

### **Project COIPE (court ordered immediate parole eligibility)**

The project is designed to fast-track parole applications for prisoners who the Court has sentenced to a term of imprisonment *with an immediate parole eligibility date*. That is, the prisoner is eligible for a parole order from the date of the sentence.

The genesis of the project was the observation of Senior Board Members of Parole Board Queensland ('the Board') that prisoners who were sentenced by the court to immediate parole eligibility were spending on average 132 days in custody past their eligibility date, as opposed to other prisoners who were spending on average 69 days past their eligibility date. The reasons for the disparity include:

- a) Section 180(2)(c) of the Corrective Services Act 2006 allows a prisoner to make an application for a parole order up to 180 days before the prisoner's eligibility date. There is no provision to allow a prisoner to make an application prior to receiving their eligibility date.
- b) Prior to the project commencing, all prisoners applying for parole would be subject to a parole board assessment report ('PBAR'), which is compiled by corrective services and sent to the Board. It takes on average approximately 6 weeks for the Board to receive a PBAR.
- c) Prior to the project commencing, only corrective services could commence the parole process, upon receipt of the application in the approved form.

Please find **attached** a copy of the progression plan which explains how the project deals with an application for a parole order. The project's success depends upon the Board, not corrective services, being able to receive and commence the application process. This is done by the relevant form being emailed directly to the Board at [COIPE@dcs.qld.gov.au](mailto:COIPE@dcs.qld.gov.au).

Further important changes include the Board receiving the VJR from the court. This allows the Board to follow up with the relevant prisoner if their application for parole has not been received within 5 business days.

Under the project the Board intends to consider an application for parole within 10 business days. Further, the Board will make the decision as to whether they want a PBAR prepared for the applicant prisoner.

The project commenced in the Ipswich District and Magistrates courts on 2 September 2019 and was extended to the Beenleigh District and Magistrates courts on 2 March 2020.

To date, the Board has considered 71 applications with 47 prisoners granted a parole order.

Some relevant data from the project, to date, includes:

- From the date of sentence to receipt of the parole application is on average 4 business days.
- From receipt of the application to consideration by the board is on average 11 business days.
- From receipt of the application to release on parole is on average 38 business days (please note the median number of days is 23. The mean is heightened by a small number of complex files which took longer to finalise.)
- Of the 71 applications considered by the Board 15 were deferred for the sentencing remarks and/or for a rehabilitation needs assessment from corrective services.
- Of the 71 applications 6 were no longer eligible for a parole order as they have been remanded in custody for further offences.
- Of the 71 applications 3 were provisionally refused a parole order.
- Of the 71 applications considered by the Board, a PBAR has been requested on 2 occasions.

Commencing on Tuesday 5 May 2020, the project will be extended to include the Supreme and District Courts sitting in Brisbane.

During the term of the project a document tray will be in court which contains a fact sheet and a Form 29 (application for a parole order).

The fact sheet explains that to apply for a parole order the prisoner must do two (2) things:

1. Make an application in the approved form (Form 29); and
2. Send the application to the Board via email to [COIPE@dcs.qld.gov.au](mailto:COIPE@dcs.qld.gov.au)

The application may be sent by the prisoner, through sentence management, by their legal representative or by a third party.

Once Parole Board Queensland (the Board) receives the application the Board will consider the application within two (2) business weeks.

Upon considering the application the Board will do one of two (2) things:

1. Make a decision in relation to the parole application; or
2. Defer the matter to obtain further material.

It is anticipated the project will highlight efficiencies including giving proper effect to the order of the court.

Please see the **attached** copy of the fact sheet and Form 29 mentioned above.

Deputy President Peter Shields will be managing the project on behalf of the Board. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Peter on 07 3565 7552 or at email [Peter.Shields@dcs.qld.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Shields@dcs.qld.gov.au)