Main Features

Prisoners per 100,000 Population annual change:
Queensland:
- All: ↓ 2.0%
- Indigenous: ↓ 2.2%
Australia:
- All: ↑ 1.4%
- Indigenous: ↑ 4.8%

Proportion of Unsentenced Prisoners annual change:
Queensland: ↑ 1.4 percentage points
Australia: ↑ 0.1 percentage point

Proportion of Female Prisoners annual change:
Queensland: ↑ 0.3 percentage point
Australia: ↑ 0.1 percentage point

Commentary

- On the night of the Prison Census, 30 June 2004, Queensland prisons held 5,240 prisoners. This number represents 21.7% of the total number in Australian prisons. Note that Queensland’s population is 19.3% of Australia’s total population.

- There were 177.0 prisoners in Queensland per 100,000 adult population in 2004 (figure 1). This rate was down 2.0% from 180.7 prisoners per 100,000 population on 30 June 2003.

- In 2004, the 24,171 prisoners in all Australian prisons represented 157.1 prisoners per 100,000 adult population, up slightly from 154.9 in 2003.

- The rate of imprisonment of Indigenous people was more than 11 times the rate of non-Indigenous people. In 2004 Queensland prisons held 1,572.2 Indigenous prisoners per 100,000 Indigenous adult population (figure 1) and 138.3 non-Indigenous prisoners per 100,000 non-Indigenous adult population.

Figure 1: Imprisonment Rate in Queensland, 1994 to 2004

- Only 1 in 14 prisoners in Queensland were female (6.9% of the total). The proportion of female prisoners in Australia as a whole was the same (6.9%). The proportion of female prisoners has increased since 2003 (6.6% for Queensland and 6.8% for Australia).

- Approximately one fifth of prisoners in Queensland (22.2%) were unsentenced, that is on remand, awaiting sentence or awaiting deportation. The Australian figure was 20.4%. The Queensland proportion increased from 20.8%, while the Australian proportion decreased from 20.5% in 2003.

- The proportion of sentenced prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence, such as life imprisonment, was greater in Queensland (6.2%) than in Australia as a whole (4.1%). The Queensland proportion decreased from 6.4% in 2003, while the Australian proportion remained the same at 4.1%.

- Of the remaining sentenced prisoners, i.e. those sentenced to a specified term, the median aggregate sentence for prisoners in Queensland was 3.5 years, the same as in 2003. The median aggregate sentence in Australia as a whole was 3.3 years, also unchanged from 2003. (If the indeterminate sentences were included in calculating the median, it would be higher, particularly in Queensland, where the proportion of indeterminate sentences was higher.)

- In 2004, 64.1% of prisoners in Queensland had an episode of prior known adult imprisonment. This proportion was down from 65.5% in 2003 but has risen overall since 1994. The proportion for Australia was 57.5% in 2004, and has been at a similar level since 1999 (figure 2).

Figure 2: Prior Adult Imprisonment Rate, 1994 to 2004