Research Publication

A qualitative exploration of factors influencing prison social climate at Rapid Build and traditional correctional centres

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Corrections Research Evaluation and Statistics

1   Executive Summary

1.1   Background and methods

The New South Wales inmate population recently experienced a period of unprecedented and rapid growth, resulting in the need for additional inmate accommodation. Corrective Services NSW responded to this increased demand with a new approach to prison design, construction and operation in the form of two 'Rapid Build' correctional centres.

The Rapid Build model involves innovations in both the structure of the centre and its inmate management practices. The innovations include a unique dormitory-style accommodation model that provides inmates with greater freedom to move about, socialise and access facilities, which are considered incentives for prosocial behaviour. The centres are also equipped with state-of-the-art security and 24-hour surveillance throughout. Infrastructure innovations are supported by an operational model centred around a highly structured purposeful day for inmates, as well as a high level of engagement by specially selected staff. While having high security classifications, inmates are specially selected for Rapid Build centres based on their history of institutional behaviour and long custodial sentences, resulting in a low level of turnover among the population. Since opening in late 2017 to early 2018, the Rapid Build centres have been identified as an opportunity to understand how their unique features may impact upon the social climate of the centres, and how this compares to traditional centres.

The current study aims to explore the experiences of both inmates and staff living and working in Rapid Build centres, and how the innovations associated with the Rapid Build model impact their experiences and views of the prison social climate. The study provides a contextualised and nuanced understanding of the prison social climate in both Rapid Build and traditional centres.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 64 inmates and staff from the two Rapid Build centres, as well as two comparison traditional centres. Inmates and staff in each centre were asked about their experiences within their respective centres and the factors they felt impacted the social climate of the centre. Common narrative themes were identified based on a qualitative analysis of interview transcripts.

1.2   Key findings

Overall, the Rapid Build centres were seen by both inmates and staff as having an overall more positive social climate than the traditional centres. Interviewees discussed a range of factors affecting their experience in the centres, with many innovations of the Rapid Build model noted as having particularly positive impacts.

The level and type of purposeful activity inmates were engaged in was commonly seen as the most important factor affecting social climate in both Rapid Build and traditional centres, with interviewees noting high levels of activity as a positive. A high level of activity alleviated the boredom and frustration that could otherwise often lead to conflict or other misconduct, with lead on effects on relationships between inmates and staff and perceptions of safety within the centre.

The different accommodation styles were also identified as impacting the social climate in each centre. This was often moderated by the type and mix of inmates in the centres and the perceived turnover of the inmate population. Inmates in Rapid Build centres appreciated the contact they had with other inmates in the dormitory-style accommodation and associated it with overall increased feelings of community. Many felt that this was enhanced by the presence of a population less prone to violence. Inmates in traditional centres felt that the nature of the cell-based accommodation model is very much impacted by the identity of their cellmate, having the opportunity to create strong relationships, but also generate friction.

The level of turnover in the centre and the type and mix of inmates were often seen as interdependent in terms of their impact on social climate. The Rapid Build centres were viewed as having a stable inmate population, largely due to the specially selected type and mix of inmates, while traditional centres were generally considered to have a high turnover of inmates. Inmates felt the population was a "lottery" that could positively or negatively influence their relationships, and change the climate in the centre, based on the type of mix of inmates at any given time. For those who liked the type and mix of inmates, a stable population was considered good; those who did not like the current mix of inmates favoured a high turnover. Staff, however, generally viewed turnover more negatively as they felt that it increased the likelihood of conflict and violence when new inmates arrived.

The quality and attitude of staff was identified as a key factor impacting inmate-staff relationships regardless of the type of centre. Inmates respected staff who were authoritative yet supportive, and confident but considerate. Surveillance was an important issue for inmates and staff when weighing up how safe they felt in their respective centres. Those in Rapid Build centres were more likely to view the centre as safe for both inmates and staff, with many noting the 24-hour surveillance of the accommodation units as an important factor contributing to this. Those in traditional centres often saw the lack of surveillance in inmate cells as leading to reduced safety during the nightly lock-in.

Inmates also identified a number of the Rapid Build innovations as privileges, including freedoms associated with accommodation style, the range of purposeful activities, the increased access to phone calls, as well as good food and even access to gardens. These perceived privileges were seen as incentives for good behaviour. Their willingness to behave out of fear of losing such privileges was then often associated with a more positive social climate in the centre. Those in traditional centres did not identify any privileges associated with their centre. They often felt their placement in that centre was punishment for misbehaving in another centre but did not relate this in any way back to the perceived social climate of the centre.

1.3   Conclusions

The current study provides a nuanced understanding of factors that influence perceptions of prison social climate among inmates and staff, and how these factors differ across Rapid Build and traditional centres. The factors most commonly identified as having an impact on social climate, many of which relate to key innovations of the Rapid Build model, are salient across both types of centres and often related to their perceived effects on safety within the prison environment. The unique contribution of each factor, though, was often moderated by the specific context of the centre and the current type and mix of the inmate population.

In general, the innovative features of the Rapid Build model were seen to operate as an interconnected system rather than as individual drivers of change. It is therefore *how* the features of this unique model come together that is important for understanding overall perceptions of the social climate of the centres.

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2   Introduction

The New South Wales prison population is the largest in Australia, accounting for 31% of the country's prisoners (Australian Bureau of Statistics; ABS, 2020). Between 2011 and 2015 the NSW prison population increased by 18%, and from 2012 to 2018 it saw a growth of 40% (Audit Office, 2019; Weatherburn et al., 2016). In response, Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) implemented the Better Prisons program, which aims to deliver additional infrastructure to safely and securely accommodate a growing inmate population.

Under the Better Prisons program, CSNSW's Prison Bed Capacity Project (PBCP) commissioned two 400-bed Rapid Build correctional centres in Wellington (Macquarie Correctional Centre) and Cessnock (Hunter Correctional Centre). The centres represent a substantial investment for CSNSW and aim to deliver innovations in inmate management relative to traditional correctional centres. Such innovations focus on the structure of the centre through providing dormitory-style accommodation with intensive and technologically advanced surveillance, and a correctional management philosophy focused on inmate routine, purposeful activity and interaction with staff.

Corrections Research Evaluation and Statistics (CRES) have been commissioned by the PBCP division to conduct an evaluation of the Rapid Build correctional centres. The evaluation framework developed by CRES sets out a program logic model for the Rapid Build centres (see Appendix 1) that articulates how the features and innovations of the centres act as mechanisms of change that in turn impact outcomes of interest. The framework outlines five key areas of evaluation as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Five areas of evaluation

The current project fits within the first area of evaluation and aims to explore the ways in which correctional centre models impact the social climate of the prison. Research suggests that different prison dynamics and situational factors (i.e., social climate) can have an impact on offenders' behaviour in prison and the therapeutic impact of incarceration (Ross et al., 2008).

As part of the evaluation CRES has conducted two projects examining the social climate in correctional centres. The first project, which is nearing completion, involved a quantitative survey of inmate and staff perceptions of social climate in both Rapid Build and traditional centres. The second project, detailed in this report, takes a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with inmates and staff to provide a more contextualised and detailed analysis of the prison social climate in Rapid Build and traditional centres.

2.1   Social climate

Social climate involves "a set of characteristics that (a) distinguish the organization from other organizations, (b) are relatively enduring, and (c) affect the behaviour of participants in the organization" (Forehand & Gilmer, cited in Wright, 1993, p.94). The concept of social climate has been linked to the study of prisons since the 1960s with Moos (cited in Wright, 1993, pp.94-95) arguing that "social environments have important consequences for individual and group behaviour". Prison social climate incorporates "the social, emotional, organizational and physical characteristics of a correctional institution as perceived by inmates and staff" (Ross et al., 2008, p.447). It is ultimately influenced by the structural environment of the prison (e.g., design features

and ongoing operations) and the existing attitudes, beliefs and values of inmates and staff, which subsequently impact inmate and staff behaviour (Burek & Liederbach, 2021).

A range of factors have been linked to prison social climate. For example, Toch (1977) identified privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, social stimulation, activity, and freedom as key factors relating to prison social climate. Schalast et al.'s (2008) measure of social climate for forensic psychiatric wards was redefined for a corrections environment to include hold and support (perceived staff support for inmates), inmate cohesion (perceived support among inmates), and experienced safety (from threats or violence) (Day et al., 2011; Tonkin et al., 2012). Boone et al.'s (2016) international literature review of prison social climate identified six primary domains:

- Relationships in prison (with staff and inmates),

- Safety and order (i.e., the rules that govern behaviour),

- Contact with the outside world (i.e., maintaining relationships with family and friends),

- Prison facilities (e.g., food or cell conditions),

- Meaningful activities (e.g., sports, library or yard time), and

- Autonomy (i.e., the extent to which prisoners have freedom to make their own decisions or move about the prison).

Boone et al.'s (2016) review also identified factors such as characteristics of the physical building infrastructure, staff characteristics and the composition of the inmate population as being important for establishing a positive living environment. Two factors that appear to be most consistently invoked in definitions of prison social climate are relationships and safety, which in turn have been linked to several key behavioural outcomes (see also Tonkin's (2016) review).

Prison social climate is argued to be of critical importance in determining the level of disorder that occurs within a prison, including riots and disturbances (Day et al., 2011). A systematic review by Gadon et al. (2006) identified a number of elements related to prison social climate that predict incidence of prison violence, including supervision and security levels, population mix, staff characteristics (e.g., experience), accommodation model and how inmates use their time. They also identified that when more inmates participate in education, vocational training, and industry there is a reduction in inmate-staff assaults.

Tonkin's (2016) review of the literature further identified a link between a negative social climate and more frequent occurrences of verbal and physical aggression. Additional indicators of prison social climate have also been related to misconduct. For example, perceived positive staff-prisoner relationships, prisoner-prisoner relationships and availability of meaningful activities were associated with lower inmate misconduct (Bosma et al., 2020). Bennett and Shuker (2018, p.54) draw on the prison social climate research to conclude that "understanding and managing social climate is an essential aspect of improving the safety and effectiveness of prisons".

A number of studies have also identified a link between positive prison social climate and inmate readiness for treatment and motivation to engage in rehabilitation, as well as greater therapeutic gains from behaviour change interventions (e.g., Day et al., 2011; Sauter et al., 2019; see also Tonkin, 2016; Van Der Helm et al., 2014; Woessner & Schwedler, 2014). This is consistent with assertions that for rehabilitative interventions to be effective, the environment in which they are delivered must be both safe and supportive (Schalast et al., 2008; Tonkin et al., 2012). Therapeutic prisons or units that specifically focus on therapeutic principles and rehabilitation are reported to have a more positive social climate compared to mainstream prisons and are therefore seen as more conducive to the rehabilitative needs of inmates (Day et al., 2012; Reading & Ross, 2020). Perceived safety is particularly important for treatment-oriented correctional models and is argued to

have the greatest impact on rehabilitation outcomes (Burek & Liederbach, 2021; Day & Vess, 2017). Overall, Harding (2014, p.171) concludes that "a good prison social climate would seem likely, other things being equal, to improve the outcomes achievable through proven rehabilitation programs".

Given the significant impact of social climate on both inmates and staff, it is important to consider the crucial elements of a correctional centre model that will aid in providing a positive social climate.

2.2   The Rapid Build model

The Macquarie and Hunter correctional centres were commissioned to assist CSNSW to rapidly increase capacity around the state due to a rising prison population. The centres were designed to house high security inmates in dormitory style accommodation. A new operating philosophy was developed with the initial aim of mitigating potential security risks associated with the proposed model; however, it also became increasingly recognised as an opportunity to foster a rehabilitative environment and promote behaviour change among inmates. A centrepiece of the operating philosophy involved engaging inmates in a program of purposeful activities as part of a highly structured day. Feedback from key operational informants indicated that the centres are intended to be viewed as 'centres of privilege' and are promoted as such to inmates. They offer a unique opportunity for inmates to improve job-related skills and prepare for life post-release.

The Rapid Build model is unique among NSW correctional centres, with several innovations aimed at creating a positive experience for inmates to encourage engagement with purposeful activities and subsequently reduce recidivism. They include several innovations in the physical infrastructure of the prison, the correctional management and philosophy, and the management of the lives of inmates in the centres (see Appendix 1 for a program logic for the Rapid Build model). As part of the current evaluation, a number of key innovations of the Rapid Build model were identified as having potentially significant effects on how inmates and staff experience the social climate of their centre and were explored in depth during interviews with inmates and staff. These include the accommodation style, the range of purposeful activities, activity levels, type and mix of inmates, turnover among the inmate population, surveillance, access to phone calls and visits, incentives for prosocial behaviour, strictness in discipline, specially selected staff and staff access to professional development. An overview of each innovation is detailed in the following subsections, along with a comparative overview of the way each feature is managed in traditional centres.

2.2.1   Accommodation style

The most notable innovation in the inmate management model in Rapid Build correctional centres is the lack of cells. The dormitory-style accommodation in the centre involves separated dormitories housing 25 people each, with a large open-floor plan providing shared space for joint activities as well as sleeping. Each inmate is provided with their own semi-private cubicle, including a bed, desk, seat and an interactive touch-screen. Each dormitory also includes a kitchen and dining/sitting area for inmates to prepare food and socialise. At any time when inmates are not engaged in planned activities, they may access any part of the dormitory, including a small open-air courtyard. The dormitory lights are turned off late every night (around 10pm) and turned on early every day (around 6am).

The accommodation style of the Rapid Builds differs markedly from most traditional centres where inmate accommodation is in closed cells, often with 2-3 inmates per cell. Such cells contain assigned inmate beds, and may contain a television, table, chair and other purchased amenities. Inmates are locked into these cells from the mid-afternoon (around 2-3pm) and spend the rest of the day and night with only their cellmate(s) until the cells are unlocked in the morning (around 7-8am).

2.2.2   Purposeful activities

As previously mentioned, a key element of the Rapid Build operating philosophy relates to the 'purposeful day' for inmates. One feature of this is the range of activities available. Inmates in Rapid Build centres are offered a wider range of purposeful activities than those available to inmates in traditional centres. Beyond traditional employment, these include a broad range of life skills courses provided by local non-governmental organisations, programs to address criminogenic needs, education programs (including tailored courses delivered by TAFE) and leisure activities. Inmates have opportunities to seek accreditation that would be valuable in the job market after their release, such as traffic control, construction safety (white card), hospitality, and sport refereeing. Inmates are expected to participate in many of these activities over the course of the day.

While traditional centres usually do provide a range of work, education and program options, they rarely have the same range of courses and opportunities for accreditation as the Rapid Builds. Many traditional centres also do not have the same level of facilities for leisure and cultural activities.

2.2.3   Activity levels

Another element of the purposeful day relates to the time inmates spend engaged in activities. Inmates in Rapid Build centres are required to engage in a large number of purposeful activities that fill much of their day (at least 10 hours). Inmates therefore have minimal 'down time' in which they are free to do what they want before the lights are turned off.

Inmates in traditional centres, on the other hand, usually follow a less intensive and less structured day. While some inmates in traditional centres may work and participate in programs relevant to their rehabilitation, others are not expected to work and may spend much of their day in idle activities and socialising. As noted in section 2.2.1, all inmates in traditional centres are likely to be idle for several hours before going to bed due to being locked in their cells.

2.2.4   The type and mix of inmates

The cohort of inmates in Rapid Build centres, despite being high security with long sentences, are specifically chosen to be more likely to adhere to rules and to benefit from a highly structured day. Key operational informants listed several unique general eligibility criteria for placement in the centres:

- A recent history of good behaviour and compliance
- A willingness to participate in work and training
- Basic literacy and numeracy to ensure capacity for program participation

Placement in traditional centres, on the other hand, is generally based on a range of factors including security classification; access to courts (for those on remand); participation in various work, education or rehabilitation programs; and requirements relating to health, associations or the need for segregation and protection.[1]

2.2.5   Turnover among the inmate population

Rapid Build centres are expected to have low inmate turnover due to the selective nature of the inmate cohort having long sentences, the lack of offenders on remand in the centres, and the perceived privilege of being placed in a Rapid Build centre.

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[1] A further overview of the factors affecting inmate placement in traditional centres is provided in CSNSW Fact Sheet #9 https://www.correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/csnsw-fact-sheets/classification-and-placement.pdf

Based on CSNSW data, the traditional centres participating in this research experienced three times the number of inmate movements compared to Rapid Build centres during the 12 months leading up to July 2019. Key operational informants mentioned several reasons for this, including large remand populations and the need to relocate inmates to centres for various reasons including access to courts, medical treatment or rehabilitation programs.

2.2.6 Surveillance

Rapid Build centres have comprehensive built-in surveillance systems with state-of-the-art technology capable of observing almost all areas of the centre, including accommodation dormitories 24 hours a day. The video-feed is observed at all times by staff in a central communications hub that can coordinate rapid responses with officers.

While traditional centres are also subject to a high level of surveillance, they do not have access to the same technology as Rapid Builds. Cells in traditional centres also do not have cameras installed in them, meaning that inmates cannot be readily observed during the lock-in period, which often represents more than 14 hours out of each day.

2.2.7 Access to phone calls and visits

Inmates in Rapid Build centres are able to make phone calls to their family and friends in the community at any time between 6am and 9pm every day. The time limit of phone calls is 12 minutes per call, and additional phones have been installed in units to reduce the wait time for making a call. Wait times are also reduced due to inmates having access to the phones throughout a longer day. Inmate visiting hours are also extended and visits may be held in the café operated by the inmates training in hospitality.

Inmates in traditional centres may only make 6-minute phone calls, and phones can only be accessed when inmates are not locked in their cells. Inmates who participate in work or other activities throughout the day therefore have limited time to use phones and may often have to queue with other inmates waiting to use phones (sometimes for long periods). Many traditional centres also have limited visiting hours and are usually restricted to standard visitation areas, although these do vary between centres.

2.2.8 Incentives for prosocial behaviour

As noted in Section 2.2, the Rapid Build centres are intended to be 'centres of privilege', providing inmates with unique benefits and freedoms that are not available in most other centres. Benefits include the freedoms associated with the dormitory-style accommodation as well as other policies improving inmates' experience in the centre, such as greater access to phone calls, better food, and opportunities for employment-focused learning. In part, these benefits are provided with the aim of incentivising inmates to behave, so that they are not transferred to another centre.

Key operational informants noted that the approach to discipline in Rapid Build centres is more focused on positive reinforcement of prosocial behaviour rather than punitive responses to negative behaviour. However, in order to maintain the benefits and sense of privilege associated with these centres, the operational model adopts a 'zero tolerance' policy for misconduct that allows for offending inmates to be removed from the centre. A clear, yet flexible, three strikes model establishes the point at which a transfer and/or review of classification is required.

Inmates in traditional centres may be subject to benefits and sanctions based on their behaviour, with the threat of transfer to another centre common for many. The benefits provided to those well behaved, however, are less substantial than those built into the model of Rapid Build centres. Inmates in traditional centres face discipline for misbehaviour as set by the management of each centre.

2.2.9 Specially selected staff

Staff placed in the Rapid Build centres are specially selected based on their attitudes to rehabilitation as well as their capabilities for prosocial interaction with inmates. This is aimed at improving the overall engagement of inmates with staff and in activities that support prosocial functioning.

Staff placed in traditional centres are selected through an external recruitment, or internal transfer, process.

2.3 The current project

It is consistent with the operating philosophy of the Rapid Build model that several innovations could be considered to have a substantial impact on how inmates and staff perceive the social climate of their centre. Several factors such as accommodation style, purposeful activities, activity levels, type and mix of inmates, access to phone calls and visits, and staff characteristics have been identified as relevant to inmates' experiences of prison life and climate in the literature (Boone et al., 2016; Gadon et al., 2006). These features will therefore be areas of focus when exploring perceived contributors to social climate and how they differ between Rapid Build and traditional sites.

The current project provides a qualitative companion to another research project conducted by CRES, which uses quantitative measures to examine factors relating to social climate at Rapid Build and traditional centres. The current project complements this empirical assessment of social climate in CSNSW centres by providing a nuanced qualitative understanding of the mechanisms through which different custodial models impact the social climate and overall experience of inmates and staff at the centre.

The primary objectives of the qualitative component of the Rapid Build evaluation are:

- To explore the social climate that is established in the two Rapid Build centres compared with the social climate at more traditional centres
- To gain a detailed understanding of the experience of living, and of managing inmates, in a Rapid Build centre
- To understand the impact of the different innovations in the Rapid Build model on inmates and staff
- To further explore themes and provide context relating to existing survey research.

3 Methods

The following chapter provides a detailed overview of the methods used to collect, analyse and synthesise data relevant to the project.

3.1 Design

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with inmates and staff at four correctional centres around NSW.[2] The centres selected included the two existing Rapid Build centres as well as two broadly comparable centres that follow the traditional CSNSW correctional model:

Rapid Build Centres

- Hunter Correctional Centre, Cessnock

- Macquarie Correctional Centre, Wellington

Traditional Centres

- Mid-North Coast Correctional Centre, Kempsey

- Wellington Correctional Centre, Wellington

An experienced CRES researcher conducted a 2-day site visit at each centre in June and July 2019. Security protocols and transfer of inmates were coordinated by management at each centre, and all interviews were conducted in a private and secure meeting room. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewee, and recordings were transcribed.

The interviews were guided by a step-based approach. Interviewees were first asked to identify factors that mattered to their experience of the overall social climate in their respective centres. Given the importance of relationships and safety in conceptualisations of social climate as well as the Rapid Build operational model, additional questions probed into perceived influences on these factors specifically. Finally, in order to ensure that key aspects of centre operations that are relevant to Rapid Build innovations were addressed in interviewees' responses, a number of questions were asked about how such aspects had a specific bearing on inmate and staff views of the social climate.

3.2 Sample and data collection

Pods or units at each centre totalling approximately 100 inmates were randomly selected by the researcher for recruitment. In order to ensure comparability with the characteristics of inmates at Rapid Builds, inmates at traditional centres were limited to sentenced males placed in high security units with mostly high-risk inmates (classification A or B). The pool of staff invited to participate in interviews was limited to those working directly with inmates who met the recruitment criteria. Staff selected for participation were Custodial Officers, Industry Overseers, Services and Program Officers, Custodial Case Management Officers, and Classification Officers.

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[2] A small number of staff interviews were conducted over the phone after the site visit in order to enable access to randomly selected staff members who were not available during the site visit.

At each centre a local contact, usually a senior staff member selected by the governor, managed the recruitment of prospective interviewees using a detailed sampling procedure and flyer/poster/email templates provided by the researcher. The local contact provided information about the project to inmates and staff and generated a list of potential participants. Prior to each site visit, the researcher randomly selected inmates and staff for interviews from the sign-up lists provided.

The project aimed to conduct interviews with 10 inmates and 10 staff during each site visit. Due to the time limitations of site visits, not all planned interviews were able to be completed in all centres. Out of 80 planned interviews (4x10 inmates and 4x10 staff members), a total of 64 were completed (see Table 1 for an overview of completed interviews).

Table 1. Interviews completed, by type of interviewee and type of centre

Centre type	Location	Interviewee type	Interviews completed
Rapid Build	Macquarie CC	Inmates	7
		Staff	9
	Hunter CC	Inmates	10
		Staff	8
Traditional	Wellington CC	Inmates	10
		Staff	9
	Mid-North-Coast CC	Inmates	5
		Staff	6
Total			64

To encourage participation among inmates, and to reduce self-selection bias, all were offered a participation incentive of a $10 deposit into their trust account. They were notified of the incentive as part of the recruitment process and funds were transferred to all those who participated at the completion of fieldwork in July 2019. The research project, including all data collection protocols, was reviewed and approved by the CSNSW Ethics Committee.

3.3   Coding

All transcribed interview data was analysed using QSR NVivo 12, using a thematic analysis approach. The data was coded into categories identified in a coding framework that was both theory-driven and based on themes emerging from the data.

Overall perceptions of social climate, relationships and safety are high-level codes in the framework, each of which includes a set of sub-codes corresponding to possible aspects of the structure and functioning of the centre that impact that element.

3.3.1   Inter-coder reliability

To ensure consistency and reliability in the coding of interviews, inter-coder reliability between two coders was established through an iterative process, informed by the processes developed by Campbell et al. (2013). The process involved breaking down all interview texts into paragraph-sized units and double-coding each unit in ~10% of interviews, and then comparing the codes in each to produce a Cohen's Kappa score. Codes were updated and changed based on discussions between the coders, and then re-tested to ensure consistency. The coders reached a final agreement level of K=0.68, judged as 'substantial agreement' according to Landis and Koch's (1977) commonly used standard.

3.4   Analysis of data

Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews conducted, and the unstructured nature of much of the data obtained from interviewees, it was often not possible to assume that statements made by interviewees are perfectly comparable. Consequently, what is being quantified in most coded themes is the presence or absence of a 'mention' of the issue in an interview. In some cases, a mention was prompted by a direct question and in other cases the interviewees raised the issues unprompted. Situations where the codes included comparable, comprehensive, and mutually exclusive data are represented as ratings or direct assessments in the report.

For sub-codes measuring the presence or absence of a mention, the denominator used to calculate proportions of interviews with mentions among different groups was the total number of interviews conducted among that group. This approach provides an indication of the prominence of a narrative among interviewees, which allows identification of narratives most commonly mentioned by different groups of interviewees. Alternately, for comparable ratings and assessment codes, the denominator used was the number of interviewees who provided a rating or assessment.

4 Findings

The main findings from inmate and staff interviews in both Rapid Build and traditional centres are set out in three sections. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 cover inmate and staff experiences of their respective centres. These sections cover overall perceptions of social climate, as well as views about relationships and safety. Section 4.3 specifically considers how the innovative elements of the Rapid Build model impact social climate compared to equivalent aspects of life in traditional centres.

4.1 Experiences of inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres

4.1.1 Perception of social climate

The vast majority of inmates and staff who were interviewed in Rapid Build centres saw their centre as having a good social climate, rating it a 4 or 5 (out of 5), with a mean rating of 3.9 (see Figure 2). On average, inmates rated social climate slightly higher than staff. Both inmates and staff commonly saw the overall social climate in the centre as mostly positive and calm. Inmates saw the centre as resembling a 'family' or 'community', with several describing it as more like a boarding school or mental health facility than a prison.
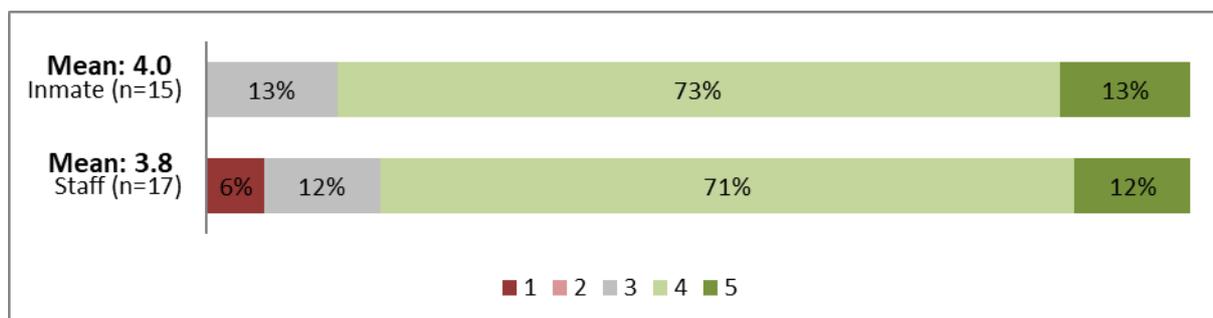

Figure 2. Rating of social climate by inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres

Interviewees in Rapid Build centres, both inmates and staff, usually reported that they saw the social climate in their centre as substantially better than that in other (traditional) centres in which they had been placed previously. These interviewees commonly reported that the atmosphere in the centre is more relaxed and less "prison-like".[3] They often saw Rapid Build centres as more social and positive, and less tense. These differences were commonly discussed as affecting inmates more than staff.

Both inmates and staff identified *activity levels* during the day as having the greatest positive impact on their perception of the overall social climate in Rapid Build centres. It was commonly felt that filling inmates' days with activities, such as work, programs and education, alleviated the boredom and hopelessness that often led to conflict, drug use and a generally unpleasant atmosphere. Some interviewees, more often staff members, explicitly saw the busy nature of the unit as 'tiring out' inmates over the course of the day. It was suggested that when inmates felt tired, it limited their interest and ability for conflict and misbehaviour during the times when many inmates were in the shared accommodation areas. A small number of inmates noted specific activities they were forced to participate in that they did not enjoy and rebelled against, leading to a more negative social climate. However, very few argued that the general level of activities during their day was a negative influence on the social climate.

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[3] Due to the fact that almost all Rapid Build inmates interviewed had previously been placed in traditional centres, they framed many answers to questions around explicit comparisons to their experiences in those centres.

The novel *accommodation style* of the Rapid Build centre was often discussed by both inmates and staff as a factor that improved the social climate of the centre. Some interviewees explicitly associated the more positive view of social climate with the lack of cell 'lock-in' and what they saw as overall greater freedom provided to inmates in Rapid Build centres. Interviewees commonly saw the dormitory-style accommodation as forcing inmates to interact, work together and solve issues quickly to enable a positive living environment. Essentially, inmates have little choice but to find a way to co-exist, meaning they often cook and clean together in common areas, subsequently leading to experiencing positive interactions with a broad mix of inmates. Interviewees often felt that the dormitory-style accommodation fosters a pro-social 'community' atmosphere. They compared the situation to that in other centres, where they felt that the time locked in separate cells leads inmates to 'stew' on their conflicts, making them harder to solve.

"…I think it's because…we try to be more like family here. When you're in other places, you get a bit angry. You're locked away and then you come on out and then you're 'sorting out' problems with people... Here, you don't have that problem. It's much calmer…" -Inmate (Rapid Build)

The *type and mix of inmates* in the Rapid Build centres was identified as having both positive and negative impacts on perceptions of social climate. A number of staff interviewed in Rapid Build centres highlighted the selective nature of the inmates placed in Rapid Build centres, which meant they had a better history of behaviour and were less prone to conflict and disruptive behaviour. Inmates, however, saw the issue as difficult to predict one way or the other, and simply a 'lottery' based on how the mix of personalities, ethnicities, ages and crime-types in the centre interact with each other. They often felt that a more homogenous group was conducive to a pleasant atmosphere. Several inmates specifically noted a separate problem of having a large number of sex offenders in their unit, which can create friction as others often harm them for various reasons.

Another factor seen mostly by staff as positively affecting social climate is the low *turnover among the inmate population*. Staff members often felt that the relatively low level of turnover among inmates, as they assessed it, was helpful in instilling a climate of stability in the centre. They often saw substantial change in the centre as leading to greater friction and conflict among inmates and between inmates and staff. They commonly explained that friction, conflict and even violence arises every time the mix shifts as inmates seek to develop new social networks and hierarchies while trying to establish dominance.

4.1.1.1 Relationships and respect

Inmates and staff who were interviewed in Rapid Build centres generally saw the relationships and degree of respect between inmates and staff as mixed or dependent on the situation, rather than clearly good or bad (see Figure 3). Interviewees explained that attitudes among inmates and staff vary and that they generally react to each other's behaviour. Interviewees focused first and foremost on the quality and attitude of staff. They explained that the ability of staff members to project an authoritative yet supportive attitude was extremely important for creating and maintaining a good relationship with inmates, indicating that *staff selection* and related factors such as training are important. Both inmates and staff reasoned that overly aggressive or unsure staff can foster resistance and unnecessary conflict.
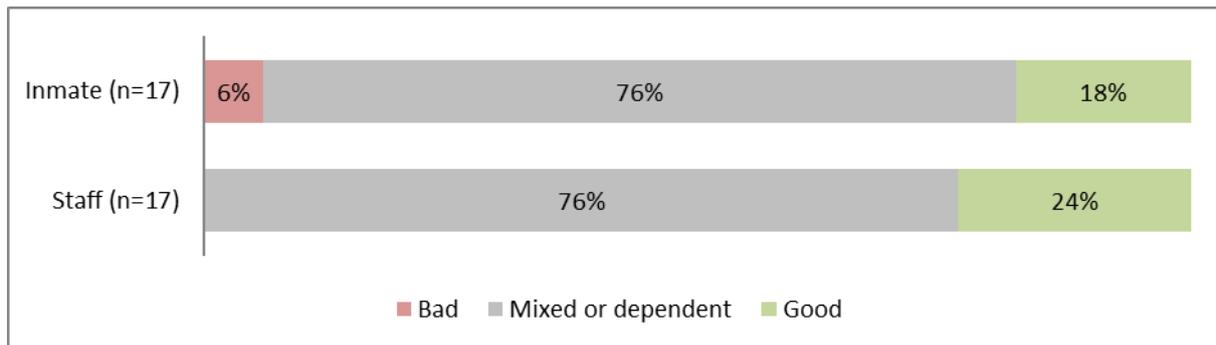
Figure 3. Assessment of inmate-staff relationships by inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres

Inmates were also asked about their relationships with other inmates, while staff were asked about their relationships with other staff. In both instances, the relationships were again seen as generally mixed or dependent (see Figure 4).
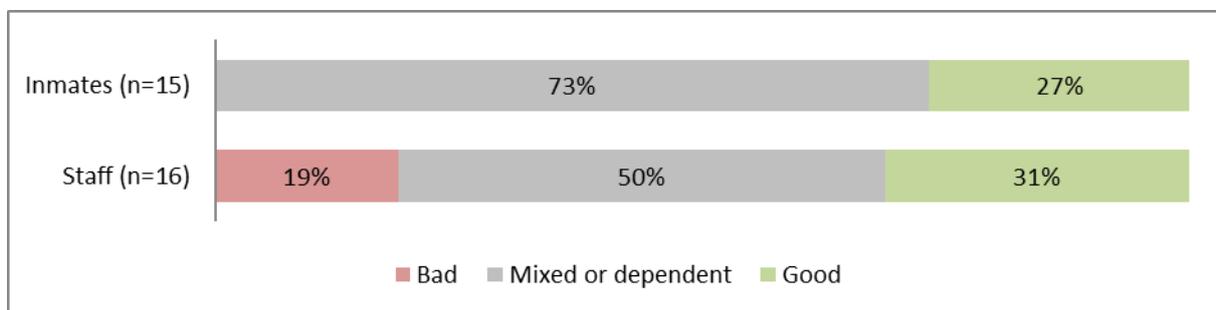

Figure 4. Assessment of relationships among members of each group in Rapid Build centres

Inmates identified a range of issues that affect their relationships with, and respect for, other inmates, including the *accommodation style*, *activity levels*, the *type and mix of inmates* in the centre and *turnover among the inmate population.* These issues were identified as being interconnected and having both positive and negative impacts. The accommodation style and activity levels in Rapid Build centres mean inmates have constant contact with each other, amplifying the impact of the type and mix of inmates in the centre; those who got along with the other inmates saw the constant contact and mix of inmates as having a positive impact, while those who felt they did not fit (or who felt others did not fit) saw the constant contact and mix of inmates as having a negative impact. Inmates also highlighted that the stability of the inmate population in the Rapid Build centres means that the mix of inmates does not change, which was generally viewed positively by those who like the mix and negatively by those who do not like the mix.

Staff views of the relationships among their colleagues differed greatly across centres, regardless of the centre model. Several staff members noted that staff dynamic was often a function of the context of the centre, and the leadership approach taken by senior staff (although this is highlighted more significantly by staff in traditional centres – see Section 4.2.1.1).

"I'd say it's about 50/50 to be honest with you… it really just depends on who it is or what rank they are or what they can get away with..." -Staff member (Rapid Build)

4.1.1.2 Perceptions of safety

Inmates and staff who were interviewed in Rapid Build centres generally saw their centre as safe (see Figure 5). Inmates and staff who made comparisons of overall safety between their centre and other (traditional) centres where they had previously been placed almost always stated that they felt their current (Rapid Build) centre was safer.

Figure 5. Assessment of safety of centre for inmates by inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres

When considering the combined responses from all inmates and staff interviewed in Rapid Build centres, close to two thirds saw their centre as safe for both inmates and staff, and almost one third saw their centre as safe for staff but mixed for inmates. Most importantly, none of the inmates or staff who were interviewed saw their centre as clearly unsafe for either inmates or staff (see Table 2).

Table 2. Convergence of views of centre safety for inmates and for staff in Rapid Build centres (n=28)

Centre is…	Safe for staff	Mixed for staff	Not safe for staff
Safe for inmates	61%	11%	0%
Mixed for inmates	29%	0%	0%
Not safe for inmates	0%	0%	0%

The issue most commonly seen as affecting the safety of inmates, both positively and negatively, was *accommodation style*. Inmates were more likely to note ways in which the dormitory-style accommodation model improved the safety of inmates, commonly attributing this to the positive social dynamic that the accommodation style promotes.

Nearly half of all interviewees in Rapid Build centres saw the privileges that come with placement in such centres (e.g., the freedoms of the dormitory-style accommodation, especially a lack of lock-in) as something that inmates are afraid to lose. They argued that these privileges act as *incentives for prosocial behaviour,* encouraging inmates to avoid both violent and non-violent misbehaviour. Several interviewees further identified the overall safety for inmates in their Rapid Build centre as an important benefit that inmates would not want to lose.

Several staff members, however, thought the accommodation style had the potential to negatively affect safety in the centre. They explained that the open-plan accommodation model and lack of cells (that allow for inmates to be separated), would make it harder to get fights and riots under control, endangering both inmates and staff.

"…at a normal centre where they're locked in cells, if we're going to enter the cell for a reason we have the security staff on and you're dealing with one or two. Now we might be going down to a pod for just one or two inmates but we still have those other 23 to deal with as well. You know like there's always that risk there." -Staff member (Rapid Build)

The same staff usually argued that other factors, most commonly the *type and mix of inmates* selected for the centre, and inmates' motivation to remain in the centre, prevented such safety risks from materialising. They explained that inmates currently placed in Rapid Build centres are specifically selected because they are nonviolent and well behaved, with around 4 in 10 indicating that the selective nature of the inmate population

had a positive impact on safety. In fact, many argued that this approach to selection was particularly important for the dormitory-style accommodation model, which would otherwise be too dangerous to implement.

Both inmates and staff also recognised the level and effectiveness of *surveillance* in the Rapid Build centres as having a positive impact on safety, particularly for inmates. Here, the level of safety was seen as a consequence of the surveillance of inmates, including 24-hour coverage of the accommodation. The increased surveillance of the Rapid Build accommodation areas was compared favourably to the situation in traditional centres where, they argued, the lack of cameras in cells can leave inmates unobserved for much of the day. Interviewees felt that the constant "eye in the sky" can help protect inmates and discourage violence.

4.2 Experiences of inmates and staff in traditional centres

4.2.1 Perception of social climate

Inmates and staff who were interviewed in traditional centres had a mixed view of the social climate in their centre, with a mean rating of 3.3 out of 5. Inmates rated it slightly higher than staff (see Figure 6).
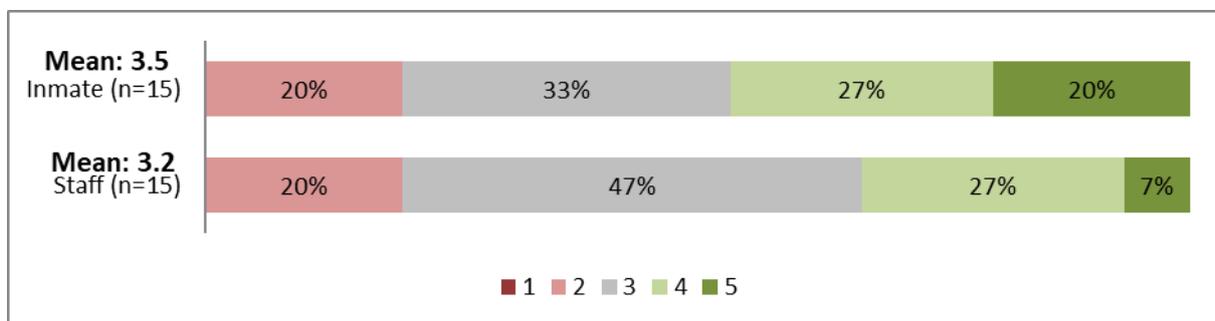

Figure 6. Rating of social climate by staff and inmates in traditional centres

Inmates commonly saw social climate in their centre as closely connected to whether they liked or disliked their fellow inmates, mostly a consequence of the *type and mix of inmates* in the centre. Staff also focused their assessment on relationships with their colleagues, as well as the extent to which they felt other staff would support them in a dangerous situation. Both inmates and staff who compared their centre to other (traditional) centres where they had previously been placed, most often saw the social climate in their current centre as the same as in other centres. This view generally manifested in a statement that all centres are alike and that, good or bad, this is just the nature of a correctional centre.

"…I've been in for a while so I guess like I'm used to all of this; there's nothing that will make change - like jail is jail."   *-Inmate (Traditional)*

Both inmates and staff most often identified *purposeful activities* and *activity levels* as having the greatest positive impact on the overall social climate. Work was usually mentioned as the major purposeful activity and inmates commonly saw themselves as very busy, with several mentioning the minimal free time available to them between finishing work and being locked in their cells in the mid-afternoon. They usually saw this level of activity as positive for social climate because it reduces boredom and tension.

Inmates in traditional centres noted that they had opportunities for frequent contact with other inmates within the shared common areas of their cell-based *accommodation style* and, due to their *activity levels,* during the time they were out-of-cell. Those being interviewed commonly appreciated this frequent contact with other inmates, arguing that it has helped create a more social atmosphere among a larger community of inmates rather than just cellmates. Several noted that having contact with other inmates reduces feelings of loneliness and can help create friendship groups that protect each other and prevent violence.

One issue noted by both inmates and staff as negatively impacting social climate was the high *turnover among the inmate population.* They argued that each change in the inmate population leads to a period of uncertainty and violence as new social dynamics are tested and hierarchies are established. Interviewees, however, viewed the level of turnover differently in terms of how it impacted overall social climate. Inmates were more concerned about turnover impacting their ability to maintain social groups and connections, and generally felt the population was stable enough to do so. However, staff often felt the opposite, arguing that turnover in their centre was too high, leading to friction between inmates as social dynamics are tested and remade again and again. In fact, the high turnover among the inmate population was the issue most frequently mentioned by staff members as having a negative impact on the overall social climate of the centre.

4.2.1.1   Relationships and respect

Inmates and staff who were interviewed in traditional centres rated their view of relationships and respect between inmates and staff as mostly mixed or dependent on the situation or people involved, rather than clearly good or bad (see Figure 7). Issues affecting relationships between inmates and staff in traditional centres were very similar to those in Rapid Build centres, with most of the focus given to the quality and attitude of staff. Inmates were more likely to respect staff who came across as confident but considerate in how they made decisions and interacted with inmates and other staff.
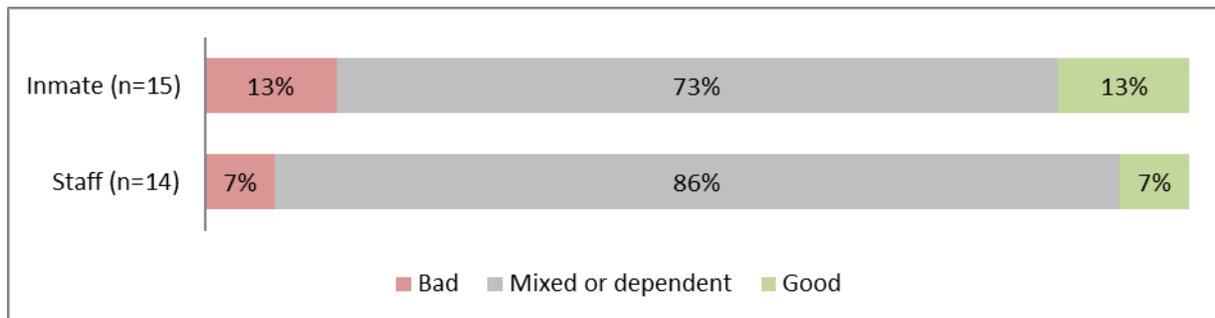
Figure 7. Assessment of inmate-staff relationships by inmates and staff in traditional centres

When inmates were asked about their relationships with other inmates, and staff were asked about their relationships with other staff, they were again seen as mainly mixed or dependent on the situation or people involved. However, inmates were much more likely to see relationships and respect between inmates as good, compared to how staff viewed relationships among themselves (see Figure 8).
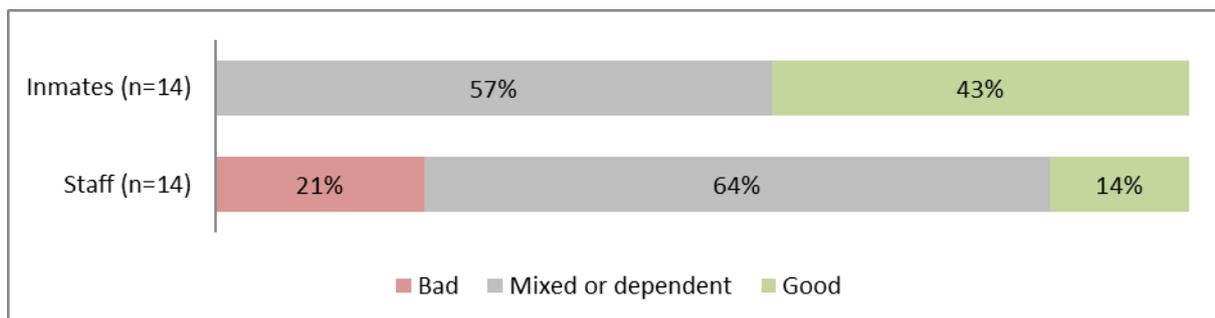
Figure 8. Assessment of relationships among members of each group (inmate-inmate and staff-staff) in traditional centres

Inmates in traditional centres identified the same issues as inmates from Rapid Build centres as both positively and negatively affecting relationships among inmates. They mentioned the frequent contact they had with other inmates due to the shared common areas of the *accommodation style* and their *activity levels*, as well as the *type and mix of inmates* in the centre, and the high *turnover among the inmate population*. They saw these

factors as working together to create and intensify environments that fit the social needs and interests of inmates.

The local context and management of a centre appeared to have a strong impact on staff perceptions of relationships and respect. For example, new hiring practices and staffing policies meant a recent influx of young and inexperienced new staff members were able to be placed in locations without the presence of senior staff to support them. Many staff members highlighted their concerns regarding such practices and policies, with several explicitly noting the friction caused by the difficulty maintaining order and keeping inexperienced staff members safe in such conditions. Some staff also identified the role of management and the perceived likelihood of being supported by managers when making decisions as having an impact on relationships among staff. When staff did not feel they were supported by managers it affected their confidence as well as their ability to project confidence to inmates.

4.2.1.2   Perceptions of safety

Inmates and staff who were interviewed in traditional centres had quite different views regarding the safety of their centres compared to those in Rapid Build centres. While most were likely to either see their centre as clearly safe or mixed/dependent on the situation and people involved, several inmates and staff identified their centre as being unsafe (see Figure 9). Inmates often argued that the perceived high level of violence in their centre is not uncommon among centres in NSW. The vast majority of inmates felt that their centre was the same as other (traditional) centres in terms of safety.
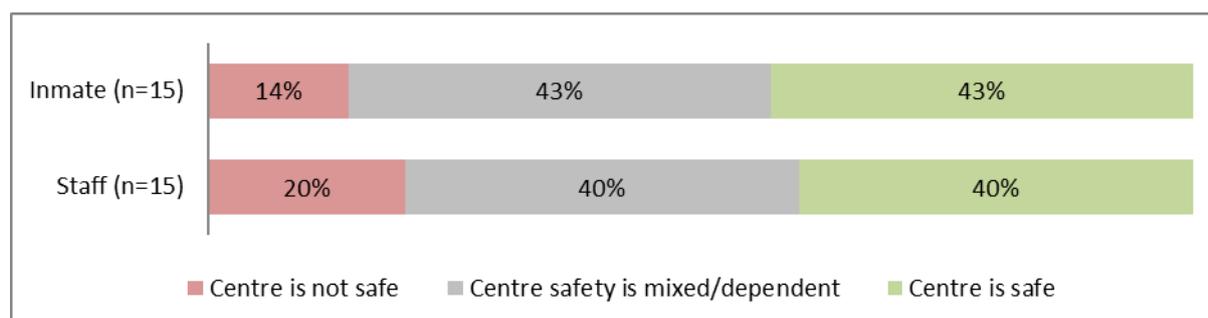
Figure 9. Assessment of safety of centre for inmates by inmates and staff in traditional centres

There were again notable differences regarding perceptions of safety in traditional centres compared to Rapid Build centres when considering the combined views of inmates and staff. Here, only one fifth of interviewees saw the traditional centre they were in as safe for both inmates and staff. While there were generally mixed views regarding the safety of the centre, it is important to note that several interviewees saw the centre as unsafe for *either* inmates or staff and some saw it as unsafe for *both* inmates and staff (see Table 3).

Table 3. Convergence of views of centre safety for inmates and for staff in traditional centres (n=28)

Centre is…	Safe for staff	mixed for staff	Not safe for staff
safe for inmates	19%	4%	7%
mixed for inmates	26%	15%	0%
not safe for inmates	7%	15%	7%

The factor interviewees most commonly saw as affecting inmates' safety in centres, both positively and negatively, was the *type and mix of inmates* placed there. Many interviewees, particularly inmates, saw their safety, and the safety of other inmates, as tied to the identity of their peers, and their ability to connect to a group. In traditional centres self-identification was commonly associated with racial and ethnic groups.

Several inmates in traditional centres argued that racial and ethnic integration in centres creates friction between groups and makes the centre less safe. They highlighted that associating with large groups of inmates they identify with was important for feeling safe.

"…all jails are about the people that are in the jail with you. I'm Koori, you know. I feel safe around other Kooris…because that's my group... In our pod at the moment there's 13, 14 [from other ethnic groups]. They feel comfortable because there's - they got a couple of numbers. But the rest of us, you know, we're all brothers. That's why I feel comfortable in this jail."   *-Inmate (Traditional)*

Another factor interviewees saw as affecting safety in the centre was the *surveillance* in the centre, particularly the lack of surveillance in cells. Staff frequently mentioned how the lack of surveillance in cells impacted the level of safety in the centre by diminishing the ability of staff to protect inmates from their cellmates during the long period of lock-in every day. They highlighted that violence often occurs during this lock-in period.

In specifically considering the safety of staff, inmates identified the quality and attitude of staff as having an impact. They commonly noted that staff with positive, confident, and friendly attitudes can reduce the risk of inmate violence and intransigence. Inmates argued that their behaviour and attitude in relation to staff is generally a reaction to staff attitudes. They explained that staff who are aggressive, dismissive and unhelpful can prompt inmates to misbehave and even attack them.

When staff were asked about issues affecting their own safety, they very often noted the impact of hiring practices and staffing policies in the centre. Staff noted that large intakes of new and young staff, and the placement of inexperienced staff in locations without experienced staff to support them, was problematic for ensuring safety. They expressed beliefs that new, young and inexperienced staff do not have the capacity to manage dangerous situations on their own, and that allowing them to do so can make these situations more dangerous for both inmates and staff.

4.3   Effects of factors relevant to Rapid Build innovations on social climate

Section 2.2 outlined innovative aspects of the Rapid Build model and how they compare to elements of the traditional centre model. This section details how each of these aspects has influenced perceptions of social climate across the different correctional centre models.

We note that in many cases, interviewees discussed the influence of factors that are relevant to Rapid Build innovations in reference to their broader experience of the prison environment and satisfaction with being at the centre, rather than social climate specifically. While not strictly related to the core aims of this study, we deemed these responses to provide important insights about how features of Rapid Build and traditional centres influence peoples' perceptions and experiences of the centre. As such, in this section we have also discussed the impact of each element on interviewees' satisfaction with their placement in the centre, where relevant.

4.3.1   Accommodation style

The accommodation style relevant to each correctional centre model was raised by both inmates and staff as having one of the most significant impacts on social climate. However, the dormitory-style accommodation in Rapid Build centres appeared to be viewed as having a greater positive impact on social climate than the standard cell-based model in traditional centres.

For those in Rapid Build centres, the dormitory-style accommodation was mentioned by half of all interviewees as one of the most important factors having a positive impact on the social climate of Rapid Build

centres. Inmates associated the perceived improvements of this accommodation style with opportunities for close social interaction and a shared purpose with other inmates in the dormitory, as well as appreciation of the perceived privilege of living in a Rapid Build centre. They also argued that the improved interaction and community feeling fostered by the accommodation model reduced the likelihood of disagreements developing into violent altercations.

"[The dormitory-style accommodation makes it safer] because… after all we just feel like a bit of a community…you're interacting with everybody, so you become like a family sort of thing. You sort of learn to live with one another this way… you have to learn to get on with people and interact and do the right thing." —Inmate (Rapid Build)

Inmates in Rapid build centres also linked the accommodation style to their general satisfaction with life in the centre. They noted the feeling of freedom associated with spending more time in a larger space, being able to walk around with fewer limitations, and being allowed to interact with many inmates until late at night. Several mentioned the ability to see the night sky as an important symbolic element of this freedom, as inmates rarely have the freedom to do this in traditional centres due to early lock-ins.

A small number of inmates in Rapid Build centres saw the accommodation style as diminishing the social climate in the centre because it forced interaction with others and reduced physical barriers between inmates, which may be unpleasant, especially if there are existing disagreements. Staff also considered the potential negative consequences of the dormitory-style accommodation. More than one third noted their fear that managing large numbers of inmates in an open-plan setting in the event of a mass fight or riot would be very difficult. The same staff however generally noted that such an event was currently a hypothetical risk and that their centre had not seen many violent events.

Inmates in traditional centres identified mixed impacts that the cell-based accommodation model has on social climate, and factors relating to relationships and safety specifically. For example, some inmates noted the frequent contact they had with their cellmate and with other inmates in common areas as a positive way to create friendship groups. On the other hand, some inmates and staff argued that the cell-based model was the catalyst for a range of other issues including increased idle time that increases tension and frustration. They also discussed a lack of surveillance in cells that puts inmates at risk of being hurt by their cellmate during long lock-in periods.

4.3.2   Purposeful activities

Interviewees from Rapid Build centres, especially staff members, commonly saw the availability and delivery of the broad range of purposeful activities in their centre as positively affecting the social climate in their centre. Inmates highlighted the importance of the range and nature of the activities that fill their days, rather than simply the proportion of their day during which they are busy. Interviewees explicitly saw purposeful activities, especially those involving training for possible employment opportunities after they are released as improving inmates' outlook, feelings of accomplishment and preparation for life in the community.

"Now if you give them education and they know they are learning things, they're kind of put into - put some perspective, put some structure into their life. Because they are thinking about what they are going to do when they get out. Whatever they are learning, they're thinking about their lives." —Inmate (Rapid Build)

Interviewees from traditional centres, despite commonly reporting feeling busy compared to other units, rarely mentioned the activities that fill their days as purposeful, simply focusing on them being "employment" or "programs". Several staff also explicitly stated that they felt there were not enough activities and that this affected inmates' rehabilitation and the social climate in the centre due to boredom.

4.3.3   Activity levels

Rapid Build centres were specifically designed to engage inmates in purposeful activities for much of their day every day. While interviewees in Rapid Build centres were more likely to see inmates as spending a large amount of their day in structured/purposeful activities, inmates in traditional centres also felt quite busy based on the structure of their day (see Figure 10).
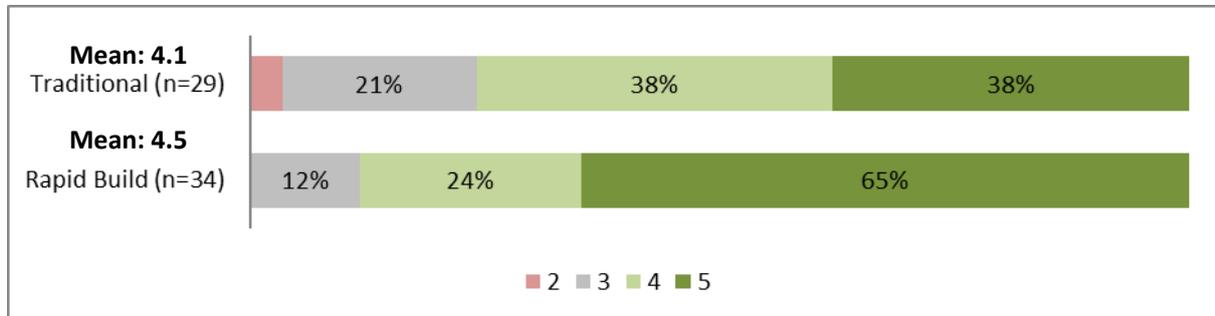

Figure 10. Interviewee rating of agreement with the statement "Inmates in this centre spend a large amount of their day in structured/purposeful activities like education, employment and programs"

The majority of inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres saw high activity levels for inmates as having a positive impact on the overall social climate in the centre. Inmates specifically noted the early wake-up, the lack of mid-afternoon lock-in, and the continuation of activities over the course of the whole day as the major aspects that make them feel particularly busy. Inmates who compared this with their previous experiences in traditional centres often associated the lack of work or having an early lock-in with increased misbehaviour due to boredom and pent-up energy. They often mentioned how the high levels of purposeful activities in their current centre has a positive impact on safety and overall misbehaviour in the centre because inmates remain busy.

Although a number of inmates in Rapid Build centres noted that their initial impressions of the high levels of daily activities was very negative, even impacting their overall satisfaction with the centre, many of these inmates said they got used to it and later found it a positive experience.

"…so when you're sitting around doing nothing, that's when all the bullshit happens. People start plotting oh look, we'll – he must have money so we'll go and harass him, or something like that, they'll gang up."   -Inmate (Rapid Build)

Inmates in traditional centres focused almost solely on paid work and an early lock-in that left little free idle time outside of cells. They compared their experiences to those of inmates in units where work is not required and highlighted the friction and violence caused by boredom and aimlessness among inmates under these circumstances. They also noted how having little downtime outside of their cells can reduce this feeling. In fact, this structure was the aspect of their life in prison that most inmates in traditional centres associated with a positive experience and as having a positive impact on their overall satisfaction with their life in the centre.

4.3.4   Type and mix of inmates

The type and mix of inmates in the centre was viewed as having a powerful impact on key aspects of social climate such as relationships and safety; however this was expressed in different ways by inmates and staff in Rapid Build and traditional centres.

Inmates from both Rapid Build and traditional centres commonly mentioned the importance of spending time with fellow inmates who are culturally, ethnically, and even geographically similar to them for enabling good relationships and overall social climate. This focus on the racial or ethnic background of inmates was more pronounced in traditional centres, where a large number of inmates emphasised that having a broad mix of

racial and ethnic groups in their unit creates friction and violence. Several noted that this was exacerbated by the violent history of many inmates in the centre.

On the other hand, inmates in Rapid Build centres were more likely to focus on the large number of sex offenders placed in Rapid Build centres as leading to fights and bullying. In one Rapid Build centre in particular it was noted that inmates attacked sex offenders, in part to demonstrate that they themselves were not sex offenders as the centre had developed a reputation, and along with it a stigma, for housing mainly sex offenders.

From the staff perspective, inmates in Rapid Build centres were characterised as particularly well-behaved with minimal history of violence and a long history of stability. They very commonly saw this as improving the safety of both inmates and staff placed in the Rapid Build centres. Staff highlighted that this was particularly important within the context of such a novel accommodation model, which lacks the separation between inmates that would normally assist staff in managing fights and riots.

"I think also the cohort of offenders that we've got here, most of them are quite aged, frail, first time in custody. Easily managed." -Staff Member (Rapid Build)

4.3.5 Turnover among the inmate population

Turnover among the inmate population was mentioned by all groups of interviewees as a major factor affecting the overall impression of social climate in their respective centres. Interviewees in Rapid Build centres were more likely to view the inmate population as stable than those in traditional centres, with almost two thirds giving a rating of 4 or 5 out of 5 to the statement "The inmate population in this centre is stable" (see Figure 11).
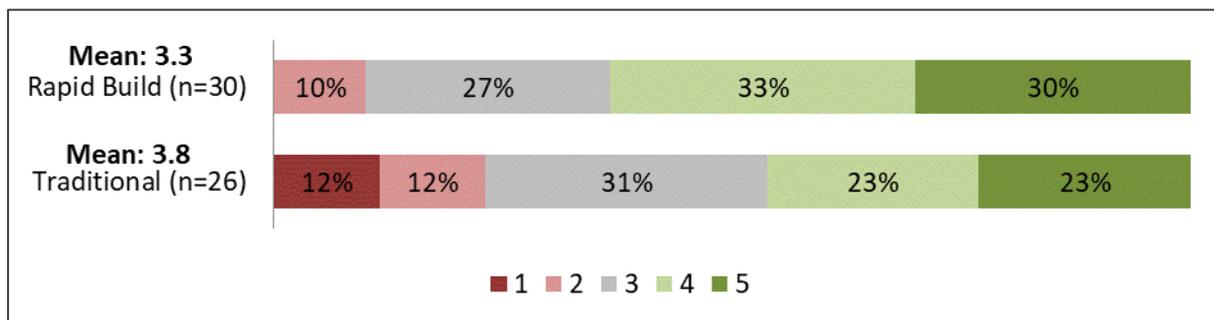
Figure 11. Interviewee rating of agreement with the statement "The inmate population in this centre is stable (i.e. there's not a lot of inmate turnover)"

Several inmates who had experienced placements in both Rapid Build and traditional centres argued that traditional centres tend to have more friction and violence due to a higher turnover of inmates that are on remand or who have been moved as punishment for misbehaviour. Several staff members from traditional centres argued that high turnover, especially when it involves remand inmates and other temporary placements in the centre, creates friction and affects the social climate of the centre.

Most inmates in both Rapid Build and traditional centres, however, did not see the main impacts of turnover as inherently positive or negative; rather, they saw it as a 'lottery' that could lead to positive or negative outcomes for them. These outcomes depend on the mix of inmates in the centre regarding character, connections, and even ethnicity. However, when probed about their preference, such interviewees generally saw stability in the centre population (i.e., low turnover) as a net positive due to its likelihood of creating positive/neutral relationships and respect even among somewhat incompatible inmates.

Staff, particularly in Rapid Build centres, also described ways in which low levels of turnover improve the social climate in their centre. They commonly argued that low turnover helped inmates feel settled and less anxious about their place among the population. They also argued that a more stable population prevented the friction that was often caused when new inmates entered the prison.

4.3.6 Surveillance

Overall, staff who were interviewed in Rapid Build centres felt that their centre had effective 24-hour surveillance, with the vast majority rating their agreement with either a 4 or 5 out of 5.[4] Those in traditional centres gave more mixed, and on average somewhat lower, ratings (see Figure 12).
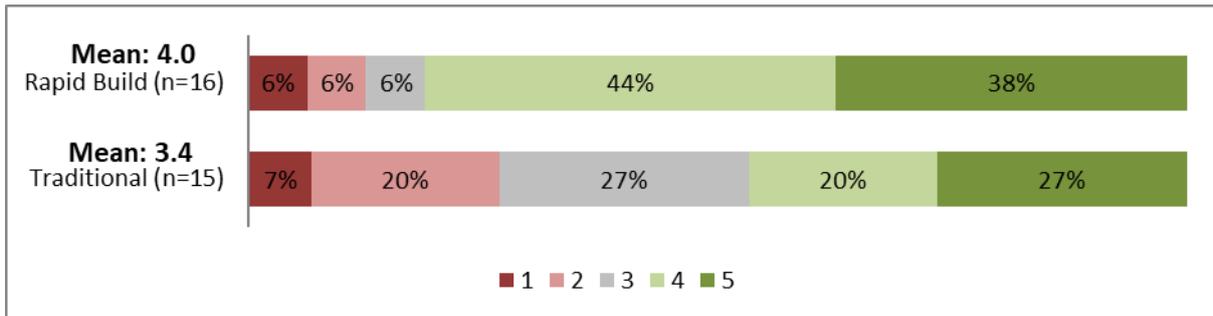
Figure 12. Interviewee rating of level of agreement with the statement "There is effective 24-hour surveillance in my centre"

More than 1 in 4 interviewees in Rapid build centres mentioned ways in which the level of surveillance in their centre improves the social climate, specifically the safety of inmates. They commonly associated this with the ability of staff to see into inmate sleeping quarters during the night, allowing them to manage violence and misbehaviour whenever it occurs. The small number of staff members in Rapid Build centres who felt that there was not effective surveillance in their centre generally associated this with technological issues, including low resolution monitors and difficulty observing all areas under surveillance at the same time.

Very few staff in traditional centres saw surveillance in their centre as having a positive impact on safety in any way. Furthermore, a third of staff in traditional centres felt that the surveillance in their centre was not sufficient, leading to an unsafe environment for inmates. Staff generally saw the lack of cameras in cells, and other camera blind spots, as the main surveillance issue increasing the risk to inmates' safety. However, they also commonly felt that the lack of cameras in cells could improve inmates' satisfaction with their life in the traditional centres due to the increased privacy. Several even argued that the lack of surveillance in cells creates a better social climate as inmates feel more comfortable.

4.3.7 Access to phone calls and visits

Inmates in Rapid Build centres reported higher agreement with the statement "Inmates have good opportunities to keep in touch with friends and family in the community" (*M* = 4.1) than those in traditional centres (*M* = 3.8) (see Figure 13).

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[4] Only staff were asked to rate their impression of the surveillance in the centre ("there is effective 24-hour surveillance of inmates"), as it is not anticipated that inmates would have detailed knowledge of the level of surveillance in their centre.

Figure 13. Interviewee rating of level of agreement with the statement "Inmates have good opportunities to keep in touch with friends and family in the community"

Inmates in Rapid Build centres, many of whom had previously been placed in traditional centres, commonly stated that the Rapid Build centre provided them with increased access to family and friends, particularly through phone calls. Inmates exp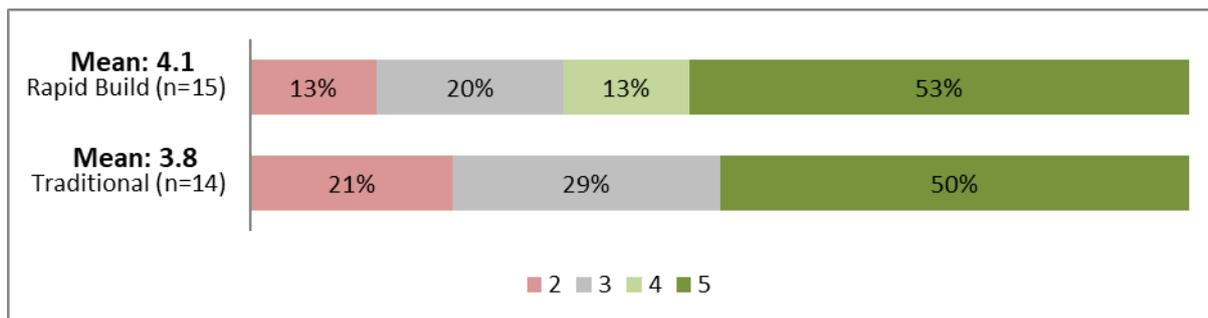lained that they were able to interact with family and friends in the community until late in the evening, often comparing the situation with that in traditional centres where the afternoon lock-ins meant they had very little time available for making phone calls. Several noted that they were able to comfortably speak with their children on weeknights and before bed for the first time since entering prison. Others reported that they had been able to re-establish relationships with family and friends due to opportunities for longer phone calls at various hours of the day. Many argued that increased opportunities to keep in touch with family and friends improves inmates' attitudes and calms them down. In fact, more than half of inmates interviewed argued that the greater level of access in their centre improves the overall social climate in the centre and the 'feeling' or 'happiness' that this created among inmates. Furthermore, these improved opportunities to communicate with family and friends outside prison were mentioned as one of the main aspects that improved their overall satisfaction with life in the centre.

Several inmates in traditional centres, on the other hand, specifically noted that the lack of free time available for them to make phone calls was a problem. They argued that having little free time to contact family and friends limits their access to the outside world, increases their stress levels, and can lead to friction with other inmates, which has a general negative impact on the social climate in the centre. Inmates from traditional centres also argued that the limited free time available can make the lines to use the phone in traditional centres a site of friction, and even violence, between inmates.

4.3.8   Incentives for prosocial behaviour

Incentives for prosocial behaviour were discussed by both staff and inmates in Rapid Build centres as impacting their experience. These incentives were seen as relevant to social climate and were also often the aspects of life in the centre that inmates saw as having a positive impact on their overall satisfaction. Many inmates associated greater satisfaction with what they saw as greater freedoms offered in the Rapid Build centre. The freedoms they mentioned were connected to the dormitory *accommodation style*, as well as other privileges including *purposeful activities*, increased access to *phone calls and visits,* good food and access to gardens.

Both inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres highlighted the perceived impact of these incentives on the behaviour of inmates who are afraid of losing the privileges associated with placement in a Rapid Build centre. Inmates weigh the benefits of misbehaviour against the risk of being removed from the Rapid Build centre. The importance of this calculation for reducing violence was highlighted by inmates. Their decision not to engage in violence or misbehaviour for fear of being moved back to a traditional centre thus helps to improve the overall social climate in the centre.

"…the way the jail is set up and the privileges here; to those of us that just want to do our time peacefully it's a good incentive… you don't want to go back to a jail where you're locked down at three o'clock and you know, so privileges like that… encourages people to, you know, behave themselves a bit more here."   *-Inmate (Rapid Build)*

To further consider incentives for and against prosocial behaviour, interviewees were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement, "There is zero tolerance of inmate misbehaviour in this centre". Inmates across centres showed moderate agreement with this statement, with average scores of 3.7 in Rapid Build centres and 3.6 in traditional centres (see Figure 14). These ratings were supported in interviews where stakeholders in Rapid Build centres commonly saw their centre as having a moderate approach to discipline, with some specifically mentioning escalating sanctions that can lead to removal.

Inmates and staff in traditional centres did not note any particular incentives against misbehaviour for inmates placed in such centres. Inmates did note a preference against being punished by staff, but did not associate this with a decision to maintain good behaviour, and discussions relating to violence and behaviour rarely mentioned thoughts of punishment. Inmates generally did not fear being transferred away from their traditional centre. In fact, several inmates in one centre saw their placement in that centre as a punishment in itself, after their bad behaviour in other centres. They did not directly relate this idea of punishment or lack of incentives for prosocial behaviour to social climate.

As illustrated in Figure 14, staff in traditional centres were less likely to perceive their centre as having zero tolerance for misbehaviour compared to inmates in the same centres and inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres. In discussions about these ratings, several staff members from traditional sites reported feeling that they are often not backed up by management when they choose to punish and charge inmates for (sometimes severe) misbehaviour. Staff members noted several ways in which this inconsistency can affect the social climate of the centre. They argued that it can lead to greater misbehaviour and even violence, as some inmates ignore instructions by lower rank staff, expecting that management will overturn decisions and limit punishments. They also felt that this can seriously affect their relationship with inmates. Inmates in traditional centres, however, did not mention such issues. Interviewees in Rapid Build centres also rarely mentioned disagreements with management about tolerance of misbehaviour.
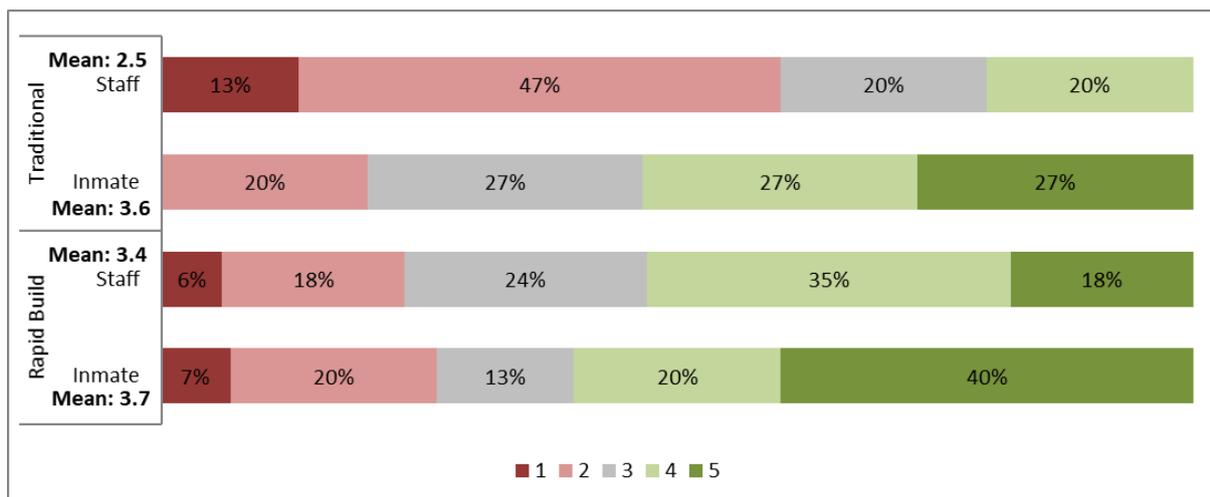
Figure 14. Staff and inmate ratings of agreement with the statement ""There is zero tolerance of inmate misbehaviour in this centre", by centre type

4.3.9   Specially selected staff

Rapid Build staff did not mention particular selection requirements for staff in Rapid Build centres and did not note dramatic differences in the quality and capabilities of their Rapid Build colleagues as compared to previous colleagues from other sites. Staff from both Rapid Build and traditional centres, however, commonly saw employment at Rapid Build centres as substantially preferable to traditional centres, making it more competitive. This was most often mentioned because of improved pay; however, some staff highlighted the specially selected inmates and reduced likelihood of violence as reasons for their preference. In fact, staff at one traditional centre commonly complained that the improved pay and conditions in a nearby Rapid Build centre lead to dissatisfaction among staff at their centre.

Inmates and staff in both Rapid Build and traditional centres had similar views about the ability of staff in their respective centres to develop positive relationships with inmates. Approximately half of all interviewees felt these relationships had a positive impact on social climate.

Staff in traditional centres, however, were more likely to discuss how the quality and attitude of staff had a negative impact on their relationships with each other. Increased hiring in many of the traditional centres was commonly mentioned as a key factor negatively impacting the overall quality of staff. They argued that this hiring often led to indiscriminate recruitment of young custodial officers with immature attitudes and difficulties executing their duties in a professional manner. Some argued that the poor skills and unhelpful attitude of these staff members negatively affects relationships between staff and how safe they feel working alongside such staff. In turn, they felt these issues affecting both relationships and safety also had a negative impact on the overall social climate in the centre.

5   Discussion

The current study aimed to examine how inmates and staff view the social climate in Rapid Build centres, relative to traditional centres. The study sought to gain a nuanced qualitative understanding of inmate experiences of living in a Rapid Build centre and staff experiences of managing those inmates. The key findings outlined in this report highlight common themes across Rapid Build and traditional centres that impacted the overall social climate of those centres.

5.1   Innovative features of the Rapid Build model affect social climate

The primary aim of the current study was to develop a nuanced understanding of factors that affect the social climate of a centre, with a focus on the innovative features of the Rapid Build model. When asked about what contributes most to their perceptions of social climate, inmates and staff from both Rapid Build and traditional centres identified similar aspects: accommodation style, incentives for prosocial behaviour, type and mix of inmates, turnover of the inmate population, purposeful activities, activity levels and access to phones. Most notably though, is how the innovative features of the Rapid Build model are interconnected and work together to influence inmate and staff experiences.

At the centre of the key innovations that affect social climate is the dormitory accommodation style of the Rapid Build centres and the impact it has on interactions between inmates. It is seen as easing tension between inmates through promoting a prosocial community, thus reducing violence and fostering a positive social climate. Inmates in traditional centres, on the other hand, felt their accommodation style, and related factors such as spending long periods of time locked in their cells, meant violence between cellmates was a common risk. Others, however, argued that the time spent in their cells, usually with only one cellmate, often creates strong bonds. Research has identified that the very nature of cellmate relationships can be critical (Muirhead et al., 2021; Schliehe & Crewe, 2021). Interactions between cellmates can enhance *or* diminish well-being because they have the potential to either increase strain or provide social support (Muirhead et al., 2021; Schliehe & Crewe, 2021). When positive relationships between inmates are formed, the risk of prison violence and inmate misconduct may be reduced, which in turn improves the perceived safety and overall social climate of the centre (Bosma et al., 2020; Gadon et al., 2006).

The freedoms and privileges associated with, and enabled by, the novel Rapid Build accommodation style further work as an incentive for prosocial behaviour. Inmates who are able to move freely around the prison, spend more time out-of-cell and even have the ability to cook their own meals, are less likely to experience deprivations of their perceived freedom of choice and autonomy, which has been associated with enhanced well-being and positive perceptions of social climate (Parsons, 2017; Van Der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2017; van Ginneken et al., 2019). Inmates in Rapid Build centres are therefore often reluctant to engage in violence for fear of being moved to a centre without such privileges.

The specially selected type and mix of inmates in Rapid Build centres (i.e., with a history of good behaviour and nonviolence) also enables the accommodation model to safely function by reducing the risks associated with the freedom of movement in the dormitory. This specially selected inmate population, together with a low turnover among the inmate population in the Rapid Build centres allows for the community-like atmosphere identified in those centres to be established and maintained. The sense of 'family' felt by inmates in the Rapid Build centres helps reduce the likelihood of friction and conflict associated with re-establishing group dynamics when the type and mix of inmates change. While these findings indicate success of the intended inmate management model at Rapid Build centres, an implication is that the impact of many innovations represented by the model are likely to be moderated by their application to specific groups of inmates. It may therefore be

difficult to generalise some Rapid Build innovations to other contexts where inmates have different characteristics or the opportunity for selection is more limited.

Inmates in traditional centres, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of being with other inmates who match their culture, ethnicity and interests, and complained that the heterogeneous nature of the centre population, especially in terms of ethnicities, leads to friction and conflict. This issue is heightened by the perception of high turnover among the inmate population, which has the potential to interrupt the status hierarchy. There is further potential for conflict and violence when certain inmate characteristics imported into the prison, such as gang membership and criminal reputation influence inmate interactions and contribute to establishing or re-establishing the inmate status hierarchy (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Kreager et al., 2017; Mears et al., 2013).

Inmates in both Rapid Build and traditional centres reported high activity levels as playing an important role in reducing boredom, hopelessness and tension, and contributing to positive views of the social climate. Inmates in Rapid Build centres spoke of a range of purposeful activities that kept them busy throughout a long day. Those in traditional centres noted it was the limited time they had between finishing work and being locked in their cells that kept them feeling busy. The greater access to purposeful activities available in the Rapid Build centres, however, meant inmates felt their time was spent on meaningful activities that improved interest in rehabilitation. The type and mix of inmates in the centre again play an important role, with inmates specially selected based on their interest and willingness to participate in a range of activities over a long, structured day. The ability to keep inmates busy and engaged throughout the day further helped mitigate the risks associated with the freedoms afforded to inmates living in an open-plan accommodation model.

Finally, the accommodation style in Rapid Build centres allows inmates access to phones until late in the evening, while inmates in traditional centres only have access to phones until they are locked in their cells. Inmates in Rapid Build centres therefore have more opportunity to contact family and friends, which in turn improves the mood of inmates and relieves tension. Previous research highlights that when inmates are able to maintain positive social connections outside prison, they are more likely to report better wellbeing and positive perceptions of their environment (e.g., Cooper & Berwick, 2001; Gullone et al., 2000; Jacoby & Kozie-Peak, 1997; Liebling, 2004; Wooldredge, 1999). In traditional centres, the limited access to phones, paired with the fact inmates often must queue to use a phone, was reported to increase stress and the risk of friction and violence between inmates. The differences in phone access between the centre models means it has a positive impact on social climate in Rapid Build centres but a negative impact on social climate in traditional centres.

After taking into account the various factors that impacted their experiences of their centre, inmates and staff in Rapid Build centres were more likely to rate the social climate in their centre as positive compared to those in traditional centres. What appeared to distinguish the Rapid Build centres from traditional centres was how these specific features were to some extent improved by the operational model of the Rapid Builds. The interplay between specific innovations suggests the Rapid Build centres promote a positive social climate *because* a number of the innovations are interdependent and work together, rather than attributing a difference in social climate to any one specific feature.

5.2   Safety is crucial for positive social climate

A common pattern to emerge across interviews with inmates and staff was that perceptions of social climate, and of factors that influence social climate, were frequently causally related to their effect on safety. This is consistent with the prominence of safety in the literature on prison climate (Boone et al., 2016; Schalast et al., 2008; Tonkin, 2016) and supports our focus on issues relating to safety as a key factor in climate during interviews. Considering that a positive social climate has been associated with better therapeutic and other outcomes for inmates (e.g., Day et al., 2011), this pattern of results gives promising indications that innovative

penological models that serve to improve climate, such as the Rapid Build centres, can address the critical security and safety functions of correctional management while also facilitating more rehabilitative goals.

The accommodation style in Rapid Build centres stood out as having the largest influence on how safe inmates and staff rated the centre. The dormitory style accommodation provided inmates with privileges not seen in the traditional centres (e.g., freedom to move around and the ability to see the night sky). The accommodation style essentially acted as an *incentive* for inmates to minimise misbehaviours such as violence so they did not lose such privileges by being transferred out of the centre. While some staff did raise concerns about their ability to control fights or riots in Rapid Build centres due to the open-plan accommodation, such scenarios were hypothetical.

As previously identified, inmates felt the accommodation style in the traditional centres meant there was an increased risk of violence between cellmates during long lock-in periods. Inmates in these centres also more broadly felt they had little incentive to behave as they already viewed placement in their current centre as a punishment for previous misbehaviour, with implications for their likelihood of future engagement in institutional violence.

The 24-hour surveillance in Rapid Build centres further contributed to the perceived safety of these centres. Staff in traditional centres, however, were more likely to focus on surveillance as a key factor negatively impacting safety. The lack of cameras in cells created concerns for the safety of inmates when they were locked in their cells and for the ability of staff to provide an immediate response when violence did occur. On the other hand, some staff also saw the lack of cameras in cells as positively contributing to social climate because it was likely to make inmates feel more comfortable and provide a sense of privacy.

In addition to infrastructure and operational elements of the Rapid Builds, staff also identified the type and mix of inmates as crucial for the safety of these centres. They primarily associated this with the specially selected nature of the population, characterised by histories of nonviolence and positive institutional behaviours. A number of studies have supported the importation theory of inmate behaviour, which asserts that pre-existing individual characteristics such as age, criminal history, offence type and race explain substantial variance in an individual's adjustment to prison and propensity for rule violations such as violence (e.g., Akers et al., 1977; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Hemmens & Marquart, 1999; Jiang, 2005; Wright, 1991). It is therefore not surprising that the type and mix of inmates plays an important role in the perceived safety of a centre. As previously discussed, these and other results of this study suggest that the effects of Rapid Build innovations on factors such as safety closely interact with the specific inmate composition at those centres. In turn, perceptions of safety at a centre were often seen to interact closely with relationships, both between inmates and between inmates and staff. For example, the type and mix of inmates was the key factor seen to influence relationships between inmates. While inmates in Rapid Build centres reported a positive community-like atmosphere, it was those in traditional centres who were more likely to view their relationships with other inmates positively. The need to develop positive relationships with other inmates in traditional centres may be related to the perceived safety of those centres. For example, inmates often reported the importance of having a community to support and protect them due to high levels of violence, thereby creating a sense of camaraderie. Inmates were more likely to feel safe when they were able to form social bonds with other inmates they identified with, based on common characteristics (e.g., ethnicity or hometown region). They felt concerned for their safety when friction arose from a mix of racial and ethnic groups. However, feeling part of a group does not necessarily reduce the overall level of violence in the centre, but instead may benefit inmates personally by meeting their needs, in this case for feelings of safety and control (Goodstein et al., 1984; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008).

Although the Rapid Build accommodation style was generally viewed as contributing to a positive social climate, those who were uncomfortable with the type and mix of inmates felt this was amplified due to the open-plan living arrangements. They saw the constant contact with inmates they did not want to associate

with as having a negative impact on the social climate of the centre. For these inmates, having a stable inmate population was also problematic as it did not allow for the type and mix of inmates to change. Some inmates in Rapid Build centres were concerned with the potential for increased friction and conflict resulting from those seeking to 'punish' sex offenders. It is the inmate population that ultimately influences the culture within the centre, which can be largely dependent on individual factors (Cohen & Taylor, 1972).

Finally, relationships between inmates and staff were also seen to influence safety. The focus largely rested on the quality and attitudes of staff, with inmates more likely to respect authoritative yet supportive, and confident but considerate staff, while overly aggressive or unsure staff created concerns for the safety of a centre. Staff in traditional centres were also more likely to identify young, inexperienced staff as creating concerns for safety, noting more experienced staff would have to step in to help maintain order. Research also indicates that staff characteristics (e.g., experience) can affect both the perceived safety of the centre through reducing prisoner-staff assaults, and the overall social climate of the centre through establishing a positive living environment (Boone et al., 2016; Gadon et al., 2006).

5.3   Limitations

The current study aims to provide a nuanced qualitative understanding of factors affecting prison social climate to complement a quantitative study of similar issues. It is not designed to provide a comprehensive comparison of Rapid Build and traditional centres; however, several limitations should still be noted.

It is important to avoid overstating the reliability of views of interviewees in traditional centres in making comparisons with Rapid Build centres. This is due to interviewees, particularly inmates, from traditional centres usually having not known any other model and being more likely to have the attitude of "all gaols are the same". It is possible they overrate the positivity of certain situations, as the interviewee is unable to imagine a different option; they are essentially subjected to "prisonization", whereby they adhere to the social norms, mandate and culture of the centre (Haney, 2012, p.4). Rapid Build interviewees, on the other hand, were likely to have also experienced the traditional centre model previously and so were able to make more reliable comparisons.

Due to the large number of sub-groups covered by the total sample of interviewees (e.g., inmates and staff in each type of centre), the size of each sub-group (15-20) means that interviewee ratings are not statistically representative of the population and should be treated as indicative only. This is, however, common and appropriate for the purposive sampling framework used in this study, which is focused on obtaining maximum variation among participants, especially when used for interview-based data collection (Sandelowski, 1995). This sampling method can also lead to self-selection bias, as it requires prospective participants to indicate interest in the research and agree to the time and energy cost of participation voluntarily (Collier & Mahoney, 1996). The research team identified this risk and actively worked to mitigate it by utilising various recognised tactics. First, we offered inmates material incentives for their contribution to the research to provide an extrinsic motivation for participation. Hsieh and Kocielnik (2016) found monetary incentives an important method for reducing self-selection bias. Second, we randomised the final sample of participants in each location from among all those who indicated interest. Khazaal et al. (2014) agued there is reduced reliability of self-reported information from non-randomised small samples. While efforts were made to reduce self-selection bias, findings should be interpreted with such limitations in mind.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the data was collected in 2019 and is based on the initially implemented model of the Rapid Build centres. Since this time, senior informants have notified the team that there have been changes to the Rapid Build model that could not be considered in this study. For example, there have been changes to the way inmates are selected for placement in the Rapid Build centres, and updated staff training has been rolled out across all NSW correctional centres that aims to develop positive staff-inmate relationships and promote a more rehabilitative prison environment. Such changes highlight the

importance of considering the specific focus of this research on the relationship between key elements of the Rapid Build model and how they work together to impact inmate and staff experiences of the social climate in the centre. Ongoing research and evaluation of the Rapid Build centres would allow for any changes to the model to be assessed, particularly with respect to impacts on social climate in those centres compared to traditional centres.

5.4 Conclusions

The Rapid Build model was originally developed to safely and securely accommodate a growing inmate population. However, it also became recognised as an opportunity to implement a correctional management philosophy designed around a purposeful structured day for inmates. The Rapid Build model contains a range of innovative features relating to the physical structure of the centres, and both the inmate regime and management of inmates. The penological literature has previously identified factors such as structure, prison facilities, meaningful activities, support, relationships, freedom and safety as influencing prison social climate (Boone et al., 2016; Toch, 1977). Given the novel approach of the Rapid Build model in incorporating such features, there was interest in exploring inmate and staff perceptions of the climate at these centres and how they may differ from those of traditional centres. Several factors were identified in the current study as influencing the social climate in both Rapid Build and traditional centres, many of which related to key innovations of the Rapid Build model. Moreover, we found that multiple innovations of the Rapid Build model work together within this unique context to improve inmate and staff perceptions of the social climate in their centre. It was also identified that many of the features seen to influence social climate did so through the impact they had on the perceived safety of the centre. Taking a holistic approach to understanding the innovations implemented in the Rapid Build model has made it clear that they operate as an interconnected system rather than as individual drivers of change.

Prison social climate has been identified as having an important impact on inmate behaviour, their motivation, readiness and willingness to engage in rehabilitation and the therapeutic impact of incarceration (e.g., Day et al., 2011; Ross et al., 2008; Sauter et al., 2019; Van Der Helm et al., 2014; Woessner & Schwedler, 2014). An environment viewed as both supportive and safe is likely to have the greatest impact on rehabilitation outcomes (Burek & Liederbach, 2021; Day & Vess, 2017; Schalast et al., 2008; Tonkin et al., 2012). The findings of the current study highlight the importance of considering how each innovation of the Rapid Build model can not only impact the experience of inmates and staff, but how the innovative features of this unique model come together to influence the overall social climate of the centre. Further research and evaluation will allow for a greater understanding of how social climate contributes to other longer-term outcomes of the Rapid Build centres and help inform continuous improvement for both these unique centres and more traditional models of inmate management.
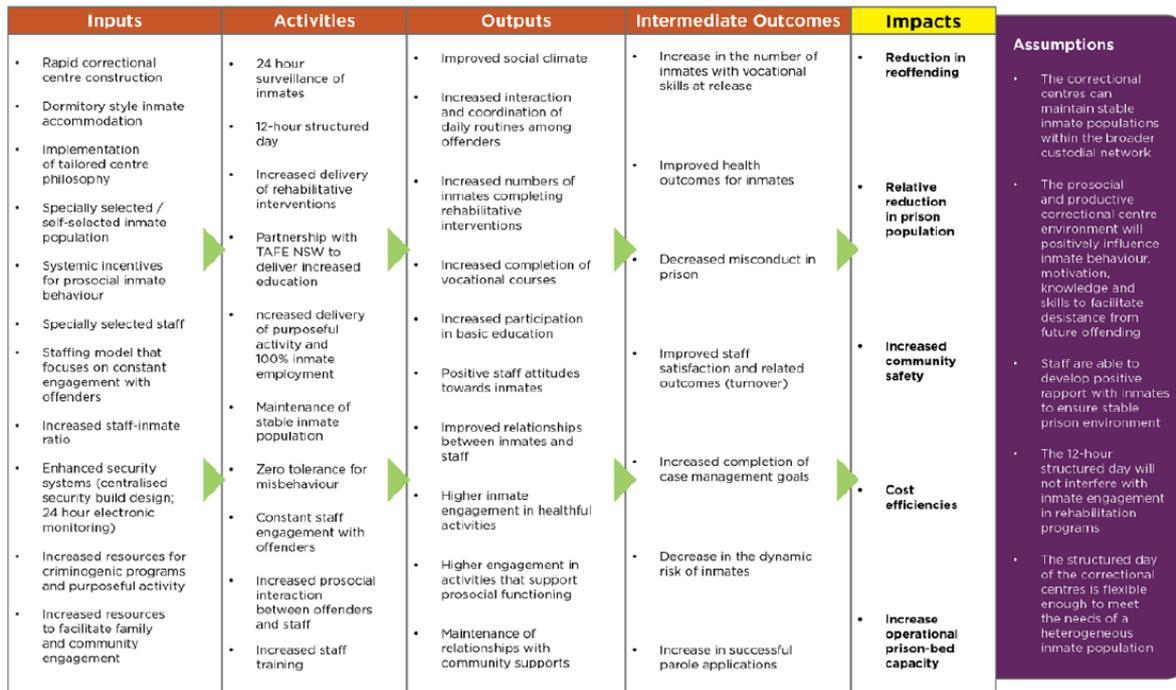
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Appendix A. Rapid Build Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	Impacts	Assumptions
• Rapid correctional centre construction • Dormitory style inmate accommodation • Implementation of tailored centre philosophy • Specially selected / self-selected inmate population • Systemic incentives for prosocial inmate behaviour • Specially selected staff • Staffing model that focuses on constant engagement with offenders • Increased staff-inmate ratio • Enhanced security systems (centralised security build design; 24 hour electronic monitoring) • Increased resources for criminogenic programs and purposeful activity • Increased resources to facilitate family and community engagement	• 24 hour surveillance of inmates • 12-hour structured day • Increased delivery of rehabilitative interventions • Partnership with TAFE NSW to deliver increased education • ncreased delivery of purposeful activity and 100% inmate employment • Maintenance of stable inmate population • Zero tolerance for misbehaviour • Constant staff engagement with offenders • Increased prosocial interaction between offenders and staff • Increased staff training	• Improved social climate • Increased interaction and coordination of daily routines among offenders • Increased numbers of inmates completing rehabilitative interventions • Increased completion of vocational courses • Increased participation in basic education • Positive staff attitudes towards inmates • Improved relationships between inmates and staff • Higher inmate engagement in healthful activities • Higher engagement in activities that support prosocial functioning • Maintenance of relationships with community supports	• Increase in the number of inmates with vocational skills at release • Improved health outcomes for inmates • Decreased misconduct in prison • Improved staff satisfaction and related outcomes (turnover) • Increased completion of case management goals • Decrease in the dynamic risk of inmates • Increase in successful parole applications	• **Reduction in reoffending** • **Relative reduction in prison population** • **Increased community safety** • **Cost efficiencies** • **Increase operational prison-bed capacity**	• The correctional centres can maintain stable inmate populations within the broader custodial network • The prosocial and productive correctional centre environment will positively influence inmate behaviour, motivation, knowledge and skills to facilitate desistance from future offending • Staff are able to develop positive rapport with inmates to ensure stable prison environment • The 12-hour structured day will not interfere with inmate engagement in rehabilitation programs • The structured day of the correctional centres is flexible enough to meet the needs of a heterogeneous inmate population

Other CRES Research Titles

Jan 2022 — Quality of the therapeutic alliance and associations with program outcomes for offenders participating in High Intensity Program Units (HIPUs)

Dec 2021 — The Initial Transitional Support (ITS) program: Implementation evaluation

Oct 2021 — Five Minute Interventions (FMI): Short-term effects of training on staff attitudes towards prisoners, motivation and ability to support rehabilitation, and job stress and satisfaction

Sept 2021 — Process evaluation of the Custody Based Intensive Treatment (CUBIT) program for sex offender: Within-treatment change

Sept 2021 — Impact Evaluation of the Gurnang Life Challenge Specialised Program for Young Adult Male Offenders in NSW

March 2021 — Evaluation of High Intensity Program Units (HIPUs): Implementation of an innovative intervention model for offenders with short custodial sentences

March 2021 — Women in prison: An examination of the support needs of women in custody with children

Feb 2021 — The Initial Transitional Support (ITS) program: A profile of offender participation and service delivery

Oct 2020 — Automated assessment of sexual recidivism risk for custody-based sex offenders

Oct 2020 — The predictive validity of general risk assessment tools for offence-specific recidivism among domestic violence offenders

Oct 2020 — Access to programs and services among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) offenders: The case of EQUIPS

Oct 2020 — Process evaluation of Custodial Case Management: Case plans

Aug 2020 — Understanding the spectrum of domestic violence: Risk factors, treatment pathways and recidivism among offenders who commit intimate partner or non-intimate partner violence

Aug 2020 — Process evaluation of the High Intensity Program Units (HIPUs): Within-treatment change

Aug 2020 — Evaluation of the Practice Guide for Intervention (PGI): Relationship between offender needs and PGI use in case planning and supervision practice

Dec 2019 — Effectiveness of the Initial Transitional Support (ITS) Service 2014-2017

Sept 2019 — Evaluation of EQUIPS treatment pathways for domestic violence offenders in New South Wales

Sept 2019 — Process evaluation of the Practice Guide for Intervention (PGI): Staff experiences of implementation and continuing service delivery

Sept 2019 — Desistance in an ageing inmate population: An examination of trends in age, assessed risk of recidivism and criminogenic needs

Aug 2019 — The Custody Triage Risk Assessment Scale (Custody TRAS): An updated statistical model for predicting risk of return to custody

May 2019 — Effects of the Practice Guide for Intervention (PGI) on behaviour change intervention dosage among community-based offenders

May 2019 — Blending care and control in delivery of the Practice Guide for Intervention (PGI): An assessment of the quality of dual role relationships between offenders and supervising officers in the community