



**Adult
Parole
Board**
Victoria

ANNUAL REPORT 2020–21



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**Adult
Parole
Board**
Victoria

Letter to the Minister

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Corrections
Level 1, 2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of section 72(1) of the *Corrections Act 1986*, we are pleased to present this Annual Report of the performance and operations of the Adult Parole Board of Victoria for the 12 months from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Yours sincerely

His Honour Peter Couzens
Chairperson

Natasha Burhop
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

The background features a complex geometric pattern of overlapping triangles and lines. The top-left and bottom-right corners are solid green, while the rest of the page is white with light green and white geometric shapes. The number '01' is positioned in the upper left quadrant.

01

Introduction

Foreword from the Chairperson

The reporting year saw the Adult Parole Board defy the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and perform its statutory duties to its high pre-pandemic standards.



Throughout the reporting year the Board operated for all intents and purposes remotely, with minimal personal attendances at the Board's premises by members, management or staff.

Apart from a few weeks when the Board's Serious Violent Offender or Sexual Offender (SVOSO) Division, comprising myself and a full-time member, convened in person at the Board's premises, all Board meetings were conducted remotely.

This involved members and the allocated meeting coordinators operating from their respective homes, communicating with each other via Zoom.

The situation was never so stark than during the three lockdown periods that occurred during the reporting year.

During those times there were weeks when not one member, manager or staff attended the Board's premises.

Although the sight of empty workstations and vacant offices was at times confronting it was, at the same time, reassuring to know that the assigned occupants of those workstations and offices were safely at home diligently and competently undertaking their assigned tasks as they would have had they been present at the Board's premises.

In-person interviews with prisoners on parole at the Board's premises were suspended for the entire reporting year.

Instead, prisoners on parole who were required to be interviewed by the Board would attend at their allocated Community Correctional Services centre and be interviewed by the Board in the presence of their parole officers via Zoom.

Enormous credit is due to all concerned for adapting so well to the world of the pandemic.

With regards to the Board's Secretariat, Acting Chief Administrative Officers Anita Lis (1 July 2019 to 8 September 2020) and Natasha Burhop (9 September 2020 to 30 June 2021), led from the front, ably assisted by their management team of Fatima Ebrahim, David Klotz, Barbara Hamston, Tania Tesich, Emma Hyde and Eloise Bellis.

Under their leadership the staff responded magnificently to the challenges of working from home, undertaking their individual roles conscientiously and successfully.

Likewise, the members adapted equally well to the unique challenges posed by the work from home direction. Whether they be divisional chairpersons, full-time members or community members, their resolve to undertake their statutory responsibilities never waned. Throughout the year they served the Board and the community with distinction.

If ever there needed to be a justification for the implementation of the first of the 23 recommendations contained in the Callinan Review of the parole system in Victoria, which was tabled in the Victorian Parliament in July 2013, the last 15 months have provided it.

In my foreword to the Board's 2018–19 Annual Report, I quoted recommendation one of the Callinan Review report, which again bears repeating:

“A new and comprehensive electronic database and case management system which is accessible to all members of the Board and its staff needs to be established as quickly as possible. The database and case management system should be designed to include appropriate Police intelligence and to allow secure remote access by Board members.”

Thankfully, the government adopted the recommendation and provided the not insignificant funding for the development and implementation of the system known as PRISM (Parole Records Integrated System of Management).

Thank goodness they did so, for without the benefits of PRISM one wonders how members and staff, spread out around the Melbourne metropolitan area and in some cases beyond, could have undertaken their work.

Parole outcomes

With one notable exception, the reporting year outcomes were largely in line with the previous reporting year, a remarkable outcome in all the circumstances.

- ▶ The Board determined 1,317 applications, granting parole in 835 cases, and denying it in 482¹ cases, a ratio of 63 per cent to 37 per cent in favour of grants. This compares with the previous year when the ratio of grants to denials was 65 per cent to 35 per cent.
- ▶ At the end of the reporting year there were 781 prisoners on parole, 18 less than the end of the previous year.
- ▶ There were 170 prisoners on parole cancelled during the reporting year, one less than the previous year.
- ▶ 647 prisoners completed their parole during the reporting year, amounting to a completion rate of 79 per cent compared to a 78 per cent completion rate for the previous year.

The notable exception

For the first time since the commencement of the implementation of the Callinan Review reforms in 2013, not one person was convicted of the commission of a serious violent offence or sexual offence while on parole.

It bears recalling that 60 people were convicted in 2013–14 of committing a serious violent offence or sexual offence while on parole. Since then, as a consequence of the adoption and implementation of the reforms, the numbers have reduced culminating in this year's truly exceptional outcome.

The numbers speak for themselves...

Number of persons convicted of committing serious violent offences or sexual offences while on parole

Reporting year	Persons convicted
2013–14	60
2014–15	22
2015–16	13
2016–17	5
2017–18	5
2018–19	3
2019–20	4
2020–21	0

¹ This figure excludes any withdrawals from prisoners.

Membership – arrivals and departures

The reporting year saw significant changes to the Board's membership.

Arrivals

The following appointments were made to the Board.

Divisional chairpersons

- ▶ The Honourable Paul Cronin, retired Family Court Judge
- ▶ Mr Raymond Elston QC, retired Senior Crown Prosecutor
- ▶ Ms Claire Harris QC, senior member of the Victorian Bar
- ▶ Mr Peter Rose QC, retired Senior Crown Prosecutor and former member of the Post Sentence Authority

The Board's membership has been enriched by the appointment of senior lawyers of the calibre of the above. They join the following long-term members to form an outstanding corps of divisional chairpersons:

- ▶ Her Honour Susan Pullen QC, sessional Deputy Chairperson and retired County Court Judge
- ▶ Stephen Farrow, full-time Deputy Chairperson
- ▶ Reserve Magistrate Alan Spillane
- ▶ Reserve Magistrate John Doherty
- ▶ Reserve Magistrate Cathy Lamble

Full-time member

- ▶ Mr Michael Hoyle, former Deputy Solicitor for Public Prosecutions at the Office of Public Prosecutions

Community members

- ▶ Ms Elisa Buggy
- ▶ Dr Clare Farmer
- ▶ Mr Keith Moor
- ▶ Ms Skye Staude
- ▶ Ms Amanda Warrick

A brief profile summary of each new member appears on pages 13 to 16 of this report.

Departures

Divisional chairpersons

- ▶ Retired Magistrate Jacinta Heffey (22 November 2017 to 22 November 2020)
- ▶ Magistrate Michelle Hodgson (22 November 2017 to 22 November 2020)

Full-time member

- ▶ Dr David Curnow (18 May 2014 to 20 October 2020)

Community members

- ▶ Dr Patricia Mehegan
(16 September 2014 to 16 September 2020)
- ▶ Charlene Micallef
(19 December 2017 to 19 December 2020)
- ▶ Kristy McKellar OAM
(19 December 2017 to 19 December 2020)
- ▶ Aunty Pam Pedersen OAM
(16 September 2014 to 24 May 2021)

I extend my thanks to each of our departing members for their individual contributions to the work of the Board during their years of membership.

Each played an important role in the Board's decision-making responsibilities and contributed significantly to the remarkable transformation of the Board since 2013.

None more so than Dr David Curnow, Aunty Pam Pedersen and Dr Patricia Mehegan, each of whom were members of the Board that I joined in June 2015.

It took me little time to realise how important each was to the Board, due to their professional and personal backgrounds, their range of experiences, their wisdom, and their commitment to the work of the Board. They will be missed.

Community engagement

Regrettably, the restrictions imposed as a consequence of the pandemic greatly reduced the Board's capacity to engage with the community in ways that it has in recent years.

Nevertheless, I had the opportunity to address members of the Independent Prison Visitor Scheme in December 2020, members of the Heidelberg Probus Club in May 2021 and members of the Victorian Custody Reference Group in June 2021.

Ongoing member education

With regards to the Board's ongoing membership education program, unfortunately our regular seminars for members held normally at the Board's premises could not take place.

Thankfully, Colleen Bell, one of the Board's full-time members, organised two member seminars that were conducted via Zoom.

The first featured a presentation by Simone Shaw, Clinical Director of Forensic Intervention Services at Corrections Victoria.

The second featured a presentation by full-time Deputy Chairperson Stephen Farrow on the subject of the risk assessment tool LS-RNR (Level of Service/Risk, Need, Responsibility).

Both seminars were extremely informative and beneficial for the members and were appreciated by all concerned.

Conclusion

Looking back, I distinctly remember that immediately after the tabling of the Callinan Review report in Parliament in July 2013, the then Premier The Hon Dr Denis Napthine AO addressed the media and concluded his remarks by stating:

"This is the line in the sand. From this time on the paramount consideration of the Adult Parole Board will be the safety and protection of the community."

Section 73A of the *Corrections Act 1986* (as amended) incorporates those sentiments.

When speaking publicly I often repeat that quote and remind the audience that the safety and protection of the community is the golden thread that runs throughout the parole system and that it must always be at the forefront of the minds of the members in their deliberations, as required by Section 73A of the Act.

I believe that the outcomes of this unique year and the years leading up to it provide objective evidence of the Board's consciousness of its paramount consideration when deciding whether or not to grant parole to an eligible prisoner.

How else can one explain the absence of persons being convicted of committing a serious violent offence or sexual offence while on parole and the decline in those cases since 2013–14?

The reality is that in the eight years following the Callinan Review report – and its adoption and implementation – Victoria's parole system has been transformed.

Eligible prisoners now have the benefit of a structured, supervised and supported transition from prison to the community, which largely explains the 79 per cent success rate of prisoners on parole reaching their discharge date.

Furthermore, the community now has the benefit of knowing that, thanks to the bipartisan support of the reforms and the legislative and administrative changes that have taken place to ensure their implementation, the Board has never been better equipped to determine if, when and on what conditions an eligible prisoner should be released on parole.

As satisfying as the results of the reporting year are, there is no room for complacency. All concerned with the parole system, including the Board, must remain acutely aware that risk can never be eliminated. We must all strive to maintain and further improve the system so that eligible prisoners can benefit from parole and at the same time maintain the safety and protection of the community.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the members, management and staff of the Board for their assistance and support throughout the reporting year.

His Honour Peter Couzens

Chairperson
Adult Parole Board

Foreword from the Acting Chief Administrative Officer

I have been acting in the Chief Administrative Officer role since September 2020, ten months of the reporting year. In 2020–21, the Secretariat continued to provide excellent support and to find innovative ways to improve its service to the Board during these challenging times.



Transition to new hybrid working model

The Board and Secretariat continued to work remotely this year, having already established a seamless and highly effective remote working model in 2019–20 with hearings run via Zoom. When we were permitted to work from the office, we celebrated the opportunity to move away from our screens and return to face-to-face interactions. However, due to the restrictions for COVID-19, we mostly worked from our home offices in 2020–21.

Despite remote working, the Board and Secretariat remained busy. The Board considered 8,119 matters during the year. Staff worked tirelessly behind the scenes to successfully manage this workload.

A new flexible working policy was implemented across the Victorian Public Service in March 2021. The balance means staff attend the Board's office at 50 Franklin Street Melbourne three days a week to support the members in person and then work remotely the remaining two days. While our staff have proven over the past 15 months that they are effective at working remotely, the intrinsic value of engaging with colleagues in person and interacting with the Board face-to-face is important. The Secretariat management team worked with staff to create a new hybrid working model that meets the Board's expectations for in-person support.

Managers commenced a structured return to the office from March 2021. Staff then commenced their return from early-May 2021, before a COVID-19 outbreak in the community in late-May 2021 placed Victoria in lockdown once again. We plan to fully implement our new hybrid working model in 2021–22. With so much change and uncertainty as to where we will perform our work from and when, I would like to thank all staff for their ongoing resilience and the Secretariat management team who have remained committed to staff wellbeing, which has never been so important.

Such complexity requires constant vigilance. The Secretariat's Practice Development team is responsible for the Board's risk, business continuity, integrity, diversity, COVIDSafe, project management and information security portfolios and is heavily involved in IT management. They are experts in all these areas because of their deep understanding of the work of the Board rather than being industry practitioners and this adds untold value in enabling the Board to focus on making decisions.

Secretariat work plan

This year, we implemented the Secretariat's first formal work plan with an ambitious agenda to focus the management team and staff on enhancing what we do and how we do it. There were five key focus areas of the work plan – improve processes and procedures, build IT knowledge, develop our staff and enhance leadership, strengthen stakeholder relationships and proactively identify and manage risks. We delivered several improvements including, for example, increased staff professional development opportunities, information security training for staff, enhanced workforce planning and improved documentation for staff to support members with IT.

In 2021–22, we will work to progress the improvements that we commenced this year, including a major Secretariat project to collate and document all our procedures and store them on a Sharepoint site for staff to easily access and edit as we continuously improve our procedures.

Membership

A major highlight this year was the appointment of 10 new members to the Board. I would like to welcome The Honourable Paul Cronin, Claire Harris QC, Ray Elston QC, Peter Rose QC, Dr Clare Farmer, Amanda Warrick, Elisa Buggy, Skye Staude, Keith Moor and Michael Hoyle. The Board will benefit from their experience. Information about their professional backgrounds is available on pages 13 to 16 of this report.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of David Klotz, Acting General Manager of Practice Development and Communications Manager, who worked in partnership with Deputy Chairperson Stephen Farrow to create and deliver the new member induction program. The aim of the induction program was to prepare our new members, through PRISM training, observing hearings and access to support, for sitting on the Board. The Secretariat management team and I also met remotely with the new members to introduce ourselves and explain how we support the Board.

While we welcomed 10 new members, we also said goodbye to seven members during the year. The terms ended for Her Honour Jacinta Heffey, Her Honour Magistrate Michelle Hodgson, Aunty Pam Pedersen OAM, Dr Patricia Mehegan, Kristy McKellar OAM and Charlene Micallef. Dr David Curnow, one of the Board's full-time members, resigned following his appointment as a full-time member of the Post Sentence Authority. I would like to acknowledge and thank each member for their individual support and contribution to the Board, and I wish them well.

Measuring Secretariat service – independent audit

In 2016, the then Minister for Corrections asked the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) to manage a two-part process to acquit a Sentencing Advisory Council recommendation "to review and report on the legislative and administrative framework governing the release and management of sentenced prisoners on parole in Victoria." The undertaking included a self-assessment in year one and an independent audit in year two. In 2018, the Secretariat undertook a self-assessment of the processes that support the Board's legislative obligations and has worked on implementing the recommended improvements. This year, a professional auditing firm conducted the first independent audit.

The Secretariat processes to support 28 of the Board's legislative obligations, such as ensuring that prisoners receive a copy of the documentation resulting from the Board's decision to cancel or revoke parole as soon as practicable, were assessed as part of the audit. Of the 456 associated controls that were assessed, including evidence that this documentation had been provided and included the reasons for cancellation, the overall compliance was 98.3 per cent. This result reflects the dedication of managers and staff to ensuring that procedures are understood and undertaken in a manner that supports the Board's legislative obligations. I would like to thank our managers for

their focus on quality every day as that is how a result such as this is achieved. My thanks also to Emma Hyde, Acting Operations Manager and Tania Tesich, Registry Manager, for working with the external auditors to prepare for and conduct their audit.

Parole data

The parole data in 2020–21 was mostly consistent with 2019–20 including decisions to grant or deny parole (63 per cent granted and 37 per cent denied this year compared with 65 per cent granted and 35 per cent denied last year), parole cancellations (170 this year compared with 171 last year) and successful parole completions (79 per cent this year compared with 78 per cent last year). It is worth noting that this is the fifth year in a row where over 75 per cent of prisoners have successfully completed their parole.

In 2013–14, the Board reported that 60 persons had been convicted of committing serious violent offences or sexual offences while on parole. I am pleased to be able to say that no one was convicted in 2020–21 of committing serious offences while on parole. This is a tremendous outcome and reflects the transformation of the Board and parole system in Victoria following the parole reforms.

PRISM and the Board's IT ecosystem

It is two years since the implementation of the Board's case workflow system, PRISM (Parole Records Integrated System of Management). This system, coupled with the excellent support provided to members by the Secretariat, was a major contributor to the stability of the Board's remote working model and will be with the new hybrid working model. However, we must always ensure that the system evolves to meet the needs and requirements of the Board. The Secretariat works closely with the DJCS Technology Solutions group and the vendors who continue to resolve issues and enhance our systems. I would like to thank Fatima Ebrahim, Acting General Manager Operations and her operational managers and coordinators for their tireless commitment to ensuring our systems are available, operating effectively and continue to be fit for purpose.

It is a testament to the high regard in which PRISM is held that we delivered demonstrations of PRISM on request to the Department of Corrections in New Zealand and to KPMG to assist in a jurisdictional review it is undertaking of the Parole Board Queensland. In both demonstrations, we provided an overview of how PRISM contributes to the effectiveness of the Board's decision-making and the Secretariat's ability to support the Board.

We have never been more reliant on IT in our remote working world. The Secretariat supports members with provision of IT devices, access to all applications, training and support. This work is led by David Klotz, Eloise Bellis, Acting Project Manager and Nicholas Horsford, Acting Coordinator, Operations, and I commend them for their unflagging commitment to what is a demanding space.

Acknowledgements

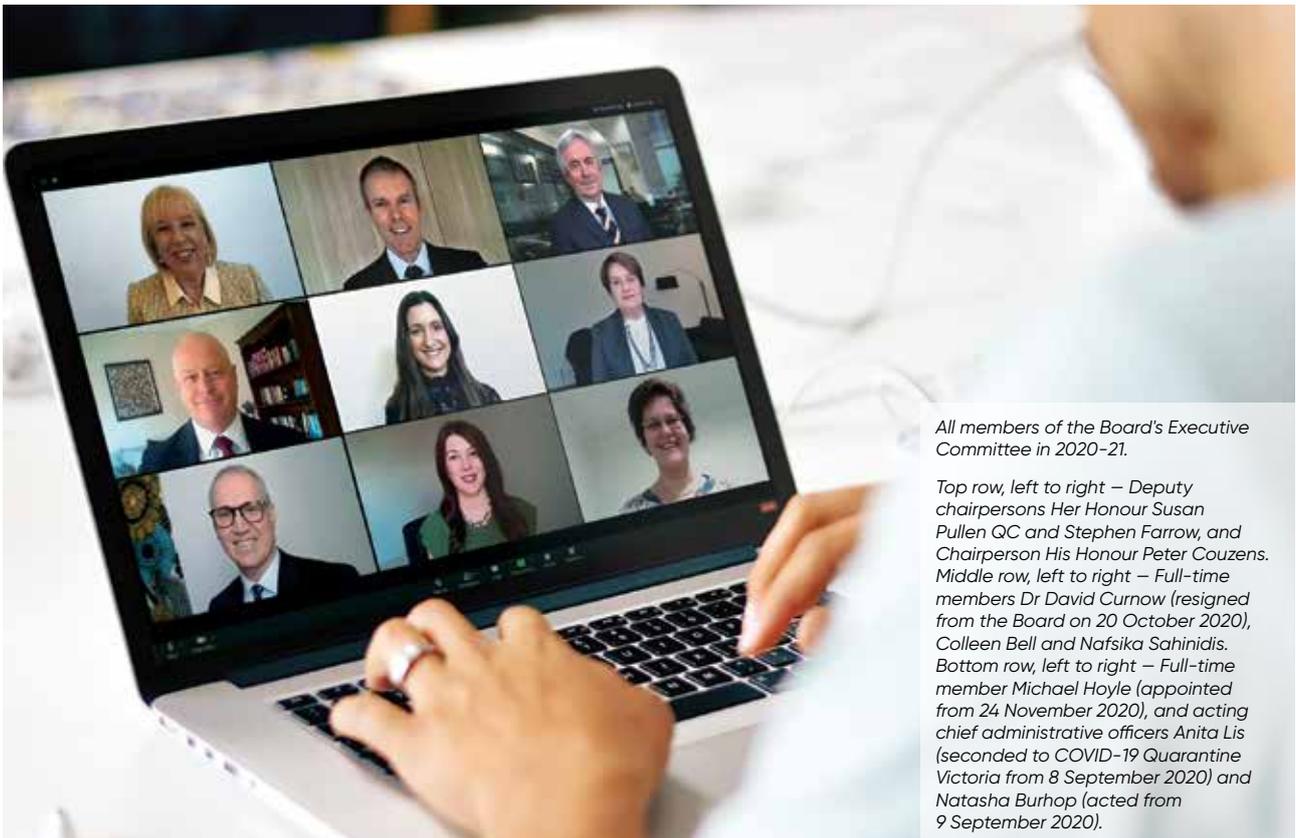
It has been a privilege to act in the Chief Administrative Officer role these past 10 months and there are many people that I would like to acknowledge and thank.

- ▶ The Chairperson, His Honour Peter Couzens, who provides strong leadership and was ably supported during the year by his Executive team including sessional Deputy Chairperson Her Honour Susan Pullen QC, full-time Deputy Chairperson Stephen Farrow, and full-time members Dr David Curnow, Nafsika Sahinidis, Colleen Bell and Michael Hoyle.
- ▶ The members who each bring their unique experience and unequivocal commitment to the Board.
- ▶ My predecessor Anita Lis who led us through the successful implementation of the Board's remote working model and paved the way for me to take the reins of the Secretariat before her secondment to an executive role in COVID-19 Quarantine Victoria in September 2020.
- ▶ My management team of Fatima Ebrahim, David Klotz, Emma Hyde, Tania Tesich and Eloise Bellis who diligently lead a motivated Secretariat who have incredible energy, positivity, are dedicated to their work and are remarkably resilient.
- ▶ Our Office Manager and Executive Assistant, Barbara Hamston, who epitomises patience and composure. She is unflinching in her support for all members and staff.
- ▶ Our many stakeholders including Corrections Victoria, Victoria Police and the Victim Services, Support and Reform team who we work closely with daily, as well as Jenny Roberts, Director of Community Operations at Corrections Victoria, who continues to support the Board.

I am proud of our achievements this year. Together, we've made improvements, overcome challenges and successfully maintained our team spirit and level of service.

Natasha Burhop

Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Adult Parole Board



All members of the Board's Executive Committee in 2020-21.

Top row, left to right – Deputy chairpersons Her Honour Susan Pullen QC and Stephen Farrow, and Chairperson His Honour Peter Couzens. Middle row, left to right – Full-time members Dr David Curnow (resigned from the Board on 20 October 2020), Colleen Bell and Nafsika Sahinidis. Bottom row, left to right – Full-time member Michael Hoyle (appointed from 24 November 2020), and acting chief administrative officers Anita Lis (seconded to COVID-19 Quarantine Victoria from 8 September 2020) and Natasha Burhop (acted from 9 September 2020).

Key highlights from 2020-21



The Board and Secretariat continued working remotely

with no backlog of matters

 **63%**
GRANTED

 **37%**
DENIED

of parole granted and denied decisions during the year



8,119 matters considered by the Board

with most hearings held remotely

 **79%**

of prisoners successfully completed their parole, the fifth year in a row where more than 75 per cent of prisoners have successfully completed their parole



10 new members appointed

including four divisional chairpersons, five community members and one full-time member

 **0**

persons convicted of committing serious offences while on parole compared with 60 when the Board first reported it in 2013-14



02

Members

Members

The Adult Parole Board's membership consists of members from a diverse range of backgrounds, both professionally and culturally, with rich and relevant experiences that they each bring to the Board. Most members, some of whom have public profiles and are well-known within the community, have had, or continue to have, outstanding careers in a range of different fields.

Board panels normally comprise a presiding divisional chairperson, a community member and a full-time member.

The divisional chairpersons include current and retired judicial officers and lawyers of at least 10 years' experience. Four of the Board's divisional chairpersons, including Her Honour Susan Pullen QC, Claire Harris QC, Ray Elston QC and Peter Rose QC, are Queen's Counsel, that appointment recognising their outstanding skill, integrity and high standing in the legal profession.

In 2020–21, the experience and backgrounds of the community members included:

- ▶ people who have been or have supported victims of crimes
- ▶ an Aboriginal elder
- ▶ retired police officers
- ▶ a retired senior crime journalist
- ▶ leaders in education
- ▶ members with extensive experience in mental health service provision, public administration and not-for-profits
- ▶ members of other decision-making boards.

During 2020–21, the full-time members included three lawyers and a forensic psychologist.

Appointments

Members appointed in 2020–21

In 2020–21, 10 new members, including four divisional chairpersons, one full-time member and five community members, were appointed to the Board.

Divisional chairpersons

- ▶ The Honourable Paul Cronin was appointed from 29 September 2020.
- ▶ Claire Harris QC was appointed from 29 September 2020.
- ▶ Ray Elston QC was appointed from 29 September 2020.
- ▶ Peter Rose QC was appointed from 30 March 2021.

Full-time member

- ▶ Michael Hoyle was appointed from 24 November 2020.

Community members

- ▶ Dr Clare Farmer was appointed from 30 March 2021.
- ▶ Elisa Buggy was appointed from 30 March 2021.
- ▶ Skye Staude was appointed from 30 March 2021.
- ▶ Amanda Warrick was appointed from 30 March 2021.
- ▶ Keith Moor was appointed from 30 March 2021.

A brief profile summary of each divisional chairperson and community member appointed this year is available on pages 13 to 15 of this report.

A reflection from new full-time member Michael Hoyle is available on page 16 of this report.

Each new member participated in an induction program following their appointment to prepare them for their work on the Board, including observing hearings and learning how to use PRISM (the Board's case workflow system) to access offender information for their hearing.

The Board held two brief events via Zoom on 14 October 2020 and 29 April 2021 for current and new members to meet each other. On 24 June 2021, the Secretariat management team presented to the new members via Zoom on how the Secretariat supports the Board.

Members re-appointed in 2020–21

In 2020–21, seven community members were re-appointed to the Board.

- ▶ Pamela White PSM was re-appointed from 25 August 2020 for three years.
- ▶ Claude Minisini was re-appointed from 16 September 2020 for three years.
- ▶ Nicole Burns was re-appointed from 23 September 2020 for three years.
- ▶ Dr Chris Trotter was re-appointed from 19 December 2020 for three years.
- ▶ Mary Malone was re-appointed from 23 September 2020 for two years.
- ▶ Rosemary Lever was re-appointed from 23 September 2020 for two years.
- ▶ Aunty Pam Pedersen OAM was re-appointed from 16 September 2020 for eight months.

Members who left the Board in 2020–21

In 2020–21, seven members, including two divisional chairpersons, one full-time member and four community members, left the Board.

Divisional chairpersons

The terms ended for:

- ▶ Her Honour Jacinta Heffey on 22 November 2020
- ▶ Her Honour Magistrate Michelle Hodgson on 22 November 2020.

Full-time member

- ▶ Dr David Curnow resigned on 20 October 2020 following his appointment as a full-time member of the Post Sentence Authority.

A reflection from former full-time member Dr David Curnow is available on page 17 of this report.

Community members

The terms ended for:

- ▶ Dr Patricia Mehegan on 16 September 2020
- ▶ Kristy McKellar OAM on 19 December 2020
- ▶ Charlene Micallef on 19 December 2020
- ▶ Aunty Pam Pedersen OAM on 24 May 2021.

The Board acknowledges and thanks each member for their individual work and commitment to the Board.

Member education

The Board has an educational seminar program as part of its professional development program to increase the knowledge of its members, and to promote consistency in the making of decisions. The program involves seminars presented by experts and professionals who are leaders in their fields.

The Board did not hold any in-person seminars during 2020–21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board held two evening seminars during the year via Zoom. At evening seminars on:

- ▶ 3 June 2021, Simone Shaw, Clinical Director of Forensic Intervention Services at Corrections Victoria, presented to the members on managing risks of sex offenders
- ▶ 17 June 2021, Stephen Farrow, full-time Deputy Chairperson of the Board, presented to the members on the LS-RNR risk assessment tool.

The Board also planned for an all-day seminar with several eminent speakers in July 2021.

Members appointed in 2020–21

The Honourable Paul Cronin

The Honourable Paul Cronin joined the Board in 2020, after serving as a Judge of the Family Court of Australia from 2006 to 2019. Prior to his appointment as a Judge, His Honour practised as a barrister, signing the Victorian Bar Roll in 1999 and representing the Victorian Bar on the Family Law section of the Law Council of Australia. Before that, His Honour had practised as a solicitor in Shepparton for 19 years. During that time, he was appointed by the Law Institute of Victoria to be Chair of the Specialisation Committee for family law accreditation, and later examiner of specialisation candidates.

The Honourable Paul Cronin was appointed as a divisional chairperson of the Adult Parole Board from 29 September 2020.



Claire Harris QC

Claire Harris QC has practised public and commercial law as a barrister since 2003 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2017. Her public law practice has included human rights and discrimination matters, Royal Commissions, inquiries, and inquests, and she has significant experience in advising and appearing in corrections-related matters. Prior to joining the Bar, Claire worked for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. She has also worked as a lawyer in public international law in London, and as an associate in the Federal Court of Australia.

Claire Harris QC was appointed as a divisional chairperson of the Adult Parole Board from 29 September 2020.

Ray Elston QC

Ray Elston QC was admitted to practise in 1973 and signed the Victorian Bar Roll in 1976. He had a diverse practice at the Bar before specialising in criminal law from 1987. Ray was appointed as a Crown Prosecutor in 1995 and Senior Counsel (Queen's Counsel) in 2004. He was then, in 2005, appointed a Senior Crown Prosecutor for a term of 10 years. He has conducted more than 500 trials, including numerous murder trials, 'gangland' cases and the Churchill Bush Fire prosecution. He has also appeared in appellate matters, in the Victorian Court of Appeal and the High Court of Australia, and as an expert witness overseas, in respect of the extradition of persons charged with murder to Australia.

Ray Elston QC was appointed as a divisional chairperson of the Adult Parole Board from 29 September 2020.



Peter Rose QC

Peter Rose QC signed the Victorian Bar Roll in 1977 and was appointed Senior Counsel (Queen's Counsel) in 2001. As a barrister, Peter has appeared and advised in the areas of criminal, civil, aviation and administrative law. In 2007, he was appointed a Senior Crown Prosecutor and conducted numerous murder trials and other high-profile criminal matters, including major occupational health and safety prosecutions.

He was also highly regarded as an expert in detention and supervision order matters. After serving for 10 years as a Senior Crown Prosecutor, Peter was appointed as a sessional member of the Post Sentence Authority upon its establishment in 2018 until his term ended in February 2021, shortly prior to his appointment to the Adult Parole Board.

Peter Rose QC was appointed as a divisional chairperson of the Adult Parole Board from 30 March 2021.



Dr Clare Farmer

Dr Clare Farmer is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Deakin University. Her research primarily explores policing and criminal justice processes – with a particular focus on procedural justice, policy development and individual rights – and she holds Faculty leadership positions within research ethics and the management of student misconduct. As well as her doctoral degree in the area of criminal justice, Dr Farmer holds a Master's degree in Criminological and Legal Psychology, as well as Honours and Master's degrees in Modern History from the University of Oxford. Prior to emigrating to Australia in 2009, Dr Farmer served as a Lay Magistrate within the Chester Petty Sessional Division in England, sitting in both adult and youth courts.

Dr Clare Farmer was appointed as a community member of the Adult Parole Board from 30 March 2021.



Skye Staude

Skye Staude is the Deputy Principal at MacKillop Education in Geelong; a school that caters for vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the Barwon region. Prior to this appointment, she was the Campus Principal of a re-engagement program in Colac, responsible for designing and overseeing programs for students who had disengaged or were at risk of disengaging from education. Skye became interested in this specialist sector over a decade ago whilst working at a Berry Street School in Noble Park. During this time, she gained a Diploma of Community Services Work and took on leadership roles whilst undertaking a Master of Instructional Leadership.

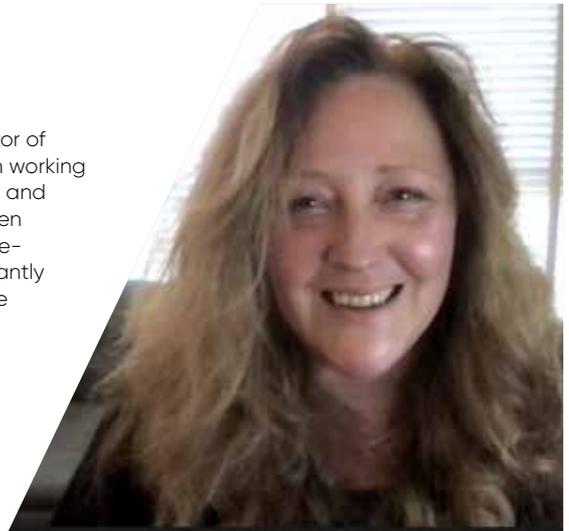
Skye Staude was appointed as a community member of the Adult Parole Board from 30 March 2021.



Amanda Warrick

Prior to joining the Board, Amanda Warrick was the Executive Director of Many Rooms. Through this appointment she was actively involved in working with and advocating on behalf of those experiencing homelessness and the disadvantaged in Melbourne. Over the last 30 years she has been committed to working in the not-for-profit sector in a variety of state-based, national and international organisations. Working predominantly through marketing, education and advocacy, Amanda is passionate about creating campaigns and services that build community understanding, compassion and empathy for those in need in our community.

Amanda Warrick was appointed as a community member of the Adult Parole Board from 30 March 2021.



Elisa Buggy

Elisa Buggy has worked at the nexus of justice, health and social support for many years, most recently as the Executive Officer of Flat Out, a not-for-profit organisation working with women who have been criminalised. Through her extensive experience in therapeutic jurisprudence, Elisa has been involved in the establishment of therapeutic courts around Australia, including the first Family Drug Treatment Court in the country. She has trained multi-disciplinary court teams and has presented to local and international forums on criminal justice and policy responses to drug use. Elisa is a social worker, holds a Master of Business Administration, and is currently studying for a Bachelor of Laws. Elisa also sits on the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association Board and is co-chair of the Project Control Group for the County Court Drug and Alcohol Treatment Court.

Elisa Buggy was appointed as a community member of the Adult Parole Board from 30 March 2021.

Keith Moor

Keith Moor is an award-winning journalist of 40 years' standing, commencing with the Perth Daily News in 1979 and then joining The Herald in Melbourne in 1983. In 1986, he won Australia's top journalism award, the Walkley Award, for his coverage of the kidnap of two Victorian aid workers in Pakistan. He won the Melbourne Press Club Quill Award for the Best Feature in Print in 2000, was highly commended at the 1997, 1998 and 2001 Quill Awards and in 2007 won the Quill Award for the Best Deadline Report in Any Medium and the News Ltd Specialist Writer of the Year Award. Keith was The Herald's Chief Police Reporter and later its Chief of Staff. He was Herald Sun Managing Editor before heading up the paper's investigative unit. Keith has written six true crime books.

Keith Moor was appointed as a community member of the Adult Parole Board from 30 March 2021.



Reflection from a full-time member appointed in 2020–21 **Michael Hoyle**



My appointment to the Adult Parole Board is an exciting opportunity to apply my experience in the criminal justice system as a prosecutor with a new focus; one that retains community safety as a touchstone, and extends to supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders as they transition back into the community.

Before joining the Board, I worked in both criminal and civil law. After studying law and science at university, I started my career at a commercial law firm, specialising in litigation and dispute resolution. I progressed to partner level at an Australasian firm and enjoyed a wide variety of exciting and interesting corporate work. The firm also had a strong commitment to pro bono public interest work, providing services to individuals and organisations that could not otherwise afford legal representation. I was particularly inspired by some of my younger colleagues who were working long days on billable cases, before going off to work at community legal centres and at other community agencies and projects. This led me to reconsider my own contribution to the community and I decided to become a prosecutor, taking on a role as a prosecuting solicitor at the Office of Public Prosecutions, Victoria (OPP).

Early on in my career at the OPP, I became aware of the often complex and emotional human stories that existed outside of the forensic consideration of evidence and legal submissions. A commitment to ensuring that victim survivors of crime were supported, and their views and concerns heard and acknowledged, co-existed with the need for the prosecution process to be impartial and fair to the accused person.

Later in my time at the OPP, as Deputy Solicitor for Public Prosecutions, I was fortunate to be involved in projects and programs aimed at enhancing the OPP's communication with victims of crime, including a collaboration with the Centre for Innovative Justice at RMIT University, to conduct research to better understand the experience of victims in the criminal justice system. This work was a watershed moment for me, giving greater meaning to my experiences with different participants in the criminal justice system and their perspectives.

The opportunity to serve on the Adult Parole Board has enabled me to take a view beyond the prosecution process, to the challenge of balancing the paramount consideration of community safety with the sustainable rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration back into the community – to live law abiding and, hopefully, purposeful lives as contributing members of the community.

I have been warmly welcomed and supported at the Board by the Chairperson, His Honour Peter Couzens, and the deputy chairpersons, Her Honour Susan Pullen QC and Stephen Farrow, as well as the sessional chairpersons, other full-time members, community members and the Board's Secretariat. It is a great privilege to work alongside these eminent judicial officers and dedicated professionals who generously share their diverse and deep knowledge as, together, we strive to make a positive contribution to the lives of those who come before the Board and to the confidence and safety of the community as a whole.

Michael Hoyle was appointed as a full-time member of the Adult Parole Board from 24 November 2020.

Reflection from a full-time member who left the Board in 2020–21 Dr David Curnow



When I was first approached in late 2013 to apply for a full-time member position at the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, I was surprised as I had not always agreed with the Board's decisions either in hearings or through its specific requests of me as a senior clinician. Fate, it appears, sometimes takes your career in directions you were not expecting. For most of my career I had been assessing and treating offenders in prisons and the community with my clear focus being to provide people with the skills to lead a crime-free lifestyle, thereby protecting the community from future offending. In addition to working in senior clinical roles in Corrections Victoria, I maintained a small solo private practice and, after completing my PhD researching the psychology of white collar criminals, had commenced working in corporate consultancy. I confess my aspirations were probably moving in a different direction from prison cells.

Early in my career, my supervisor noted that there were three levels of intervention that a clinician could apply – individual, group/prison and system wide. I recognised that being appointed to the Board was an opportunity to make a difference at the broadest level. It was also going to lead to significant change as I had to relocate my family from Bendigo to Melbourne, work in a city office and shift from the role of clinician to decision maker. In making this transition, I was extremely fortunate to have an experienced mentor in Professor James Ogloff AM, supportive colleagues, a professional Secretariat under General Manager of Operations Pauline Bailey and the extraordinary leadership of Chairperson The Honourable E.W. Gillard QC and Acting Chief Administrative Officer Jan Noblett. I recognise now, more than at the time, that the Board was taking a chance on me, as I was the first non-lawyer appointed as a full-time member. A review of other parole bodies around Australia reveals this to still be true with no psychologists as full-time Board members.

After commencing at the Board, it would be fair to say that it was in transition. I was acutely aware that while the Board now had the resources, there had been a significant loss of confidence in the community in both the Board and the parole system in general that needed to be addressed.

Over the next six years, there was a remarkable transformation of the Board through the hard work of the members and Secretariat staff under the leadership of Chairperson His Honour Peter Couzens, Deputy Chairperson His Honour Frank Shelton and Chief Administrative Officer Stuart Ward. There was a great sense of teamwork to implement this change, and for my small part I chaired the Board's Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee and the Risk and Audit Subcommittee that received great support from the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Over time, the Board's decision-making became more nuanced, consistent and could take full advantage of the diversity of the membership. The Board was able to weave in the critical focus on risk with the important question of what value there was for the offender being released into the community under conditions. We thought that the Board had met its challenge at that point of finalising the last of the Callinan Review recommendations and the extraordinary decrease in the number of offenders committing serious offences while on parole. We were wrong. COVID-19 struck, and we were presented with fresh challenges. I am proud to say that the Board not only maintained its hearings, but actually managed a surge in the number of matters it had to consider. This success was due to the investment in PRISM (the Board's electronic case workflow system), an agile Secretariat and the Board's experienced membership.

Finally, I valued each day at the Board – from my first to my last – as no two were the same. I was privileged to witness not only the modernisation of a decision-making body that provides such a critical function in the justice system but also an organisation that constantly looks for ways to improve. This was achieved through attention to culture, consistent referral to legislative responsibilities, effective leadership, building relationships with other agencies, utilising data, and valuing the diversity of opinion on the Board. I want to thank The Honourable E.W. Gillard QC for taking a chance on me, and His Honour Peter Couzens for his leadership, support and guidance. The learning and growth I gained over this time was career-defining and I will always be grateful for the opportunity I was given.

Dr David Curnow was appointed as a full-time member of the Adult Parole Board from 18 May 2014 until he resigned on 20 October 2020 following his appointment as a full-time member of the Post Sentence Authority.

Adult Parole Board members 2020–21

Chairperson

His Honour Peter Couzens

Retired Judge of the County Court,
retired President of the Children's Court of Victoria
Appointed to the Board as Chairperson from
9 June 2015

Deputy Chairpersons

Her Honour Susan Pullen QC

Retired Judge of the County Court
Appointed to the Board as a divisional
chairperson from 6 November 2013
Appointed as Deputy Chairperson from
19 December 2019

Stephen Farrow

Appointed to the Board as a full-time member
from 11 November 2013
Appointed as Deputy Chairperson from
19 December 2019

Full-time members

Dr David Curnow

Appointed to the Board from 18 May 2014
Resigned from the Board on 20 October 2020

Nafsika Sahinidis

Appointed to the Board from 31 January 2017

Colleen Bell

Appointed to the Board from 19 December 2017

Michael Hoyle

Appointed to the Board from 24 November 2020

Divisional chairpersons

His Honour John Doherty

Retired Magistrate
Appointed to the Board from 29 October 2014

His Honour Alan Spillane

Retired Magistrate
Appointed to the Board from 25 November 2013

Her Honour Jacinta Heffey

Retired Magistrate
Appointed to the Board from 22 November 2017
Appointment ended on 22 November 2020

Her Honour Michelle Hodgson

Magistrate
Appointed to the Board from 22 November 2017
Appointment ended on 22 November 2020

Her Honour Catherine Lamble

Retired Magistrate
Appointed to the Board from 17 April 2018

The Honourable Paul Cronin

Retired Family Court Judge
Appointed to the Board from 29 September 2020

Ray Elston QC

Retired Senior Crown Prosecutor
Appointed to the Board from 29 September 2020

Claire Harris QC

Senior member of the Victorian Bar
Appointed to the Board from 29 September 2020

Peter Rose QC

Retired Senior Crown Prosecutor,
former member of the Post Sentence Authority
Appointed to the Board from 30 March 2021

Community members

Kieran Walshe APM

Former Deputy Commissioner of Victoria Police
Appointed to the Board from 5 February 2013

Glenda Frost

Former President of Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices, experienced in company and tax law and accounting
Appointed to the Board from 17 December 2013

Pamela White PSM

Retired public servant with extensive experience in human services
Appointed to the Board from 29 April 2014

Dr Patricia Mehegan

Member of the Mental Health Tribunal,
Member of the Forensic Leave Panel
Appointed to the Board from 16 September 2014
Appointment ended on 16 September 2020

Claude Minisini

Chief Executive of a corporate issues management consultancy, former member of Victoria Police
Appointed to the Board from 16 September 2014

Aunty Pam Pedersen OAM

Aboriginal community Elder from the Yorta Yorta nation,
Elder representative for the Koori courts in Melbourne and Shepparton
Appointed to the Board from 16 September 2014
Appointment ended on 24 May 2021

Nicole Burns

Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal,
Migration and Refugee Division, Deputy Chairperson of the Patient Review Panel
Appointed to the Board from 23 September 2014

Rosemary Lever

Former Deputy Chancellor of RMIT University,
former CEO of the Children's Protection Society
Appointed to the Board from 23 September 2014

Mary Malone

A senior health administrator from South Australia and regional Victoria
Appointed to the Board from 23 September 2014

Kristy McKellar OAM

Family Violence and Social Change Consultant, and survivor advocate
Appointed to the Board from 19 December 2017
Appointment ended on 19 December 2020

Charlene Micallef

Former Manager of the Victims Strategy and Services Directorate at the Office of Public Prosecutions
Appointed to the Board from 19 December 2017
Appointment ended on 19 December 2020

Dr Chris Trotter

Professor Emeritus in the Department of Social Work at Monash University and Director of the Monash Criminal Justice Research Consortium
Appointed to the Board from 19 December 2017

Dr Clare Farmer

Deakin University criminologist specialising in criminal-justice focused research,
former lay Magistrate in England
Appointed to the Board from 30 March 2021

Elisa Buggy

Executive Officer of an organisation working with women in prison, Board member of Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, extensive experience in therapeutic jurisprudence especially drug courts
Appointed to the Board from 30 March 2021

Skye Staude

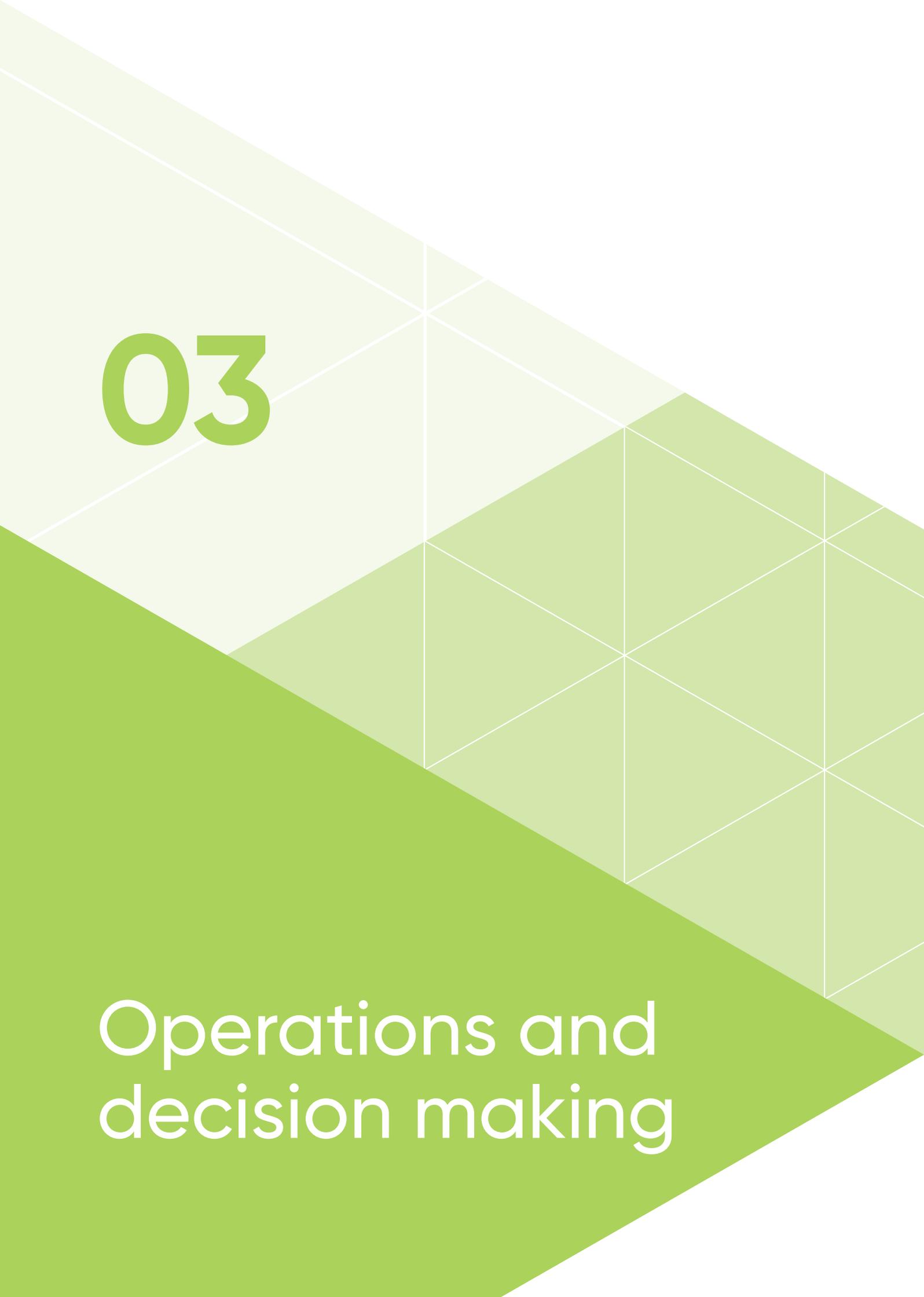
Deputy Principal at MacKillop Education, extensive experience in working with vulnerable youth at risk of disengaging from education
Appointed to the Board from 30 March 2021

Amanda Warrick

Worked in not-for-profit sector for over 30 years, former director of an organisation working with those experiencing homelessness in Melbourne
Appointed to the Board from 30 March 2021

Keith Moor

Retired senior crime journalist, Walkley and Quill Award winner, true crime author
Appointed to the Board from 30 March 2021



03

Operations and
decision making

Sentencing and parole

Purpose of parole

The purpose of parole is to promote public safety by supervising and supporting the transition of prisoners from prison back into the community in a way that seeks to minimise their risk of reoffending. The Board must treat the safety and protection of the community as its paramount consideration.

Sentencing

The courts have the sole responsibility for sentencing offenders. Only courts can impose a sentence and set a non-parole period as part of a sentence of imprisonment.

The Board has no role in the sentencing process and cannot change a sentence imposed by a court.

The Board's role is not to decide whether the prisoner has been punished too much or not enough.

The Board cannot decide to make the prisoner serve longer in prison to denounce their offence or to deter them or someone else from committing a similar offence. This is because those are sentencing considerations and are solely matters for the courts.

The Board's role is to consider the risk of the prisoner's transition back into the community.

Not all prison sentences include a non-parole period. In accordance with the *Sentencing Act 1991*, this depends on the length of the prison sentence.

A non-parole period must be at least six months less than the maximum term of the sentence. For example, if a court sentences a prisoner to five years' imprisonment, the longest possible non-parole period is four and a half years, but it can be shorter.

More than 24 months

The sentencing court must set a non-parole period, unless the nature of the offence or the offender's history would make parole inappropriate.

Between 12 and 24 months

The sentencing court is not required to, but may decide to, fix a non-parole period.

Less than 12 months

A non-parole period cannot be set by the sentencing court, and therefore parole is not possible.

Adult Parole Board

The *Corrections Act 1986* establishes the Adult Parole Board, its composition, functions, powers, and decision-making principles. The Board has additional functions outlined in the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* and *Sentencing Act 1991*.

The Board does not have a case management function. It is not responsible for preparing prisoners for parole, or for supervising and managing them while they are on parole. It does not have an investigative function. Rather, it is a decision-making body that relies on information provided to it, primarily by Corrections Victoria, to make decisions in accordance with its statutory authority.

Board decisions

The main decisions made by the Board are to:

- ▶ determine if a parole application will proceed to the preparation of a Parole Suitability Assessment (this means that the Board requests a Parole Suitability Assessment from Corrections Victoria's Community Correctional Services to provide information upon which it can decide whether to grant, deny or defer parole)
- ▶ defer the parole application
- ▶ grant parole
- ▶ deny parole
- ▶ revoke parole (this takes place after the Board has granted parole but before the prisoner has been released. For example, a positive drug test in prison may result in the Board revoking the prisoner's parole before they are released)
- ▶ to impose discretionary conditions on a parole order
- ▶ vary parole conditions
- ▶ warn a prisoner on parole if their conduct has the potential to lead to their parole being cancelled
- ▶ cancel parole if there has been a breach (or suspected breach) of a parole condition, or if the risk to the safety and protection of the community has escalated
- ▶ following a parole cancellation, determine whether to grant any time to count.

If the prisoner's sentence includes a non-parole period, the Board may order their release at any time after the expiry of that period.

Factors taken into account

In making decisions to grant parole, the Board carefully considers all relevant information with the paramount consideration being the safety and protection of the community.

Other matters that the Board takes into account include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ the sentence imposed by the court including any comments by the court about parole and rehabilitation
- ▶ psychiatric or psychological reports available to the court when it imposed the sentence
- ▶ victim impact statements provided to the sentencing court
- ▶ the nature and circumstances of the offence for which the prisoner is serving a sentence
- ▶ the prisoner's criminal history, including performance on past parole orders or community-based orders
- ▶ a submission received from a victim of the prisoner
- ▶ the outcome of formal risk assessments conducted for the prisoner
- ▶ whether the prisoner has undertaken treatment or programs and, if so, formal reports of their performance
- ▶ psychiatric or psychological reports requested by the Board
- ▶ whether proposed accommodation is suitable and stable
- ▶ the prisoner's behaviour in prison, including outcomes of random drug tests
- ▶ for serious offenders, the Board considers a detailed home assessment report about the suitability of proposed accommodation and intelligence held by Corrections Victoria and Victoria Police.

Parole conditions

The Board is required by law to impose 10 core parole conditions on every parole order. The Board may also impose discretionary conditions depending on a prisoner's individual circumstances. If a prisoner breaches a condition, their parole may be cancelled and they may be returned to custody.

Core conditions

The ten core conditions are:

1. You must not break any law.
2. You must report to the community corrections centre specified in this Order within two clear working days after this Order comes into force.

3. You must notify a community corrections officer of any change of address at least two clear working days before the change of address.
4. You must notify a community corrections officer of any change of employment within at least two clear working days of the change of employment.
5. You are under the supervision of a community corrections officer.
6. You must report to, and receive visits from, a community corrections officer as and when directed by the community corrections officer.
7. You must be available for an interview by a community corrections officer, the Regional Manager or the Adult Parole Board at the time and place as directed by the community corrections officer or the Regional Manager or Adult Parole Board.
8. You must attend in person at a community corrections centre as directed in writing by a community corrections officer.
9. You must not leave Victoria except with the written permission, granted either generally or in a particular case, of the Regional Manager/ Adult Parole Board.
10. You must comply with any direction given by a community corrections officer or the Regional Manager or the Adult Parole Board that is necessary for a community corrections officer or the Regional Manager or the Adult Parole Board to give to ensure that you comply with this Order.

Discretionary conditions

Discretionary conditions may include (for example):

- ▶ alcohol abstinence
- ▶ drug testing
- ▶ curfews
- ▶ residential restrictions
- ▶ geographical restrictions prohibiting entry into specified areas
- ▶ victim contact restrictions
- ▶ participation in rehabilitation programs
- ▶ community work
- ▶ electronic monitoring – both geographical and alcohol consumption.

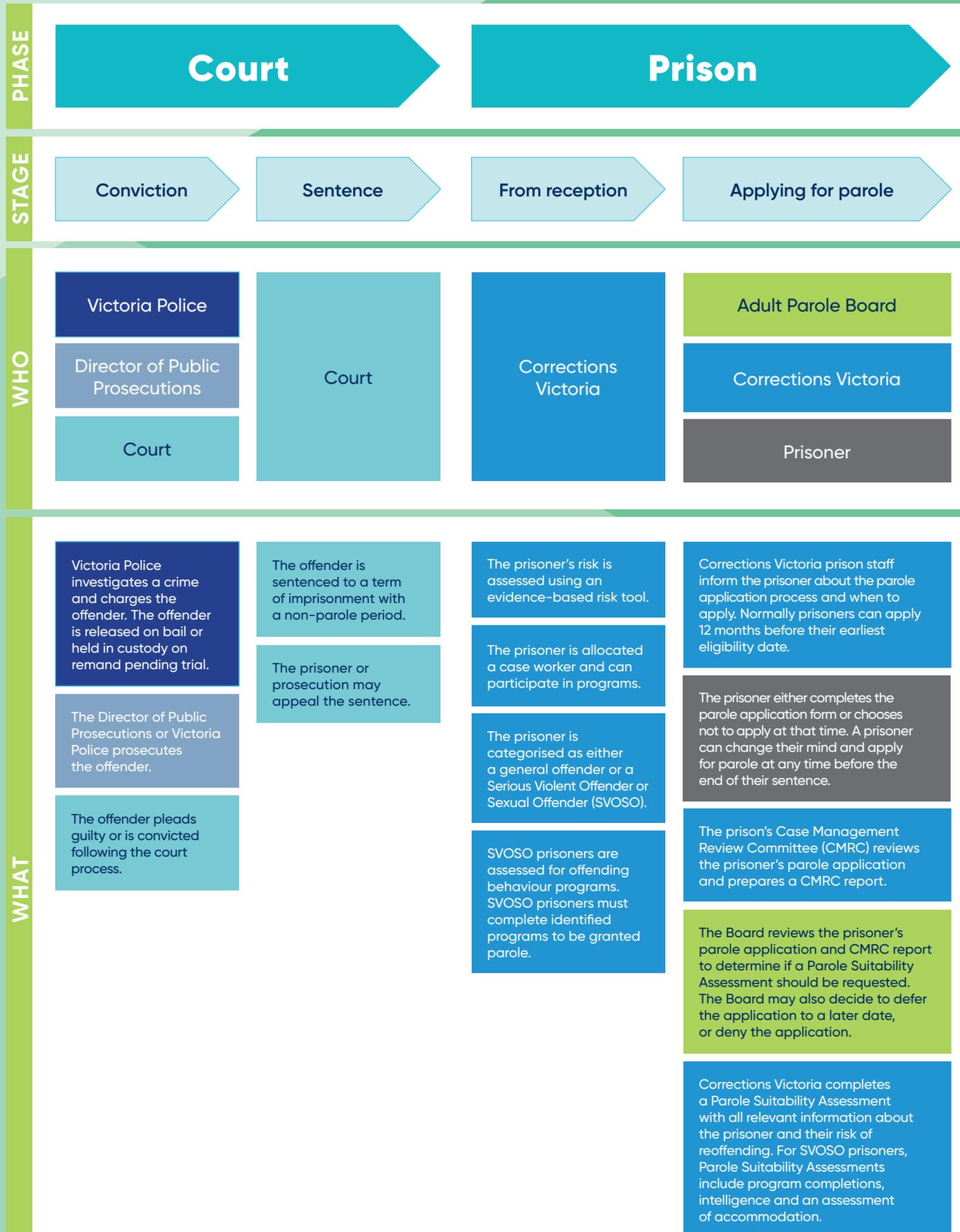
Varying and revoking conditions

The Board can vary the conditions of a parole order at any time during the parole period. Conditions can be added to respond to changes in risk. Alternatively, conditions can be revoked if the prisoner has been performing well on parole for a long period. The Board's primary consideration is always the safety and protection of the community.



Chairperson His Honour Peter Couzens and full-time member Nafsika Sahinidis in the Serious Violent Offender or Sexual Offender (SVOSO) Division hearing on 23 March 2021. This was the first hearing, and one of the only hearings, held in person at 50 Franklin Street in 2021 due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The parole process



Parole

Deciding to grant or deny parole

Parole outcome

Adult Parole Board

Adult Parole Board

Corrections Victoria

Victoria Police

Prisoner

The Board considers the prisoner’s parole application and the Parole Suitability Assessment.

To assist with its decision, the Board may interview the prisoner or Corrections Victoria parole officers and other staff. The Board takes into account written submissions by victims of crime.

The Board’s paramount consideration is always the safety and protection of the community.

For general offenders, the Board decides to either grant or deny parole.

For SVOSO prisoners, a general Board panel considers whether to recommend parole. The SVOSO Division will then consider whether to grant or deny parole. The two-tiered decision-making process provides a higher level of scrutiny before parole is granted to serious offenders.

The Board sets targeted parole conditions to manage the prisoner’s ongoing risks and needs in the community.

The prisoner is supervised on parole by Corrections Victoria parole officers.

Through Advice and Recommendation reports, Corrections Victoria parole officers keep the Board informed about the prisoner’s progress on parole.

Through Risk and Compliance reports, Corrections Victoria parole officers may notify the Board about a prisoner’s breach of conditions or escalation of risk.

If Victoria Police identify that a prisoner has breached certain parole conditions, they can arrest the prisoner and notify the Board through the 24-hour breach of parole model.

The Board’s paramount consideration is always the safety and protection of the community. The Board considers all breaches of parole and risk escalation. The Board may interview the prisoner or Corrections Victoria parole officers and other staff.

The Board may cancel a prisoner’s parole and issue a warrant for their arrest and return to prison, issue a warning to the prisoner or vary the prisoner’s parole conditions.

The prisoner completes their parole.

If a prisoner’s parole is cancelled, the prisoner may choose to apply for re-parole after they have been returned to custody.

The Board considers whether any time the prisoner spent on parole will be counted as time served under the sentence.

Parole data 2020-21

Stage 1 The prisoner applies for parole

Prisoners who have been sentenced by a court to a non-parole period must apply to the Adult Parole Board if they want to be considered for release on parole.

In 2020-21, there was a decrease in the number of prisoners who were in custody and eligible for parole (from 3,844 at 30 June 2020 down to 3,415 at 30 June 2021). This is likely due to the impact of disruptions within the Criminal Justice System due to COVID-19 related affects and associated restrictions. This may have also contributed to the decrease in parole applications received by the Board during the year (the Board received 1,349 applications for parole in 2020-21, 431 fewer applications than in 2019-20).

There was a 38 per cent decline this year in the number of prisoners who were eligible for parole but chose not to apply (from 152 in 2019-20 down to 95 in 2020-21).

Of the 1,349 applications for parole, 87 per cent (or 1,167) proceeded to the preparation of a Parole Suitability Assessment. This is consistent with 2019-20 where 86 per cent of applications received during the year proceeded to the preparation of a Parole Suitability Assessment.

Parole officers from Community Correctional Services prepare comprehensive Parole Suitability Assessment reports to inform the Board's decisions.

The remaining 182 applications were either deemed invalid, deferred, denied at the application stage, or had not been processed as at 30 June 2021.

Parole applications	2020-21	%	2019-20	%	% change between 2019-20 and 2020-21
Total number of parole applications received	1,349	-	1,780	-	-24%
Total number of parole applications still in progress	8	1%	14	1%	-43%
Outcomes					
Progressed to Parole or Re-parole Suitability Assessment	1,167	87%	1,527	86%	-24%
Denied	59	4%	63	4%	-6%
Deferred	28	2%	36	2%	-22%
Invalid application	87	6%	140	8%	-38%
Eligible prisoners who did not apply for parole	95	7%	152	8%	-38%

Stage 2: The Board decides to grant or deny parole

When a prisoner has applied for parole and the Board has determined that the application will proceed, the Board will then receive a Parole Suitability Assessment from Community Correctional Services (CCS).

The report contains information that includes:

- ▶ the prisoner's background (including past offending and performance on previous supervised sentences in the community, including any previous parole orders or community correction orders)
- ▶ the current offences and the circumstances in which the prisoner committed them
- ▶ the prisoner's behaviour in prison
- ▶ any assessments or treatment conducted in prison
- ▶ their plans for release (such as accommodation and employment).
- ▶ The report considers the prisoner's risk factors and the extent to which they could be mitigated by parole conditions.

The Board may also receive further information, including submissions from victims of the prisoner's offending, correspondence from the prisoner, their family or supports, and information from police (such as whether there are any family violence safety notices or any current or expired intervention orders relating to the prisoner).

Once the Board has received all the necessary information, it will decide whether to grant or deny parole. This decision will not necessarily be in the same reporting year that the prisoner's application was lodged.

In 2020–21, the Board made 1,317 decisions to grant and deny parole (excluding the prisoners who withdrew their

applications for parole). This is a slight decrease from the previous year (1,400 decisions to grant and deny parole in 2019–20). Sixty-three per cent (or 835) of those decisions in 2020–21 were to grant parole while 37 per cent (or 482) were to deny parole. This is consistent with 2019–20 where 65 per cent (or 913) of decisions were to grant parole while 35 per cent (or 487) were to deny parole.

Having somewhere appropriate to live is a major factor in being able to successfully complete parole. If a prisoner is suitable for parole but has been unable to propose any accommodation or has proposed unsuitable accommodation, the Board will ordinarily request a further report to allow more time for the prisoner and CCS to continue to explore accommodation options. The Board will ordinarily not deny parole in such cases until there is insufficient time remaining on the sentence.

Absence of suitable accommodation was one of the factors in 60 per cent of cases in which the Board denied parole in 2020–21. Less common factors in the Board deciding to deny parole were a failure to complete relevant programs in prison (22 per cent) and unacceptable behaviour in prison (15 per cent).

After applying for parole, a prisoner can choose to withdraw their application. In 2020–21, 182 prisoners withdrew their application. This is a 14 per cent decrease from the previous year (212 prisoners chose to withdraw their application in 2019–20). The most common reasons for a prisoner to withdraw their application in 2020–21 included the prisoner not wishing to be subjected to parole conditions or the prisoner having an absence of suitable accommodation.

Parole decisions	2020–21	%	2019–20	%	% change between 2019–20 and 2020–21
Decisions to grant parole	835	63%	913	65%	-9%
Decisions to deny parole (excluding those that withdrew their application)	482	37%	487	35%	-1%
Number of prisoners who withdrew their application	182	12% ²	212	13%	-14%

² This is the proportion of all granted, denied and withdrawn decisions.

Re-parole

If a prisoner's parole is cancelled, they may apply to the Board to be released on re-parole.

In considering an application for re-parole, the Board will carefully examine the reasons why the previous parole was cancelled and what, if anything, the prisoner has done to address the reason for their parole being cancelled. For example, if a prisoner's parole was cancelled because they used illicit drugs, the Parole Suitability Assessment – Re-parole report may inform the Board whether the prisoner has completed a drug and alcohol program in prison or produced any positive tests for drugs.

Of the 1,317 decisions to grant or deny parole in 2020–21, 108 were for re-parole (excluding the prisoners who withdrew their applications for re-parole). Of the 108 decisions, 54 (or 50 per cent) were to grant re-parole while 54 (or 50 per cent) were to deny re-parole.

The Board is likely to deny re-parole if the prisoner performed very poorly on their initial period of parole (prior to their parole cancellation) and there is insufficient time remaining on the sentence for re-parole to be of benefit.

Re-parole decisions	2020–21	%	2019–20	%	% change between 2019–20 and 2020–21
Re-parole orders granted	54	50%	49	46%	10%
Re-parole orders denied (excluding those that withdrew their application)	54	50%	57	54%	-5%
Number of prisoners who withdrew their application for re-parole	8	7% ³	10	9%	-20%

Stage 3: Prisoners on parole and outcomes

Prisoners on parole

Prisoners on parole are supervised by parole officers from Community Correctional Services (CCS). Prisoners are required to attend regular supervision meetings with their parole officer who will report any issues regarding the prisoner's compliance or risk to the Board.

At 30 June 2021, there were 781 prisoners on parole. The majority were male (91 per cent or 708).

Prisoners on parole (at 30 June)	2020–21	%	2019–20	%	% change between 2019–20 and 2020–21
Number of prisoners on parole	781	–	799	–	-2%
Characteristics					
<i>SVOSO prisoners on parole</i>	412	53%	408	51%	1%
<i>Aboriginal prisoners on parole</i>	37	5%	38	5%	-3%
<i>Male prisoners on parole</i>	708	91%	717	90%	-1%
<i>Female prisoners on parole</i>	73	9%	82	10%	-11%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 17–24</i>	32	4%	25	3%	28%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 25–29</i>	102	13%	119	15%	-14%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 30–34</i>	130	17%	129	16%	1%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 35–39</i>	111	14%	86	11%	29%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 40–49</i>	152	19%	181	23%	-16%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 50–59</i>	120	15%	118	15%	2%
<i>Prisoners on parole aged 60 and over</i>	134	17%	141	18%	-5%

³ This is the proportion of all re-parole granted, denied and withdrawn decisions.

Breach of parole (arrest and detention)

If a prisoner on parole is arrested by Victoria Police (for example, for suspected further offending or for breaching certain parole conditions), the Board is notified immediately. Board members and staff are available on call every day of the year to respond to such incidents.

A full-time member must then determine whether the prisoner should be released from custody or continue to be detained while the Board awaits a full report from the prisoner's parole officer to then determine whether to cancel their parole.

In 2020–21, Victoria Police notified the Board of 66 prisoners who were arrested under suspicion of breaching their parole conditions. This is a 35 per cent increase from last year (49 notifications in 2019–20).

The Board decided to cease detention for 26 of the 66 prisoners – a 117 per cent increase from last year (12 of 49 prisoners in 2019–20). The Board may decide to cease detention because, for example, the prisoner was arrested but Victoria Police was not intending to charge the prisoner at that time pending further investigation. Even though the Board decides to cease detention, the Board may request a report from CCS with further information about the incident and an update on the prisoner's parole compliance in order to consider whether further action is required, such as varying the prisoner's parole conditions or delivering a verbal warning to the prisoner.

Of the remaining 40 prisoners who were detained pending consideration by the Board, the parole order for 27 prisoners were cancelled and 13 were not cancelled. This is consistent with 2019–20 where 37 prisoners were detained pending consideration by the Board with 24 cancelled and 13 not cancelled.

Breach of parole (arrest and detention)	2020–21	%	2019–20	%	% change between 2019–20 and 2020–21
Total notifications received	66	–	49	–	35%
Total detained	40	61%	37	76%	8%
<i>Total cancelled</i>	27	68%	24	65%	13%
<i>Total not cancelled</i>	13	33%	13	35%	0%
Total ceased to detain	26	39%	12	24%	117%

Cancellations

Under the *Corrections Act 1986*, the Board's paramount consideration is the safety and protection of the community.

If a prisoner's risk to the community is increasing, their parole officer is obliged to notify the Board. The Board will then decide whether to cancel the prisoner's parole and return them back to custody.

The risk increase will normally be apparent from the prisoner breaching their conditions (for example, by positive drug tests or by avoiding drug testing). In a small number of cases, the risk increase may be apparent even if the prisoner is compliant with their conditions.

The Board will consider whether other actions may be appropriate (for example, by varying the prisoner's conditions or delivering a warning).

However, if the Board concludes that the risk to the community posed by the prisoner has come to outweigh the benefits to the community of the prisoner remaining on parole, the Board will cancel their parole.

In 2020–21, the Board cancelled parole for 170 prisoners on parole. This is one less cancellation than the previous year (171 cancellations in 2019–20).

Drug use (particularly methylamphetamine or 'ice') was at least one of the factors in 62 per cent of all cancellations, while being charged with or found guilty of a further offence was a factor in 33 cancellations (or 19 per cent). Non-compliance with parole conditions, including breaches of conditions, loss of contact with CCS or unacceptable absences for scheduled appointments, was one of the factors in 110 (or 65 per cent) cancellations.

Parole cancellations	2020–21	%	2019–20	%	% change between 2019–20 and 2020–21
Number of prisoners who had parole cancelled	170	–	171	–	-1%

Time to count

When a prisoner's parole is cancelled, none of the time that the prisoner spent on parole is counted towards their sentence unless the Board directs that some or all of it should be counted.

For every parole cancellation, the Board will consider whether to direct any time to count after the prisoner has returned to custody.

In making this decision, the Board will consider the prisoner's performance over the whole time they were on parole. For example, a prisoner may have made progress while on parole, but then encountered a setback which triggered a relapse into drug use resulting in cancellation.

If a prisoner becomes concerned that their parole may be cancelled, the prospect of time to count can motivate the prisoner to persevere with onerous parole conditions, knowing that the effort they have put in and the progress that they have made over an extended period will be recognised and will not be lost even if their parole is eventually cancelled.

Parole conditions are designed to promote positive behaviour (for example, engagement in counselling) and to detect and deter negative behaviour (for example, illicit drug use). A prisoner who makes little or no use of the support provided while on parole, and demonstrates limited or no effort towards their rehabilitation, may not merit any time to count.

If the prisoner's parole is cancelled during the intensive parole period (generally the first three months of parole) or because of serious offending while on parole, it is unlikely that they will receive any time to count.

The Board holds one hearing each week, presided by the Chairperson, to consider time to count matters. In 2020–21, the Board considered 185 time to count matters (some of which may have related to cancellations that occurred in previous reporting years). The Board decided not to grant any time to count in 95 matters (or 51 per cent). The Board granted at least some time to count in 62 matters (or 34 per cent). In the remaining 28 matters (or 15 per cent), the Board deferred its decision.

Time to count	2020–21	%	2019–20	%	% change between 2019–20 and 2020–21
Number of time to count cases considered	185	–	215	–	-14%
Time to count granted	62	34%	75	35%	-17%
Time to count not granted	95	51%	117	54%	-19%
Time to count deferred	28	15%	23	11%	22%

Order completions

During 2020–21, 818 prisoners on parole had their orders discharged by Corrections Victoria. Of these, 647 prisoners were discharged as successfully completing their parole order, resulting in a successful completion rate of 79 per cent. This was the fifth consecutive year that the successful completion rate has been over 75 per cent.

Reviews

A prisoner or their supports can request a review of a Board decision at any time by contacting the Board. Each request for review is considered by a panel including the Board's Chairperson and a full-time member.

In 2020–21, the Board received two requests from prisoners to review Board decisions.

One review related to the Board's decision to revoke a prisoner's parole. The Board rejected the review request as there was no new information for the Board to vary its decision.

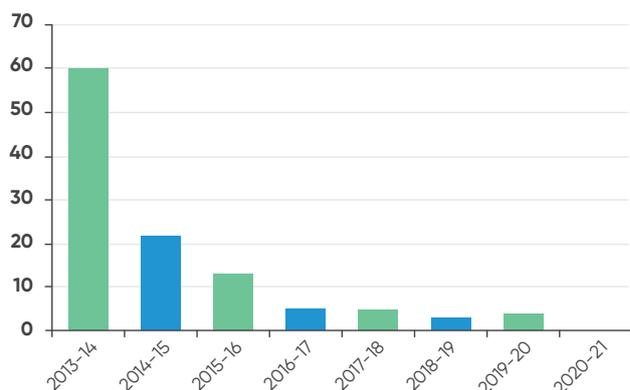
The other review related to whether additional time to count should be granted following a parole cancellation. The Board accepted the review request, based on additional information provided by the prisoner for the purpose of the review, and granted the prisoner additional time to count.

The Board also considered a request for review from a prisoner in 2020–21 that was received last reporting year but did not have an outcome at 30 June 2020. This review also related to whether additional time to count should be granted following a parole cancellation. The Board rejected the review request because there was no new information for the Board to vary its decision.

Convictions for serious offences committed on parole

There were no persons convicted in 2020–21 of committing a serious violent offence or sexual offence while on parole. This is a 100 per cent reduction from the first reporting year (60 in 2013–14).

Number of persons convicted of a serious violent offence or sexual offence committed while on parole, from 2013–14 to 2020–21



Projects and risk management

Information security

In 2020–21, the Board continued to work on its information security project through its Risk and Audit Subcommittee to ensure compliance with the Victorian Protective Data Security Framework and its associated standards, the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards, under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

In August 2020, the Board attested to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) that it had implemented the key activities or is in the process of implementing key activities as required by the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards.

The Secretariat's Practice Development team ran information security workshops with the Secretariat management team and staff in December 2020 to increase their understanding and awareness of information security. Natasha Burhop, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, also presented on information security to the Board's Executive Committee on 22 March 2021.

On 18 December 2020, following comprehensive testing by the Secretariat's management team, PRISM (the Board's case workflow system) was enhanced so that all documents with offender information generated by the Board in PRISM now have the "OFFICIAL: Sensitive" protective marking. Recipients will now be aware of how the Board has classified the information and must secure the Board's information appropriately.

In 2021–22, the Board will continue to work towards compliance with the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards. Key focus areas will include developing a formal process for identifying information security incidents and reporting these to OVIC, enhancing the identification and management of information security risks through the Board's existing risk register, engaging the Board's stakeholders on information security, and increasing information security awareness for members and staff through more training.

Independent audit

Following a recommendation made by the Sentencing Advisory Council in its 2012 *Review of the Victorian Adult Parole System*, the Minister for Corrections at the time endorsed a program for a regular audit of the Board's processes and procedures that support compliance with its legislative requirements. Under this program, an external auditor conducts an independent audit on a biennial basis, and on the alternate years the Board's Secretariat conducts a self-assessment.

Grant Thornton Australia Limited (Grant Thornton) was contracted by the Justice Review and Assurance Office (JARO) to complete an independent audit of the Board in 2020–21. Grant Thornton had previously worked with the Board's Secretariat to develop and implement an audit tool.

Grant Thornton, who were supported by the Secretariat to scope the program and advise the auditors on how to conduct the audit remotely, commenced the audit in April 2021 and delivered its findings in May 2021. Grant Thornton determined that the overall compliance with key process controls that support legislative requirements was 98.3 per cent.

The Risk and Audit Subcommittee noted the results of the independent audit on 19 June 2021. The Secretariat will continue to look at how to improve its processes following the independent audit.

Emergency and risk management

The Board's Risk Register is reviewed annually to determine whether the risk profile of the Board has changed as well as reviewed regularly during the year to ensure that risk mitigation treatments are progressing. In November 2020, the Secretariat management team held several internal workshops to update the Risk Register. The updated Risk Register was then endorsed out-of-sessions by the Risk and Audit Subcommittee in January 2021.

The Secretariat management team also updated the Board's Business Continuity Plan to reflect changes to the Board's operations for its new hybrid working model. The management team then successfully completed its annual exercise, facilitated by a member of the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Resilience and Assurance team, on 11 March 2021 to test the effectiveness of the updated Business Continuity Plan (the mock scenario was a positive COVID-19 case at the Board's premises at 50 Franklin Street, resulting in the building being closed during the Board's in-person interview with a prisoner). The Risk and Audit Subcommittee endorsed the updated Business Continuity Plan on 24 March 2021.

In preparation for the return of Board operations to 50 Franklin Street, the Board developed a COVIDSafe Plan and updated it regularly in line with public health advice. The Board also developed a Business Contingency Plan, a requirement of the COVIDSafe Plan, that details the actions to take if a Board or staff member contracts or is in close contact with COVID-19 and how Board operations will continue.

Litigation

The Adult Parole Board's Risk and Audit Subcommittee is responsible for overseeing the risks associated with litigation.

Coroners Court of Victoria

On 15 March 2021, Coroner Audrey Jamieson commenced two inquests into the death of Mr Kai Hao on 5 June 2017 by Mr Yacqub Khayre, who was on parole at the time, as well as the death of Mr Khayre on 5 June 2017.

The inquest concluded on 19 March 2021 and the Coroner reserved her findings which are likely to be delivered later in 2021.

Civil claims in respect to murder by those released on parole

The Board is involved in several proceedings being brought against the State of Victoria by families of victims who have been murdered by people on, or recently having completed, parole.

Privacy and information

Privacy and information

There are strict rules governing the release of information by the Adult Parole Board. The disclosure of 'personal and confidential information' is governed by Part 9E of the *Corrections Act 1986* and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. The Board is not subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

It is an offence for Board members or staff to use or disclose personal or confidential information unless the disclosure is authorised: s.104ZZA of the *Corrections Act 1986*.

Information contained in an offender's file is treated as confidential and ensures that information can be provided to the Board with complete frankness by clinicians and intelligence. It also ensures that prisoners can speak to the Board without reservation.

Under the *Corrections Act 1986*:

- ▶ registered victims may be informed of an offender's release date and certain victim-related conditions, but otherwise registered victims are not privy to information on an offender's file (registered victim submissions are treated with strict confidentiality)
- ▶ there are limited circumstances, listed in s.104ZZ, where information given to the Board may be disclosed
- ▶ the disclosure of other 'personal or confidential information' is governed by s.104ZY which authorises disclosure of personal or confidential information for 'official duties' (defined under s.104ZX of the Act to include preparation for, conduct of or participation in, proceedings in any court or tribunal), law enforcement or in the specific circumstances stipulated under ss.104ZY(2).

Safety and protection of the community

Disclosure of personal and confidential information is authorised if a relevant person believes on reasonable grounds that the use or disclosure is necessary:

- ▶ to reduce the risk of a person committing a violent offence; or
- ▶ to lessen or prevent a threat to the life, health, safety or welfare of any person.



04

Stakeholder collaboration
and engagement

Working collaboratively with stakeholders

Corrections Victoria

In 2020–21, the Board continued to foster a close, working relationship with Corrections Victoria that is collaborative, respectful and effective.

Senior managers from Corrections Victoria are included as members on the Board's key governance committees. The Board's Chairperson regularly communicated with the Acting Commissioner and Acting Deputy Commissioner of Corrections Victoria during the year. The Board's Acting Chief Administrative Officers met regularly with the Corrections Victoria Director of Community Operations.

The Board relies on the information it receives from Corrections Victoria's Community Correctional Services (CCS), including Parole Suitability Assessments and risk evaluation reports, to inform its decisions. The Board is regularly assisted by the attendance of parole officers at Board hearings to provide information and answer questions, including when the Board interviews a prisoner on parole.

The Secretariat, which supports the Board and ensures that all matters are properly prepared and presented for Board consideration, is comprised of Corrections Victoria staff.

Corrections Victoria prison officers from the Melbourne Assessment Prison (MAP) are present during the Board's in-person interviews with prisoners. The prison officers have legislative powers to search and seize, give directions and use reasonable force to ensure compliance, use instruments of restraint, and arrest and detain.

Due to COVID-19, the Board did not conduct any in-person interviews from early-July 2020 and for the remainder of 2020–21. All interviews with prisoners on parole were conducted remotely with members attending via Zoom and the prisoner and parole officer attending via a video conferencing unit at a CCS location. MAP prison staff attended the Board's premises at 50 Franklin Street on 3 May 2021 to meet with the Secretariat and prepare for the return of in-person interviews when COVID-19 restrictions ease.

Victims

Victims of Crime Consultative Committee

The Board has been represented on the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee (VOCCC) since its inception in 2012.

Victim Services, Support and Reform

The Board and the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Victim Services, Support and Reform (VSSR) adhere to an information-sharing protocol that outlines agreed processes to receive information from and disseminate parole information to registered victims.

The Board's Secretariat and VSSR meet quarterly to review the arrangements and discuss any issues that need to be addressed. The information-sharing protocol is formally reviewed by the Secretariat and VSSR biannually.

Victims Register

The Victims Register is managed by Victim Services, Support and Reform. It is responsible for maintaining contact with victims of violent crime who have registered to receive information about an adult prisoner.

The Board and the Victims Register work closely in relation to operational and policy issues. The Board provides information each day to the Victims Register about the management of prisoners (where appropriate) and victim-related conditions. The Victims Register is then able to provide victims of crime with timely, relevant and accurate information about the release of a prisoner on parole.

In 2020–21, 107 prisoners with one or more registered victims were granted parole. For 123 registered victims, the Board informed the Victims Register of the date of release of the prisoner on parole to enable compliance with the legislative requirement for the Victims Register to give the registered victims at least 14 days' notice of the release date unless the Board waives the notice period.

Victim submissions

Individuals included on the Victims Register have the right to send a written submission to the Board when the prisoner for whom they are registered is being considered for parole.

All submissions from victims are read by the Board and the issues and concerns raised are carefully considered as part of the decision-making process. Each submission is treated with strict confidence.

In 2020–21, 146 submissions were provided for the Board's consideration.

Victoria Police

The Board and Victoria Police work closely together. The Board also has an effective working relationship with the Fugitive Task Force which is responsible for the timely and safe arrest of prisoners who have had their parole cancelled and a warrant issued for their arrest.

When the Board cancels a prisoner's parole during an in-person interview, Victoria Police officers from Melbourne East Police Station execute the warrant at the hearing and safely return the prisoner to custody.

The Secretariat met with police officers from Melbourne East Police Station on 6 May 2021 via Zoom to prepare for the return of in-person interviews when the COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

Post Sentence Authority

The Board works closely with the Post Sentence Authority. The Board and the Post Sentence Authority share the ground floor hearing room at 50 Franklin Street.

Parole boards in other jurisdictions

The Board met with representatives of the New South Wales State Parole Authority, Parole Board Queensland and the Parole Board of South Australia to learn how these jurisdictions manage communications with stakeholders during a crisis.

Stephen Farrow, Deputy Chairperson, and David Klotz, the Secretariat's Communications Manager, met with representatives of the New South Wales State Parole Authority Secretariat on 16 February 2021, representatives of the Parole Board Queensland Secretariat on 1 March 2021 and the Presiding Member of the Parole Board of South Australia, Ms Frances Nelson QC, on 1 March 2021. The Board thanks these jurisdictions for their engagement and useful information provided during these discussions.

Participation in KPMG review of Parole Board Queensland

The Board participated in a review by KPMG to evaluate the operations of the Parole Board Queensland. KPMG met with His Honour Peter Couzens, Chairperson, and Natasha Burhop, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, on 15 April 2021 and then with senior members of the Secretariat management team on 29 April 2021 to learn about the Board's operating model and Secretariat processes.

The Secretariat management team also delivered a demonstration of PRISM, the Board's case workflow system, to KPMG at its request on 18 June 2021.

Demonstration of PRISM to the Department of Corrections in New Zealand

Stephen Farrow, Deputy Chairperson, demonstrated PRISM to representatives of the Department of Corrections in New Zealand at their request on 11 June 2021.

Increasing the community's understanding of parole



His Honour Peter Couzens presents (via Microsoft Teams) at the Independent Prison Visitor Scheme annual conference with the theme "The journey of an offender – parole, straight release and transition" on 18 December 2020.

Presentations to stakeholders

In 2020–21, the Adult Parole Board presented to several groups including clinicians from Forensic Intervention Services, parole staff from Dandenong Community Correctional Services, students from Monash Law Clinics, members of the Heidelberg Probus Club, members of the Victorian Custody Reference Group and at the Independent Prison Visitor Scheme annual conference.

Website

The Board's website received 57,577 unique page views in 2020–21 which is consistent with the number of unique page views in 2019–20 (58,825).

The most popular pages contained information about the purpose and benefits of parole, frequently asked questions and parole conditions.

New chair and community members appointed to the Board's Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee

The Board's Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee was established in 2014 to provide strategic direction for the Board's communications and stakeholder engagement.

Its membership includes the chair (who is a full-time member of the Board), four members of the

Secretariat's management team (including the Chief Administrative Officer, General Manager Practice Development, General Manager Operations and Communications Manager), up to two of the Board's community members and representatives from the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Strategic Communications Branch.

Dr David Curnow chaired the subcommittee until his resignation as a full-time member in October 2020. Full-time member Colleen Bell now chairs the subcommittee.

Two new community members – Keith Moor, a retired senior crime journalist, true crime author and Walkley and Quill Award winner, and Amanda Warrick who has worked in the marketing/communications area of the not-for-profit sector for over 30 years – have joined the subcommittee.

The Board thanks and acknowledges the work and contribution of Mary Malone, community member, who was a member of the subcommittee from 2016 to 2021, as well as Geoff Wilkinson OAM who was a member of the subcommittee from its inception in 2014 until April 2020 when he resigned as a community member.

The subcommittee's terms of reference were revised in June 2021 to reflect these changes.

The subcommittee, with its new chair and community members, will meet quarterly in 2021–22.

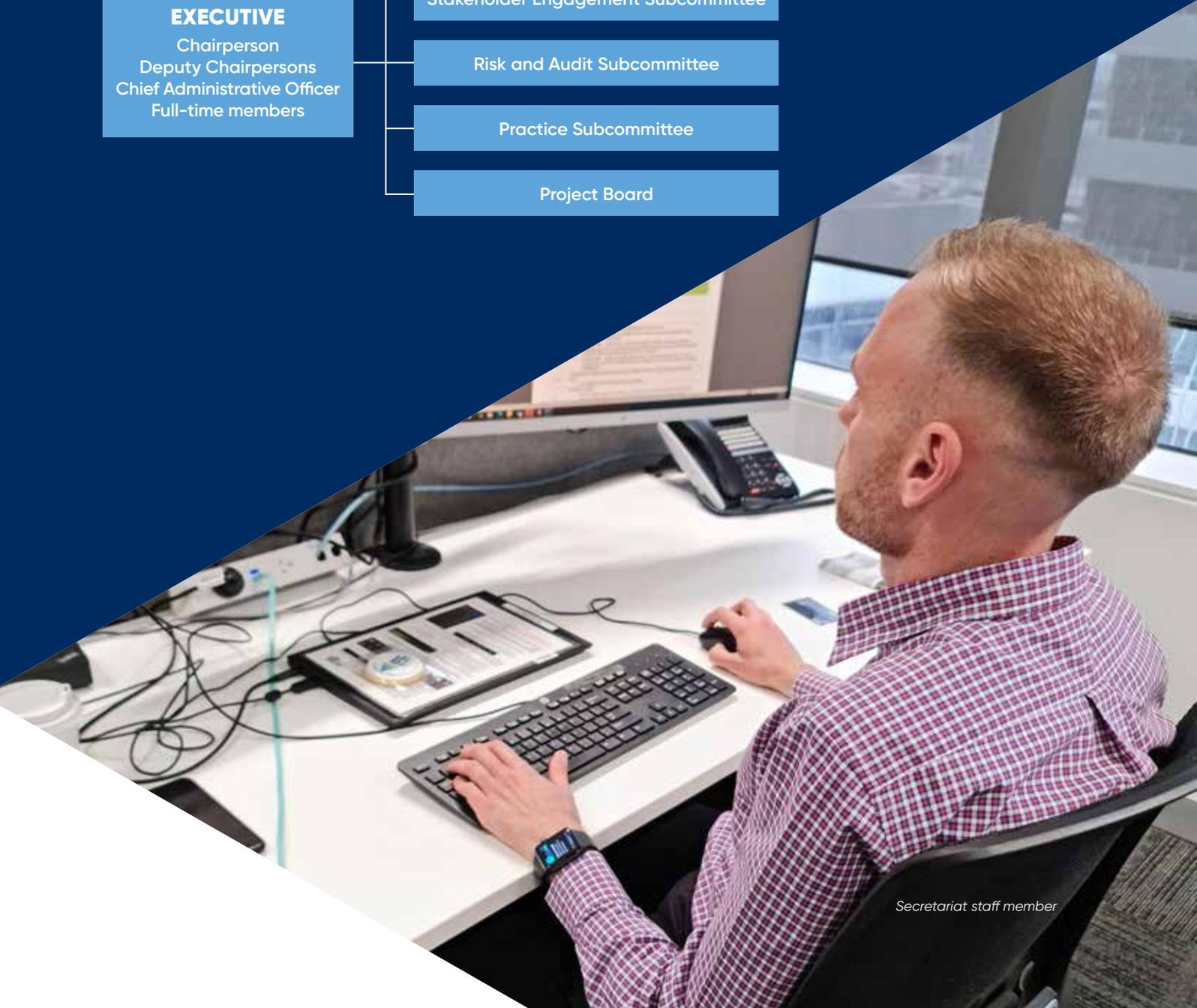


05

Organisation and governance

Governance

The Board's governance structure oversees the efficient and effective administration of the Board's strategy, policy, and practice. All strategic decisions are made by the Executive based on the recommendations and advice of the four supporting subcommittees, with project advice provided by the Project Board.



Secretariat staff member

Secretariat

The Adult Parole Board is supported to undertake its functions by a Secretariat comprising of 28⁴ Corrections Victoria staff from the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS).

The Secretariat is led by the Chief Administrative Officer with the support of the senior management team including the General Manager Operations and the General Manager Practice Development. The management team, which meets fortnightly, comprises the senior managers as well as the Operations Manager, Registry Manager, Project Manager and Communications Manager.

Anita Lis acted as Chief Administrative Officer until September 2020 and, following her secondment to COVID-19 Quarantine Victoria, Natasha Burhop acted in the role for the remainder of the reporting year.

In 2020–21, the management team developed and implemented the Secretariat's first formal work plan with five key focus areas including improving processes and procedures, building IT knowledge, developing staff and enhancing leadership, strengthening stakeholder relationships and proactively identifying and managing risks.

The Secretariat worked during the year to improve the Board's remote working model implemented in 2019–20. For example – when the Board was no longer able to conduct in-person interviews at the Board's premises, the Secretariat worked with Corrections Victoria to transition these interviews to remote.

The Board members and meeting coordinators participated in remote interview hearings via Zoom while the parole officer and prisoner participated via a video conferencing unit at a Community Correctional Services location.

As remote working extended from the end of 2019–20 and into 2020–21, the management team increased its focus on staff wellbeing and supporting staff.

In October 2020, the Secretariat acknowledged National Safe Work Month by providing information to staff on the topics of navigating mental health during COVID-19 and remote working and physical wellness.

During the year, staff also received training on information security to increase their understanding and awareness of their information security obligations.

Operational health and safety

The Board is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and workplace violence.

The Board's health and safety representative monitors the occupational health and safety of staff and members. Any concern can be placed on the agenda of regular management team meetings, and a standing item is maintained on the agenda for this purpose.

The Board attends a building management meeting for operational health and safety with the Post Sentence Authority and several DJCS business units located at 50 Franklin Street. The Board and Post Sentence Authority, which share the ground floor hearing room, also have a designated operational health and safety working group.

Equal employment opportunity employer

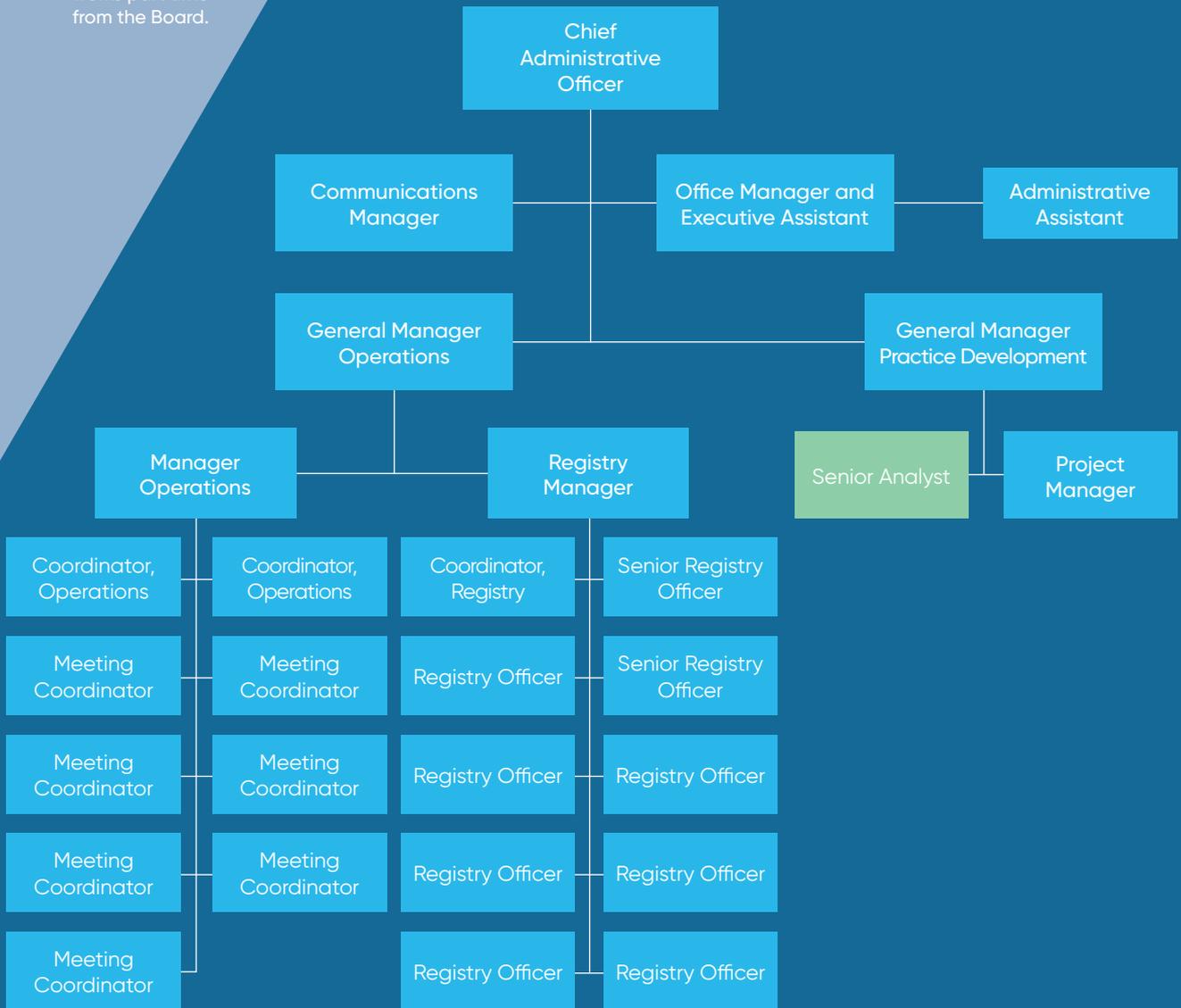
The Board is an equal employment opportunity employer. Appointments and promotions are based on merit, and staff receive the training and gain the experience required to enhance their skills and abilities.

⁴ The total of 28 includes five vacancies at 30 June 2021. Of the 23 staff at 30 June 2021, 17 were female and six were male. The Secretariat is comprised of the following position levels: one E03; two VPS6; four VPS5; four VPS4; nine VPS3; and nine VPS2.

Secretariat organisational chart

Legend

■ Corrections and Justice Services Senior Analyst works part time from the Board.



Profiles of Secretariat staff



Tania Tesich
Registry Manager

I have worked for the Adult Parole Board for eight years and seen the Board undergo a transformation with a number of projects implemented including PRISM, the Board's electronic case workflow system, which has improved workflow processes and provided members with remote access to their cases so they can better prepare for their hearings.

Prior to working at the Adult Parole Board, I completed a Diploma of Social Science and Justice and a Bachelor's Degree in Mediation and Advocacy. I was employed in operational roles within Community Correctional Services for seven years and during this period I held several leadership and managerial roles within the parole stream.

I have always been passionate about community safety and supporting offenders during parole. These individuals require the support and positive reinforcement when they are released from prison to assist them from breaking the cycle of crime and maintaining a law-abiding lifestyle.

During my time at the Board, I have worked in several roles within the Secretariat and have been the Registry Manager for the past five years. I am responsible for managing and supporting the registry team and continue to be involved in projects to improve workflow processes for the staff and members.

In addition, over the past 16 months during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been involved with planning, supporting and leading the team with working remotely and planning our return to the office.

It has been a privilege to work with such resilient and dedicated staff alongside committed and diligent Board members who have diverse experience and knowledge.



Nick Evangelou
Meeting Coordinator

I certainly joined the Board during an interesting period, commencing my role as a Meeting Coordinator in April 2020 on a six-month secondment. This was, of course, amidst the start of the lockdowns in Victoria for COVID-19. I was fortunate enough to have around three weeks in the office to meet staff, observe Board hearings and receive some training before our work at the Secretariat became completely remote. It was not the start I had envisioned; however, I quickly observed the forward thinking and planning that was taking place by members of the Board and the Secretariat to ensure we were best prepared to transition into remote working. Now, over a year later, I've found myself in an ongoing role with the Board and have enjoyed taking on new responsibilities along the way.

Prior to commencing with the Board, I had worked in Community Correctional Services since 2017 as a Court Case Manager, Parole Officer and Senior Parole Officer. These roles saw me managing different cohorts of offenders and, of course, frequently submitting reports to the Board and meeting with members. Throughout my time managing parolees, I was able to observe firsthand the positive impact the parole system had on rehabilitating offenders and assisting them in leading pro-social lives. My employment within the parole stream has certainly assisted me in my Meeting Coordinator role as I was already familiar with many of the Board's decisions and procedures.

As a Meeting Coordinator, I have been mainly responsible for the preparation of matters to be considered by the Board, conducting hearings and actioning Board decisions. I was fortunate enough to be the first Meeting Coordinator responsible for conducting interview Boards remotely, which gave me the opportunity to work closely with management and assist in refining remote interview processes.

Despite the challenges faced over the past year and a half, I remain confident that the Board and Secretariat will continue to deliver a gold standard of professionalism, resilience and integrity throughout these times. It has been a privilege to work alongside such an amazing team.



06

Year at a glance

Financial report

Operating statement and financial summary 2016–17 to 2020–21

Funding and expenditure

The Board is funded by Corrections Victoria and its accounts are managed through the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

	2020–21	2020–21 % of total expenditure	2019–20	2018–19	2017–18	2016–17
Funding \$						
	5,539,400		5,233,700	5,078,300	5,547,700	5,356,300
Expenditure \$						
Salaries to staff	3,032,432	60%	3,084,312	3,050,525	3,186,824	2,926,812
Sessional member fees	304,202	6%	264,878	327,355	309,824	311,657
Salary related on-costs	932,658	19%	946,613	958,815	998,640	911,200
Operating expenses	748,348	15%	593,154	736,927	910,836	769,428
Total expenditures	5,017,640		4,888,957	5,073,622	5,406,124	4,919,098

Audited accounts

The Board's accounts are included in the accounts of Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice and Community Safety. The audited accounts are published in the Department of Justice and Community Safety Annual Report 2020–21.

Assets

The Board is not a body corporate and does not have power under its legislation to purchase, hold, or dispose of real and personal property.

Employee benefits

All employees of the Board are paid by Corrections Victoria. Consequently, the Board does not make payments directly in respect of employees' superannuation, payroll tax and WorkCover.

Member remuneration

Remuneration of sessional members and the Board's full-time members is fixed by the Governor in Council. Divisional chairpersons are remunerated at the rate of \$658 per sitting day (divisional chairpersons who are sitting judicial officers are not remunerated for their work on the Board). Community members are remunerated at the rate of \$569 per sitting day. These rates are set out in the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Guidelines for the Appointment and Remuneration of Part-Time Non-Executive Directors of State Government Boards and Members of Statutory Bodies and Advisory Committees.

Year at a glance

Statistics

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	% change between 2019-20 and 2020-21
Parole eligibility (at 30 June)						
Prisoners in custody	7,249	7,151	8,102	7,668	7,151	1%
Prisoners eligible for parole	3,415	3,844	4,067	3,846	3,727	-11%
Prisoners on parole ⁵	781	799	748	768	763	-2%
Parole applications						
Total number received	1,349	1,780	1,746	1,680	1,689	-24%
Total progressed to Parole or Re-parole Suitability Assessment	1,167	1,527	1,505	1,481	1,449	-24%
Eligible prisoners who advised that they did not wish to apply for parole	95	152	156	114	91	-38%
Parole decisions						
Parole orders granted	835	913	803	803	757	-9%
% granted that were re-parole prisoners	6%	5%	6%	8%	-	N/A
Parole orders denied (including those that withdrew)	664	699	707	706	549	-5%
% denied that were re-parole prisoners	8%	10%	11%	12%	-	N/A
Number of prisoners who withdrew their application	182	212	205	242	-	-14%
% that withdrew their application	27%	30%	29%	34%	-	N/A
Parole orders revoked	36	50	55	41	39	-28%
% revoked that were re-parole prisoners	8%	6%	9%	7%	-	N/A
Time to count						
Time to count granted	62	75	57	54	-	-17%
Time to count not granted	95	117	83	122	-	-19%
Time to count deferred	28	23	22	23	-	22%
Parole outcomes						
Breach of parole (arrest and detention)						
Total notifications received	66	49	52	55	54	35%
Total detained	40	37	30	42	42	8%
Total cancelled	27	24	24	26	38	13%
Total not cancelled	13	13	6	16	4	0%
Total ceased to detain	26	12	22	13	12	117%
Cancellation of orders						
Parole orders cancelled	170	171	153	156	204	-1%
% cancelled that were re-parole prisoners	9%	7%	12%	6%	-	N/A
Serious violent offence or sexual offence (SVOSO) convictions						
Total number persons convicted	0	4	3	5	5	-100%
% convicted that were re-parole persons	0%	0%	0%	40%	-	N/A
Total number of SVOSO offences	0	8	5	15	11	-100%
Completions⁶						
Parole order completions	647	681	624	551	619	-5%
Successful completion rate	79%	78%	80%	78%	76%	N/A

5 Due to changes in the reporting data, the prisoners on parole data has been updated to include prisoners who were on state parole orders, interstate parole orders or state and commonwealth parole orders at 30 June of each reporting year. It does not include prisoners who were only on commonwealth parole orders.

6 Due to changes in the reporting data, the completions data has been updated to include prisoners who were discharged from state parole orders or interstate parole orders.

Activities

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	% change between 2019-20 and 2020-21
Board activities						
Number of Board meeting days	272	269 ⁷	269	294	268	1%
Number of matters before the Board	8,119	8,735 ⁸	7,927	8,880	8,457	-7%
Average number of matters considered per meeting day	30	32	29	30	32	-6%
Prisoners interviewed at prison	69	71	46	38	67	-3%
Serious Violent Offender or Sexual Offender (SVOSO) Division activities						
Number of meeting days	119	108	105	82	113	10%
Number of matters considered	601	609	467	502	542	-1%
<i>Total matters granted by the SVOSO Division</i>	364	365	277	318	321	0%
<i>Total matters denied by the SVOSO Division</i>	30 ⁹	45	36	31	18	-33%
<i>Total matters revoked by the SVOSO Division</i>	19 ¹⁰	23	17	13	18	-17%
<i>Other outcomes made by the SVOSO Division</i>	206	199	152	150	185	4%
Victim submissions						
Submissions from victims	146	126	138	131	161	16%
Youth transfers						
Transfers from prison to a youth justice centre	1	0	2	1	4	N/A
Transfers from a youth justice centre to prison	17	19 ¹¹	16	19 ¹²	17	-11%
Interstate transfers						
Parole orders transferred from Victoria	28	26	26	19	19	8%
Parole orders transferred to Victoria	29	34	24	33	34	-15%
Members of the Board (at 30 June)						
Divisional chairpersons	9	11	13	13	13	-18%
Full-time members	3	3	4	4	3	0%
Community members	13	11	15	15	13	18%
Total members	25	25	33	33	30	0%
Staff of the Board (at 30 June)						
Total employees	28 ¹³	28	30	30	30	0%
Financial management						
Funding	5,539,400	5,233,700	5,078,300	5,547,700	5,356,300	6%
Expenditure	5,017,640	4,888,957	5,073,622	5,406,124	4,919,097	3%

7 Updated figure of 269 from the reported 277 in the Board's Annual Report 2019-20.

8 Updated figure of 8,735 from the reported 8,741 in the Board's Annual Report 2019-20.

9 For 18 matters it considered, the SVOSO Division made two decisions – an order to revoke parole and an order to deny parole.

10 For 18 matters it considered, the SVOSO Division made two decisions – an order to revoke parole and an order to deny parole.

11 Updated figure of 19 from the reported 17 in the Board's Annual Report 2019-20 following advice received from the Youth Parole Board.

12 Updated figure of 19 from the reported 18 in the Board's annual reports from 2017-18 following advice received from the Youth Parole Board.

13 The total includes five vacancies at 30 June 2021.

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The information contained in this report was accurate as of September 2021.