Main Features

Imprisonment rate annual change:
Queensland  ↓  2.8%
Australia  ↓  0.4%

Proportion of unsentenced prisoners annual change:
Queensland  ↓  1.1 percentage points
Australia  ↑  0.6 percentage points

Proportion of female prisoners annual change:
Queensland  ↑  0.4 percentage points
Australia  ↓  0.2 percentage point

Commentary

Note: data contained in this brief should be read with reference to the explanatory notes provided in ABS Cat. No. 4517.0

- On the night of the Prison Census, 30 June 2008, Queensland prisons held 5,544 prisoners. This was 20.1% of the 27,615 prisoners in Australian prisons.

- The crude imprisonment rate in Queensland for 2008 was 169.2 prisoners per 100,000 adult persons. This rate was a decrease of 2.8% from 174.0 prisoners per 100,000 adult population in 2007. The imprisonment rate in Australia was 168.7 prisoners per 100,000 adult population, a 0.4% decrease from 169.4 in 2007 (Figure 1).

- Approximately 1 in 13 prisoners in Queensland in 2008 were female (7.7% of the total, compared with 7.3% in 2007). The proportion of female prisoners in Australia as a whole decreased from 7.3% in 2007 to 7.1% in 2008.

- The age-standardised rate of imprisonment for Queensland Indigenous prisoners was 1,397.0 per 100,000 adult Indigenous population, compared with 131.1 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous, making Indigenous persons 10.7 times more likely than non-Indigenous persons to be in prison at 30 June 2008 (Figure 2). The age-standardised Queensland Indigenous imprisonment rate was lower than Australia’s as a whole (1,769.4 per 100,000).

- In Queensland 22.3% of prisoners were unsentenced (on remand, awaiting sentence or awaiting deportation), compared with 23.0% for Australia.

- Of the prisoners with a sentence (those sentenced to a specified term), the median aggregate sentence length for prisoners in Queensland was 3.0 years the same as in 2007. The median aggregate sentence in Australia as a whole was 3.0 years, which was also the same as in 2007. (Note: if indeterminate sentences were included in calculating the median, it would be higher, particularly in Queensland, where the proportion of indeterminate sentences was higher.)

- In 2008, 58.3% of prisoners in Queensland had an episode of prior known adult imprisonment. This proportion has decreased from 65.2% in 2007. Similarly, the proportion for Australia has decreased from 56.5% in 2007 to 54.9% in 2008.

Figure 1: Imprisonment rate, 1998 to 2008

Figure 2: Indigenous and non-Indigenous age standardised imprisonment rates, Qld, 2001 to 2008