Main Features

Imprisonment rate annual change:
Queensland  ↓  0.8%
Australia          ↑  3.6%

Proportion of unsentenced prisoners annual change:
Queensland  ↓  1.9 percentage points
Australia          ↓  1.2 percentage points

Proportion of female prisoners annual change:
Queensland  ↓  0.3 percentage point
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 2009, Queensland prisons held 5,667 prisoners. This was 19.3% of the 29,317 prisoners in Australian prisons.

- The crude imprisonment rate in Queensland for 2009 was 167.9 prisoners per 100,000 adult persons. This rate was a decrease of 0.8% from 169.2 prisoners per 100,000 adult population in 2008. The imprisonment rate in Australia was 174.7 prisoners per 100,000 adult population, a 3.6% increase from 168.7 in 2008 (Figure 1).

- Approximately, 1 in 13 prisoners in Queensland in 2009 were female (7.3% of the total, compared with 7.7% in 2008). The proportion of female prisoners in Australia as a whole increased from 7.1% in 2008 to 7.2% in 2009.

- The age-standardised rate of imprisonment for Queensland Indigenous prisoners was 1,427.2 per 100,000 adult Indigenous population, compared with 128.5 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous, making Indigenous persons 11.1 times more likely than non-Indigenous persons to be in prison at 30 June 2009 (Figure 2). The age-standardised Queensland Indigenous imprisonment rate was lower than Australia's as a whole (1,890.7 per 100,000).

- In Queensland, 20.4% of prisoners were unsentenced (on remand, awaiting sentence or awaiting deportation), compared with 21.8% for Australia in 2009.

- 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 2008. The median aggregate sentence in Australia as a whole was 3.0 years, which was also the same as in 2008. (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 2009, 59.9% of prisoners in Queensland had an episode of prior known adult imprisonment. This proportion has increased from 58.3% in 2008. Similarly, the proportion for Australia has increased from 54.9% in 2008 to 55.5% in 2009.

Figure 1: Imprisonment rate, 1999 to 2009

Figure 2: Indigenous and non-Indigenous age standardised (a) imprisonment rates, Queensland, 2001 to 2009

(a) Age standardisation is a statistical method that adjusts crude rates to account for age differences between study populations.