies, linking with specific services as appropriate
- Provide wrap-around Indigenous framed supporting service.
- Housing for women in process of regaining custody of children as well as those living with their children is necessary

Future



- Potential Barriers: poor communication, lack of agency commitment and lack of service capacity and skills
- Must have committed budget and service accords, Indigenous community management group, develop from the ground up appropriate responsive Aboriginal women and children support approaches



Evaluation

- Progressive evaluation of the lead agency and its relations with supporting agencies and of experience of and outcomes for the women and children