

Home Detention in Victoria

Final Evaluation Report

April 2006

A report by the Melbourne Centre for Criminological
Research and Evaluation for the Corrections Victoria,
Department of Justice

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Executive Summary

The Victorian Home Detention Pilot Program commenced in November 2004 after amendments to the Sentencing Act 1991 and the Corrections Act 1986 provided for home detention to be both a sentencing option by the courts (*'front end'*), and a pre-release option for prisoners (*'back end'*). In the period to April 2006, a total of 138 orders were made, representing 18% of all applications made to the Adult Parole Board. Of these, 100 offenders had successfully completed their order by April 2006, 26 offenders were currently on Home Detention (with another 4 offenders granted Home Detention but awaiting release from prison) and 8 offenders had had their orders revoked. On average, sentence orders were around five and a half months long (mean duration 166 days), while the average length of post prison orders was just under four months (mean duration 115 days). The average caseload of the Home Detention Unit was 26 orders.

Key findings from the evaluation are:

- Caseload numbers were lower than expected, but this was a reflection of the stringent assessment criteria adopted, and was partly offset by budgetary economies. The lower than expected caseload numbers were primarily the result of the very low rate of sentence orders applied for by the courts.
- Breach and revocation rates were low. There were only five serious breaches leading to revocation of an order, and a further 15 minor breaches. Three orders were also revoked because co-residents withdrew consent and/or the offender was unable to provide suitable accommodation. Breach and revocation rates were much lower on the post-prison component of the program than on the sentence component.

- Despite initial concerns about the potential for home detention to expose families to risk or unreasonable compliance pressures, there was no evidence of significant risk and the overwhelming response from families was supportive.
- The rate of re-offending by home detainees was lower than expected. The expected number of recidivists for the home detention program was 7.26, and the actual number was one plus a further home detainee on remand.
- Despite the relatively high unit costs that are a consequence of reduced caseloads, the VHD program returned \$1.80 in benefits for every \$1 spent on the program. In terms of overall cost-benefit, the program yielded superior outcomes for less cost than the alternative of imprisonment. There were also non-costed benefits in the form of low parole breach rates, reduced cost of crime and improved family outcomes.

Recommendations

Changes to the sentencing process

Recommendation 1:

The requirement for equivalence between the term of imprisonment imposed and the term of home detention to be served should be replaced by a provision that allows the court to set a term of home detention proportionate to the seriousness of the offence(s).

Recommendation 2:

If an offender sentenced to a home detention order commits a serious breach, and the Adult Parole Board determines that the home detention order should be revoked, or the offender loses his or her accommodation, or those residing with the offender withdraw their consent, the offender should be returned to prison in the interim and then returned to the original court of sentence. The court should then determine a period of imprisonment to be served in lieu of the order, that period to be no longer than the term of the home detention order. In setting a term of imprisonment, the court should take account of the period of home detention already served.

Changes to eligibility criteria

Recommendation 3

The offence-related eligibility criteria in Section 18ZV of the Sentencing Act 1991 and Section 60A of the Corrections Act 1986 should be amended so that the court and the Adult Parole Board have discretion to approve orders for offenders who committed prohibited offences:

- more than 5 years prior to the offences for which the home detention order is being considered, or
- where the nature of any violent or sexual offences was such that the court or the Adult Parole Board judges that the offender does not pose a significant risk to the community.

Miscellaneous changes to legislation

Recommendation 4

The following miscellaneous changes should be made to either the Sentencing Act 1991 or the Corrections Act 1986, both:

- The legislation should provide a clear definition of “co-resident”. The terms used in the legislation (variously “persons with whom the prisoners intends to reside”, “a person residing at the approved residence”, “persons who will be residing with the offender”) are inadequately defined for the purposes of making assessments and case management.
- The Home Detention Unit should be empowered to carry out police criminal history checks on co-residents. This will in turn require that co-residents supply certified copies of identification.
- The undertakings required of offenders should include the provision of details of prescription medication to the Home Detention Unit or to a pathology laboratory responsible for carrying out urine tests.

- The definitions of certain offences in Section 18ZV of the Sentencing Act 1991 and Section 60A of the Corrections Act 1986 should be extended or clarified. Specifically:
 - The status of culpable driving in relation to Schedule 1 of the Act needs to be clarified;
 - The definition of firearms and prohibited weapon offences should be extended to include possession offences;
 - Where the description of a weapons related offence does not allow the court or Adult Parole Board to determine whether the weapon falls under the prohibited offence provisions, the legislation should allow discretion as to whether an order may be made;
 - Where the description of a drug trafficking offence does not allow the court or Adult Parole Board to determine whether the offence satisfies the definition of “commercial quantity” or “large commercial quantity” in Schedule 1, the legislation should allow discretion as to whether an order may be made.

Recommendations for procedural and operational changes

Recommendation 5

The scope of the post-prison home detention program should be expanded with the goal of a caseload of 35 offenders after the first year and 45 to 50 after the second year. This expansion in scope should include:

- Extending program coverage to offenders living in regional Victoria. This will entail changes in the service model, such as using regional Community Correctional Service staff to provide some surveillance and support services.

- Developing options for offenders without access to a residence. This may require establishing supported accommodation arrangements through programs like Housing Pathways or Transitional Housing Managers.
- Gradual extension to higher risk offenders. The recommended changes to the legislative provisions covering eligibility will be a critical pre-requisite for this.

Recommendation 6

The sentence program should be re-established as a two-year pilot program. The recommended legislative changes to sentencing and revocation provisions are a critical requirement for this.

Recommendation 7

The program model for post-prison orders should emphasize the transitional nature of the program. Consideration should be given to the relationship that should exist between home detention and the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre, and the assessment and allocation strategies necessary to make this relationship work effectively. The Home Detention Unit should establish more formal relationships with community-based transitional support agencies, and should involve them in the development of service and support arrangements for releasees and their families.

Recommendation 8

Additional, specific provision should be made to provide counseling and other support to home detainees and their families. This may involve the recruitment

of counseling staff to work within the Home Detention Unit, or funding community-based agencies to provide these services.

Recommendation 9

Access to urineanalysis services are inadequate for the current caseload of the HDU, and this problem will become more serious as caseloads increase. An increase in the number and availability of metropolitan testing locations is required. The extension of the program to offenders in regional Victoria may require the development of a mobile testing capability.

Recommendation 10

The current arrangements for the collection and storage of offender information are inadequate, and there is little likelihood that this gap will be filled by existing prison or CCS systems in the short or medium term. Again, this has been manageable with the existing caseload, but will become much more serious as caseloads increase. The HDU and APB should develop specifications for a common case management and offender records system. Any re-tendering for the electronic monitoring system should include a requirement for supply of a case management and offender records system.

Recommendation 11

A comprehensive briefing and resource kit (incorporating both visual and written material) should be developed for the Victorian program. This kit should set out clearly the eligibility requirements for the program, the surveillance and other conditions that apply to a home detention order, and the issues that co-residents and participants need to consider before they agree to the making of an order.

Section 1

Introduction

This report is the final report of the evaluation of the Victorian Home Detention (VHD) Program, conducted between February 2005 and April 2006. It is presented in two parts. Part One describes the outcomes of the VHD program: the numbers and characteristics of the offenders who went through the program, the assessment and selection processes, the programs and services that offenders undertook, the breach and re-offending impacts of the program, and its costs and benefits. Part Two considers what needs to happen if the VHD program is to continue and expand in the future. It sets out some policy alternatives for the future development of the program, and recommends a range of legislative and operational changes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

While this report covers a wide range of issues, it is not by any means exhaustive. Some of the issues or recommendations set out here are based on investigations carried out in the earlier stages of the evaluation. This final report only contains a summary of these issues. In particular, material relating to the implementation of the VHD program is covered in detail in the *Formative Evaluation Report* (July 2005), and the detailed findings from our interviews with participants and co-residents are presented in the *Feedback From Participants and Co-residents* report (November 2005).

Brief Description of the Program

The VHD pilot program commenced in 2004 after amendments to the Sentencing Act 1991 and the Corrections Act 1986 provided for home detention to be both a sentencing option by the courts (*front end*), and a pre-release option for prisoners (*back end*). Originally, the VHD program was restricted to offenders who would reside within a 25 kilometre radius from the Melbourne GPO while on Home Detention, however this requirement was subsequently extended to 30 kilometers in July 2005 and 40 kilometers in January 2006.

As a sentencing option, the pilot program's primary aim was to divert non-violent¹ offenders from prison. The VHD program provides judges and magistrates with the option of sentencing offenders to home detention for a period of up to 12 months. In order for an offender to receive a *front end* sentence to VHD a court must first sentence the offender to a term of imprisonment. Following this, the offender must be assessed by the Home Detention Unit (HDU) as suitable for the order. If the offender is found unsuitable, the original term of imprisonment is imposed.

At the *back end*, eligible prisoners who have served at least two-thirds of their minimum sentence can apply through the Adult Parole Board (APB) to be released onto home detention for the remainder of their sentence. This cannot exceed a period of 6 months. Following an initial eligibility screening by the APB, successful applicants from this stage are then assessed for their suitability for

¹ Offenders are ineligible for a home detention sentence if they have committed a serious sexual, violent, serious violent or drug offence as defined in Schedule 1 of the Sentencing Act 1991, or other sexual, weapons, or stalking offences or breach of an intervention order as specified in S.18ZV of the Sentencing Act 1991.

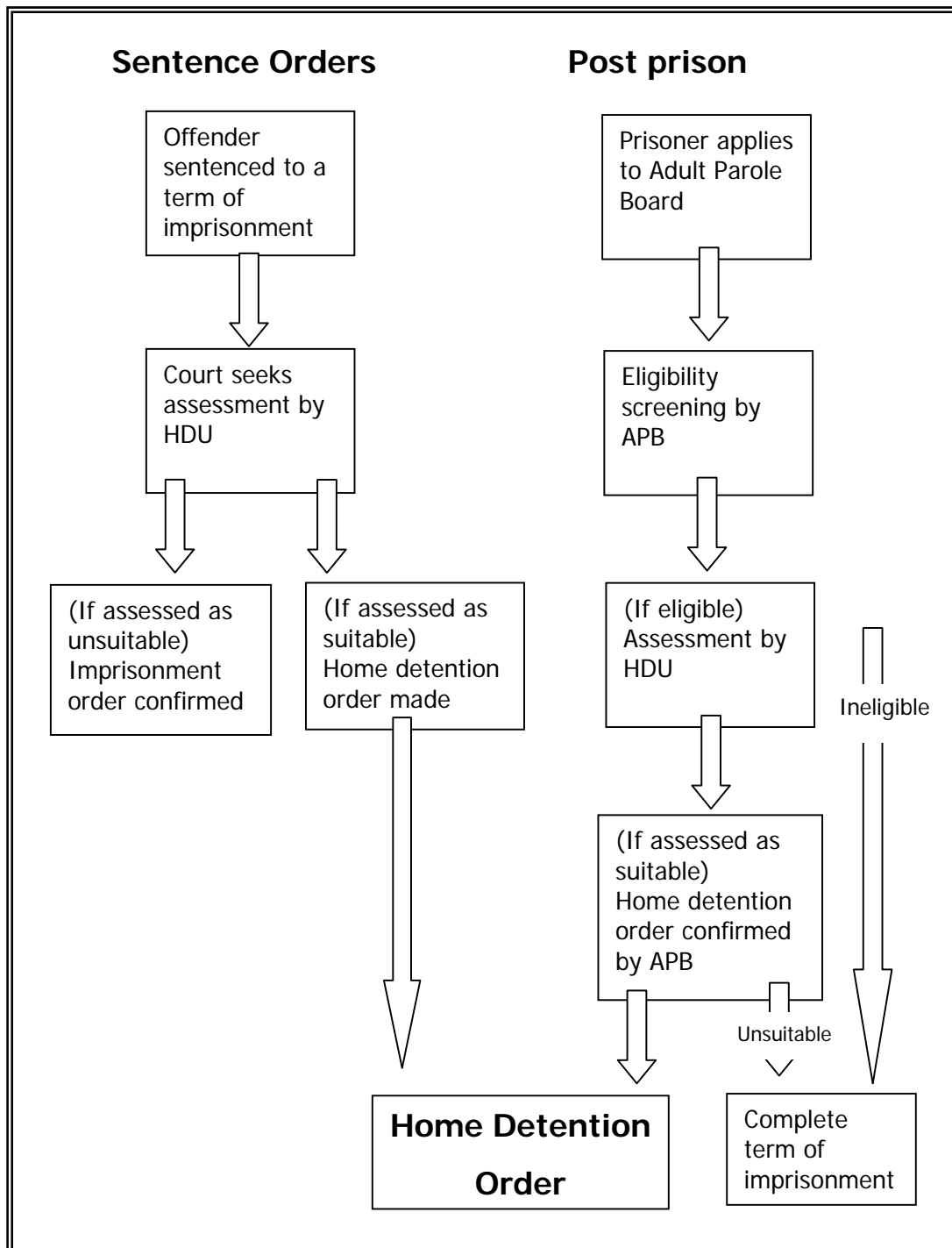


Figure 1.1: Assessment process for Home Detention Orders

release onto the VHD program by the HDU. This involves a thorough assessment of the applicant, potential co-residents and the intended place of residence, with an emphasis on ensuring the safety of the applicant's family and the community generally. Home detention will be refused in any situation where there are safety concerns for the participant, co-resident(s) or community. The primary aim of the back end program is to assist non-violent, low risk, minimum security prisoners to reintegrate into the community following their release.

The VHD Program has core eligibility criteria which *must* be met in order for an offender's initial application to progress to the assessment phase. These are that the offender:

- Be 18 years or older;
 - Have not committed a serious violent offence, a weapons offence or a serious sexual offence as defined in S.18ZV the Sentencing Act 1991 or S.60A of the Corrections Act 1986.
 - Have not been convicted of stalking or breaching an Intervention Order;
 - Have no history of drugs charges relating to commercial trafficking quantities;
 - Have accommodation available that is assessed as suitable for placement, and that lies within the program boundary;
 - Is assessed as a suitable person for a home detention order; and
 - (If a prison releasee) have a minimum security status.
-
- In addition, the persons living at the proposed residence must agree to the making of the order

The assessment report from the VHD is provided to the Court or Adult Parole Board, either recommending or refusing home detention for the applicant. In

addition to assessing the safety of the offender, co-residents and the community generally, this report lists the offender's educational and training requirements, social and personal issues, core activities to be undertaken while on the program (e.g. employment, education, counselling), supports and the monitoring measures that will be implemented to observe compliance with the order.

In addition to carrying out thorough assessments of applicants for VHD, the Home Detention Unit is responsible for:

- Comprehensive case management of offenders;
- Intensive monitoring of core conditions and curfews; and
- Providing practical assistance and referral to treatment and support services for both offenders and their co-resident(s).

The VHD program places a strong emphasis on *case management* as opposed to simply *compliance management*. Offenders work with their designated Home Detention Officer (Case Manager) to establish goals that are relevant and appropriate for their time in home detention. These goals can include things such as abstinence, counselling, mental health, physical health, financial stability, family assistance and education. The Offender Management Plan is reviewed regularly to ensure that the offender is on track, the goals remain relevant, and the offender receives consistent and coordinated care and supervision. HDU staff are not only responsible for the case management of offenders, but also play a key support role for co-residents. As a result, staff have received thorough training across a broad range of areas to equip them with the skills necessary to case manage offenders and work with co-residents effectively.

In addition to case management, staff are expected to act in a supervisory role by monitoring curfews and compliance with the core conditions of the order. Participants in the program are closely and frequently supervised by Home

Detention Officers throughout their time in home detention - 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Home Detention Officers monitor compliance through three major tools:

- ❖ Face-to-face, phone and 'drive-by' contacts with the detainee in a variety of settings (e.g. at home, with family, at work) and at random times;
- ❖ The electronic monitoring system ('EMS'), which allows for the close monitoring of offenders' adherence to curfews, and sends out alerts to staff if these are breached, for immediate investigation; and
- ❖ Drug and alcohol testing.

All offenders on the VHD program are subject to electronic monitoring. The Victorian program uses an "active" system supplied by Comsat Security. The detainee wears a transmitter tag on his or her ankle. The tag communicates with a base station connected to the home phone line. A central monitoring station records whether the transmitter tag is in contact with the base station during curfew periods. In the event that there is loss of contact during a curfew period, a violation is recorded and an alarm signal is automatically generated.

There are clear and strict procedures in place to respond to any breaches of the core conditions by an offender. Minor breaches can be dealt with by a formal warning or changes to the curfew or other conditions of the order, while major breaches are reported to and sanctioned by the Adult Parole Board². Major breaches include positive drug or alcohol screening test results, re-offending, any behaviour that compromises the safety of the community, co-residents or staff and non-compliance with core conditions of the order. In the case of a major breach or the withdrawal of a co-resident's support (where there is no other immediately suitable accommodation), the home detainee is returned to prison.

² See s.18ZZI of the Sentencing Act 1991 and s60O and s.60P of the Corrections Act 1986.

Where a serious breach results in revocation of a home detention order, the APB issues a warrant and the offender is arrested (usually within hours) and imprisoned.

Evaluation process

The evaluation strategy for the VHD program encompassed four main aims:

1. assisting Corrections Victoria to conceptualise and structure the program in a way that allows effective process and outcome evaluation to take place;
2. examining the implementation of Home Detention and identifying areas where fine-tuning of program referral and operational processes might be made;
3. determining the impact of the Home Detention program (including order compliance, re-offending, impact on co-residents, and cost-benefit outcomes) and the personal and systemic factors that contribute to program outcomes;
4. providing Corrections Victoria stakeholders with knowledge of program effectiveness in terms of process and impact to inform decisions about further funding in this area.

The *Formative Evaluation Report* (July 2005) examined issues relating to the first two of these evaluation aims, gathering information concerning the operation of the program and interviewing a wide range of stakeholders about the VHD program. A more detailed discussion of the methodologies for this stage of the evaluation can be found in the *Formative Evaluation Report*.

The *Feedback From Participants and Co-residents Report* (November 2005) focused mainly on the third of the VHD program evaluation aims, using interviews with participants and co-residents to provide an insight into their experience of the VHD program and the impact of home detention on family life and participants' reintegration into the community after a period of imprisonment. A more detailed review of the methodologies for this stage of the evaluation can be found in the *Feedback From Participants and Co-residents Report*.

This final report is primarily concerned with the fourth aim of the VHD program evaluation, collecting and analysing information about the characteristics of, and outcomes for, participants on the VHD program in order to inform decision-making on the future operation of the VHD program. However, it should be noted that this process of data collection and analysis was constrained by the limitations of the case management and offender information systems that the Adult Parole Board and Home Detention Unit use. This was already raised as a significant issue in the *Formative Evaluation Report*, where gaps and inconsistencies in data collection were discussed as a limiting factor for a comprehensive evaluation of program flows, throughputs and outcomes. This report highlighted a clear need for a data management system - something that was considered not only crucial for the purposes of an effective evaluation of the VHD program, but was central to the day-to-day management and monitoring of the VHD program. In spite of these serious limitations, information on participant demographics, program flows, application and assessment throughputs, program and service uptake, supervision and monitoring, and program outcomes was compiled for this third report on the VHD program through the blending of data recorded on APB and HDU databases, hand-written records kept by HDU staff and discussions with HDU staff. While this process

was far from efficient, it presented the best way to gain sufficiently detailed information for the purposes of the evaluation.

Part One Outcomes of the Victorian Home Detention Program

Section 2

Home detention program numbers: assessments, order characteristics and caseloads

In order to achieve its goals, any criminal justice program must be able to identify and engage an adequate number of participants who satisfy its target requirements. The Victorian Home Detention program was established on the basis that program numbers during the pilot would not exceed 80³. It was expected that around 15% of these cases would be pre-release orders, and the remaining 85% would be sentence orders. This section examines the processes whereby applicants were assessed for VHD orders, the outcomes of those assessments, the type and duration of home detention orders, and the caseload consequences of these processes.

In the period from the commencement of the VHD program up to February 2006, 138 Home Detention were made. Of these, 100 offenders had successfully completed their order, 26 offenders were currently on Home Detention (with another 4 offenders granted Home Detention but awaiting release from prison) and 8 offenders had had their orders revoked.

³ See Hansard, Second Reading speech, 3 May 2001.

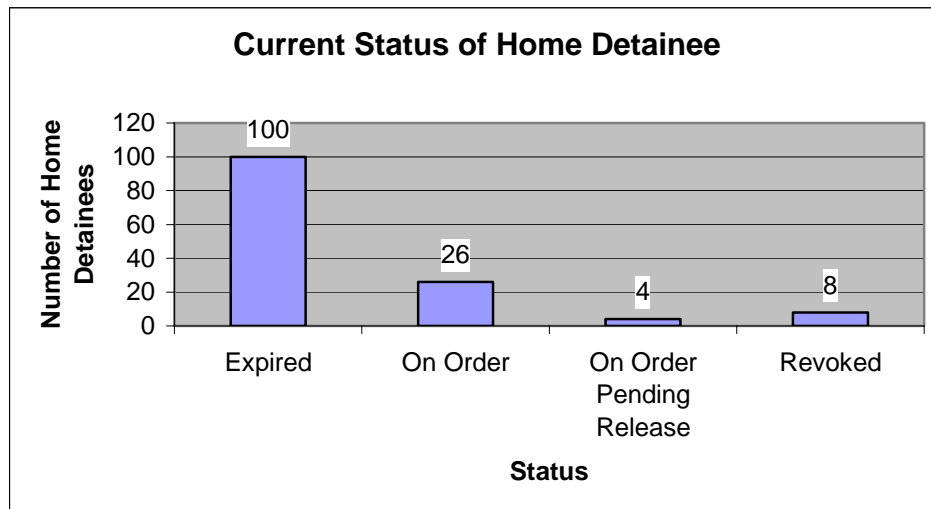


Figure 2.1: Status of home detention orders: December 2004 to February 2006

Application and assessment process

Post-prison order applications

In the period between November 2003 and February 2006 a total of 735 applications for Home Detention (HD) were received by the Adult Parole Board (APB) from 658 offenders⁴. Of these offenders, 592 applied to the APB for HD once only, 55 applied twice and 11 applied three times. There was a short-term peak in the number of applications for home detention in the first two months after the commencement of the pilot, representing the backlog of prisoners nearing the end of their terms of imprisonment. After February 2004, the rate of

⁴ The statistics presented in this report are sourced from databases maintained by the Adult Parole Board and the Home Detention Unit. The counts of orders applications, the outcomes of those applications, and the details of the orders made depends on the time at which the count was taken, and in the absence of a single, comprehensive information system for the Home Detention program there is some variation in total numbers. This issue is discussed in detail in Appendix 1.

applications stabilized at a monthly average of approximately 21 (Figure 2.2). Some applicants who were refused on the screening assessment reapplied at a later date, and there was an average of 2.6 re-applications per month over this period.

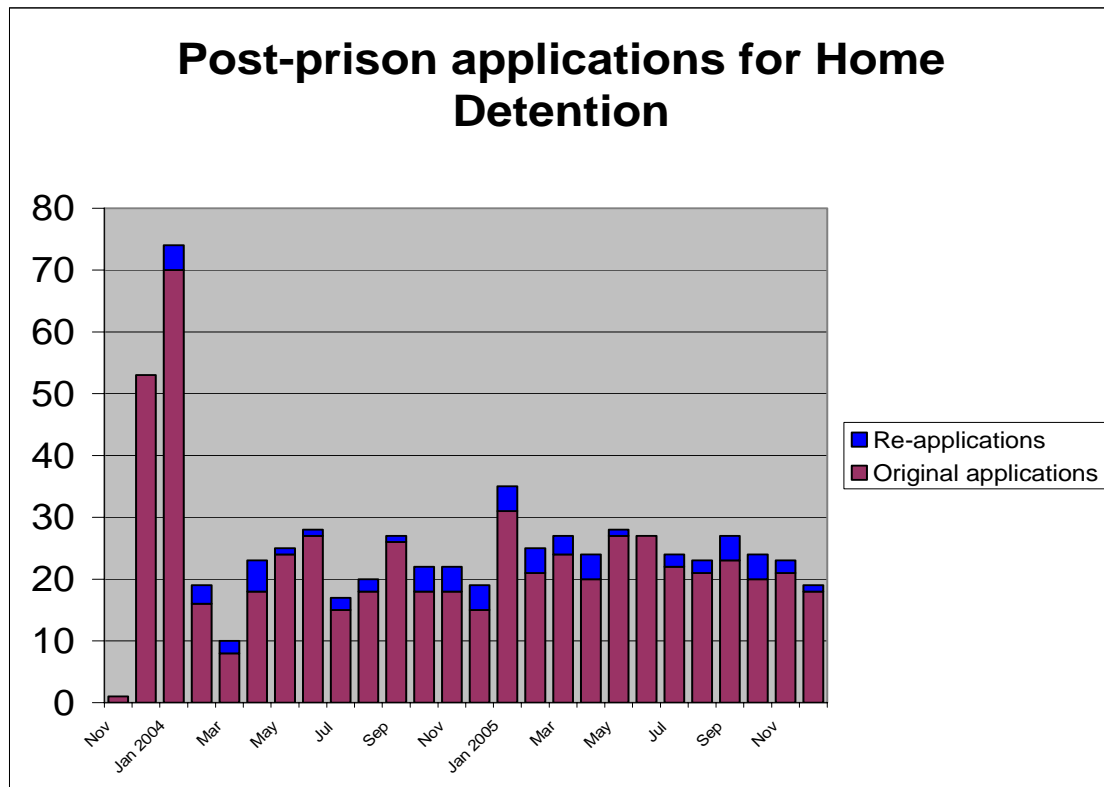


Figure 2.2 Number of post-prison applications (2004 & 2005)

Just over half of all applications for HD (52%) were rejected at the eligibility screening stage (Table 2.1). Of those that went to the next assessment stage, 52% were found suitable for a Home Detention Order. The Adult Parole Board made a final decision to approve 138 applicants for an Order. The total attrition rate from initial application to approved orders was 81% (that is, 19% of initial applications resulted in a Home Detention Order).

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Eligibility screening by APB (post-prison orders only, November 2003-February 2006)</i>		
<i>Total applications</i>	<i>735</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Approved for assessment</i>	<i>322</i>	<i>44%</i>
<i>Rejected</i>	<i>379</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Deferred, Withdrawn, Pending, Awaiting sentence</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>Detailed assessment by HDU (post-prison and sentence orders, November 2003 to April 2006)</i>		
<i>Total detailed assessments completed</i>	<i>327</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Assessed as ineligible</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>13%</i>
<i>Assessed as unsuitable</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Assessed as suitable</i>	<i>170</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Final court or APB decision (post-prison and sentence orders, November 2003 to February 2006)</i>		
<i>Total final decisions</i>	<i>327</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Approved for HD</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>42%</i>
<i>Rejected</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>49%</i>
<i>Withdrawn</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Deferred, pending</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>6%</i>

Table 2.1 Outcomes of eligibility screening and detailed assessments⁵

⁵ Table 2.1 represents data from several sources. There were some inconsistencies between counts and outcomes in APB and HDU records. The information management requirements for the home detention program are discussed in Appendix 1.

Reasons for rejection of post-prison applications

Applications for home detention were rejected for a variety of reasons. At the eligibility screening stage, the most common reasons for rejection were that the applicant's current or past offences included sexual or serious violent or weapons offences (Table 2.2). Around one fifth of applicants were rejected because they had no accommodation or their accommodation was unsuitable (usually, because it was outside the program boundary). One in six applicants were rejected because there was insufficient time left on their sentence, and 14% were rejected because they were serving a partially suspended sentence of imprisonment.

<i>Reason for ineligibility⁵</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Nature of current offences	82	21%
Nature of past offences	74	19%
No or unsuitable accommodation	75	19%
Insufficient time remaining before release	68	17%
Serving a partially suspended sentence	55	14%
Drug Importation or Customs Act offence	15	4%
Breach of Intervention Order	16	4%
Not minimum security rating	4	1%
Parole not granted	4	1%
Other reasons	2	-
Total	395	100%

Table 2.2 Reasons for rejection of home detention applications by Adult Parole Board: eligibility screening stage (program commencement to April 2006)

Applications who were found eligible were sometimes rejected at the full assessment stage because they failed to satisfy all the pilot program suitability requirements (Table 2.3). The most common reasons for rejection at this stage

were that the applicant did not have accommodation within the pilot program boundaries, or that there were offences or other matters in the person's history that made them unsuitable. At the full assessment stage, around half of all those rejected were found to pose unacceptable risk of harm to others (usually co-residents). Other common reasons for rejection at the assessment stage were that there was insufficient time remaining on the person's sentence, the applicant's domestic circumstances were inappropriate, and that co-residents did not give consent to the order.

OUTCOME OF HDU ASSESSMENTS⁶	2004	2005	2006	Total	%
<i>Applicants found ineligible</i>					
Exclusions based on offence type	1	1	1	3	7%
Pre-release longer than 6 months	2	0	0	2	5%
Assessment Requested Without Sentencing	1	0	0	1	2%
Exclusions Based on Past History	9	2	1	12	27%
Offender Withdrawn Application	3	1	0	4	9%
No accommodation within pilot area	15	7	0	22	50%
Total found ineligible	31	11	2	44	100%
<i>Applicants found unsuitable</i>					
Co-resident Refused Consent	3	4	3	10	9%
Inappropriate Domestic Circumstances	9	3	2	14	12%
Insufficient Motivation	0	1	1	2	2%
Unacceptable Risk of Harm to Others	14	25	2	41	36%
No Accommodation	1	3	1	5	4%
Resides out of area	0	1	0	1	1%
Insufficient Time for Order	0	1	0	1	1%

⁶ Tables 2.2 and 2.3 show all reasons recorded for rejection of application. Some applicants were found ineligible or unsuitable for more than one reason and hence column totals do not equal the sum of cells.

Other	14	8	15	37	33%
Total assessed as unsuitable	43	46	24	113	100%

Table 2.3 Reasons for rejection of home detention applications by Adult Parole Board: suitability screening stage (program commencement to April 2006)

Sentence order applications and outcomes

There were 17 sentence orders made over the course of the pilot program. From program commencement to December 2005, the HDU had received 32 formal requests for assessment. The number of applications for sentence orders is more difficult to quantify, as the application process really commences when the defendant and his or her solicitor suggest home detention as a sentencing option during the hearing or at sentencing. Some applications are probably ruled out at this stage. However, because much of this initial screening process is informal, the number of initial applications cannot reliably be determined.

Order length

The majority of orders made were between three and six months (Figure 2.3). On average, sentence orders were around five and a half months long (mean duration 166 days), while the average length of post prison orders was just under four months (mean duration 115 days). The shortest order made was a 12-day post-prison order. There were three sentence orders of 12 months duration, and nine post-prison orders of six months duration (the maximum periods permitted by legislation).

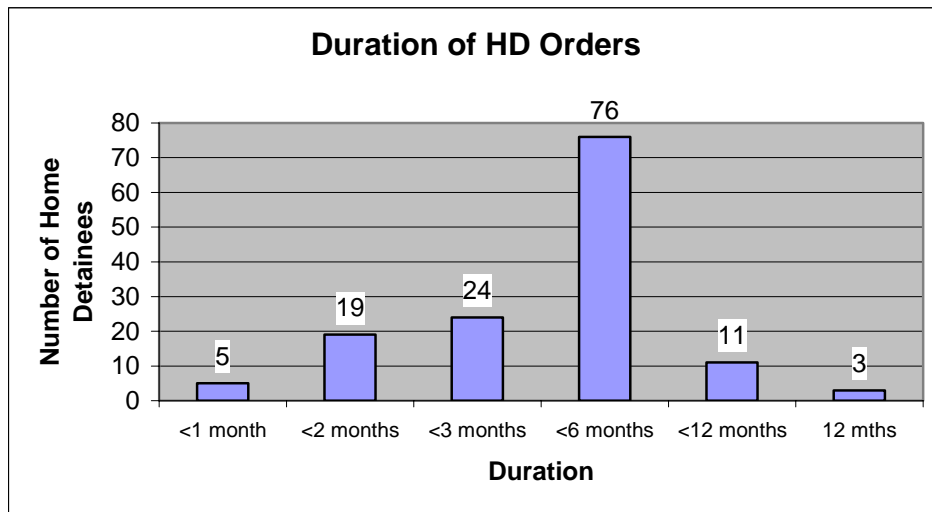


Figure 2.3 Distribution of order lengths

Caseload

The number of offenders on home detention orders increased slowly but steadily throughout 2004 and the first half of 2005, reaching a maximum of 32 in August and September 2005 (Figure 2.4). The HDU caseload then fell away sharply to the end of 2005 before returning to the long-term average figure of around 25 in the early part of 2006.

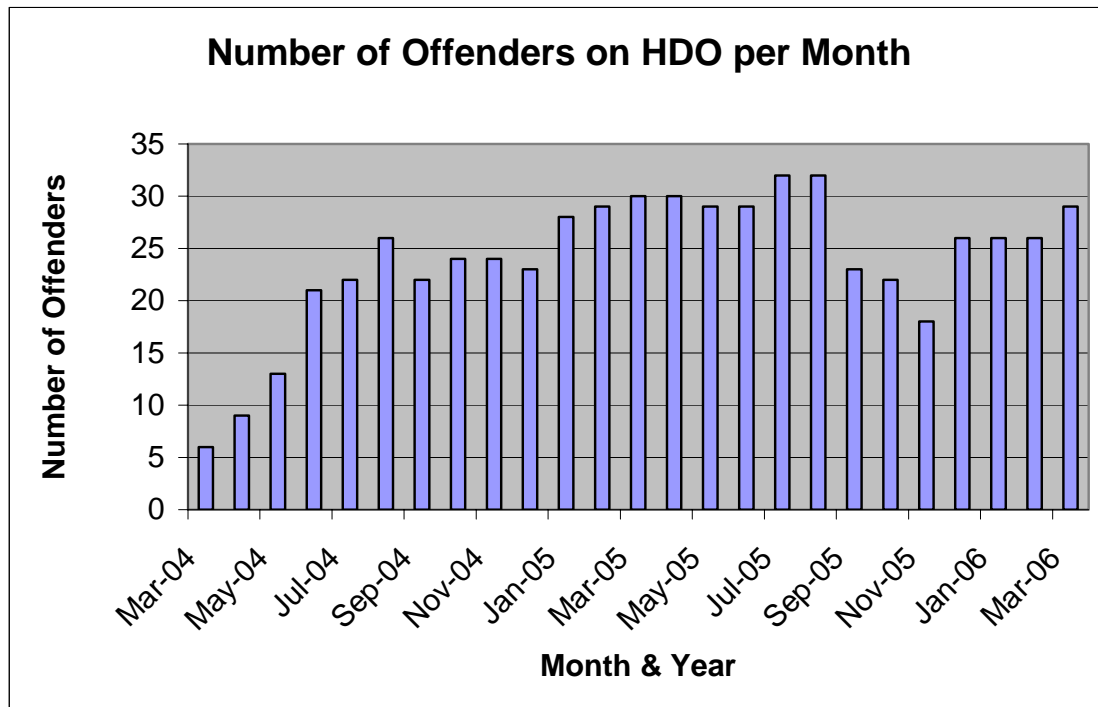


Figure 2.4 HDU Caseload, March 2004 to March 2006.

The rise in average caseload to mid-2005 can be explained in terms of the gradual lessening in the stringency of program selection criteria as both the HDU and APB gained experience with the operation of the VHD program and the capacity of offenders to cope with the requirements of their orders. The requirement for applicants to have a residence within 25 kilometres of the city centre was changed to 30 kilometres after mid-2005, and subsequently further extended to 40 kilometres in January 2006. The reasons for the reversal of this pattern leading to a decline in the caseload at the end of 2005 are unclear. There was a small reduction in the rate of applications towards the end of 2005, but not enough to account for the large change in caseload.

Issues about program numbers

A key issue for the VHD program was the smaller than expected number of orders that were made. The target for the program was a caseload of 80, but the average caseload for the program was less than one-third this figure. While caseload was not a fundamental problem for the pilot program (in the sense that the primary goal for the pilot program was to prove the home detention model), it is a critical issue for the future expansion of the VHD program. Unless program numbers can be significantly increased, unit costs will remain higher than desirable and the impact of home detention on custodial numbers will be small.

There were two primary causes of the low program numbers:

- The number of sentence orders sought by the courts was much smaller than expected. It had been anticipated that 85% of orders would be sentence orders. In fact, the ratio of sentence to post-prison orders was almost exactly the reverse of this: 85% of orders made were post-prison orders.
- There was a high rate of attrition from application to the granting of post-prison orders. Only around one application in every six was granted a home detention order. The highest rate of attrition was at the eligibility screening stage. About half of those who went through the detailed assessment stage were assessed as suitable, and this proportion increased to around two-thirds by the end of the pilot.

The causes of the low rate of sentence orders were examined in detail in the formative evaluation report of July 2005. The main concerns raised by Magistrates in relation to the sentence order program at that time were:

- The legislative requirement that equates a term of imprisonment with a term of home detention was inequitable and unjust. In the view of sentencers, a term of imprisonment and an equal term of home detention are not equivalent as punishment. This inequity is compounded because the ultimate outcome of an application for a home detention order does not necessarily depend on the actions of the offender but can be the result of lack of suitable accommodation or family support.
- The court only has access to advice about the suitability of an offender after an initial application has been made. As a result, the sentencer is forced to make judgments in the absence of sentencing-relevant information that would be available if a Community Based Order or Intensive Correction Order were under consideration.
- Defense counsel were either unaware of, or unwilling to suggest, VHD as a sentence option. More specifically, defense counsel were concerned about the potential for an application to be found ineligible or otherwise rejected, with the result that their client would be imprisoned.
- Magistrates found it hard to identify the right kind of case that would be appropriate for VHD. In a sense, the low numbers of VHD orders is self-perpetuating, because Magistrates have no clear “case models” as to what is appropriate.

The causes of the high rate of attrition between application and the granting of an order lie mainly in the stringency of the eligibility criteria for the program. The primary reasons for refusal of applications for home detention were that the applicant posed an unacceptable risk because of his or her past or current offences or breaches, that the applicant’s sentence was not appropriate an appropriate basis for a VHD order, or that there were accommodation issues or risks of potential violence to co-residents.

Overall, the number of offenders on the VHD program was substantially lower than originally anticipated. However, this overall pattern is the product of two apparently contradictory results. The number of prisoners released to the post-prison program was far greater than had been envisaged, and the success of the program is mainly attributable to its capacity to identify, recruit and successfully manage this group of prison releasees. The releasees provided a critical mass of motivated participants without whom the pilot program would probably have failed. The involvement of prison releasees raised a number of important policy issues relating to the role of home detention in the release transition process, and these issues are discussed in Part Two of this report.

In parallel with this unexpected success was the failure of the sentence program. The number of offenders who received sentence orders was negligible – less than one per month over the course of the pilot. The very small number of sentence orders places some important limitations on this evaluation. While we can provide reliable assessments of the program's costs and benefits as they relate to releasees on home detention, it is difficult to make confident statements about offenders sentenced to home detention based on only 17 cases. It is clear that sentenced offenders differ from prison releasees in a number of important respects (for example, breach rates) but there are probably other aspects of the impact of the program on sentenced offenders or their co-residents that will remain unknown until more home detention sentences are made. It is clear that significant legislative and procedural changes will be required if this component of the home detention program is to be made to work effectively. Again, these issues and suggested reforms are discussed in Part Two of this report.

Section 3

Characteristics of HD program participants

This section provides an overview of some of the characteristics of offenders on the VHD program, such as age group, gender, education and employment status, country of birth and offence type.

Age

The age of offenders accepted onto home detention ranged from 19 years old to 66 years old. The youngest male on the program was 19 years old and the youngest female on the program was 26 years old. The average age of home detainees was 38 years old, with a median age of 36 years old. The average age for females (40) was 2 years higher than for males, and the median age for females (39) was 4 years higher than males (35). These results suggest that women on VHD are more likely to be an older group than men. The table below shows that the two largest age groups of offenders on home detention are 30-34 year olds and 25-29 year olds. It should be noted that a significant proportion of offenders (n=28) were 50 years or older while on home detention.

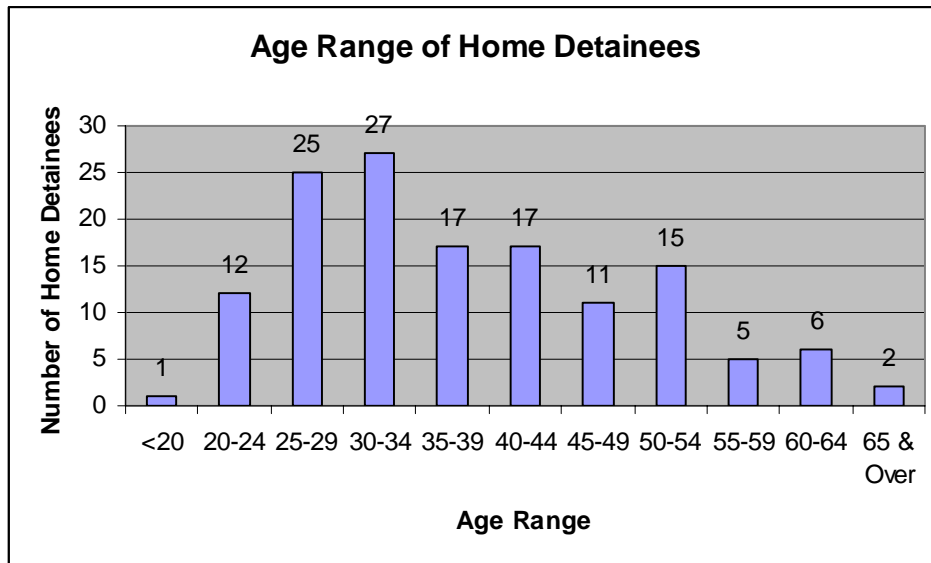


Figure 3.1: Age of home detainees

Gender

Table 3.1 shows that 23% of offenders accepted onto home detention were female and 77% were male. A comparison of those offenders accepted onto the program to those who applied shows that women are more likely to be accepted onto home detention than men, with 25% of female applicants accepted onto home detention and 18% of male applicants.

Application Stage	Female (#)	Percentage	Male (#)	Percentage
Eligibility Screening	127	17%	604	83%
Detailed Assessment	70	19%	304	81%
Accepted onto HD	32	23%	106	77%

Table 3.1 Sex of applicants at screening, assessment and approved order stages⁷*Marital Status*

Nearly half of offenders accepted for home detention were either engaged, married or in a de facto relationship (47%), with 15% separated or divorced and 38% single. This indicates that a significant amount of offenders accepted onto the program were in a stable relationship. Information on whether offenders resided with partners, family members or both during their home detention order were not complete enough to provide more detail on the nature of offenders social relationships and ties. Strong and positive social ties, and good relationships with family are protective factors that contribute to reducing the risk of re-offending.

Indigenous Status & Country of Birth

Only two offenders on home detention indicated that they were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural background. The majority of participants on the home detention program were born in Australia (73%), with the next most common group born in Asia (13%) (Table 3.2).

Country of Birth	Number	Percentage
Australia	100	73%
Oceania	2	1%
United Kingdom	3	2%

⁷ Note that these data were compiled from APB records and HDU case files and the total number of orders at each assessment stage is therefore marginally different to those shown in Table 2.1

Europe	5	4%
Asia	18	13%
Middle East	6	4%
Other/unknown	4	2%
Total (known)	138	100%

Table 3.2 Place of birth of home detainees

Education Level

In comparison with prisoners generally, offenders on home detention were well educated, with 58% of participants having undertaken some secondary study, 19% having completed secondary study and 21% with a tertiary education. Only one person on the program had not had any formal education and one person had only undertaken partial primary study (Figure 3.2).

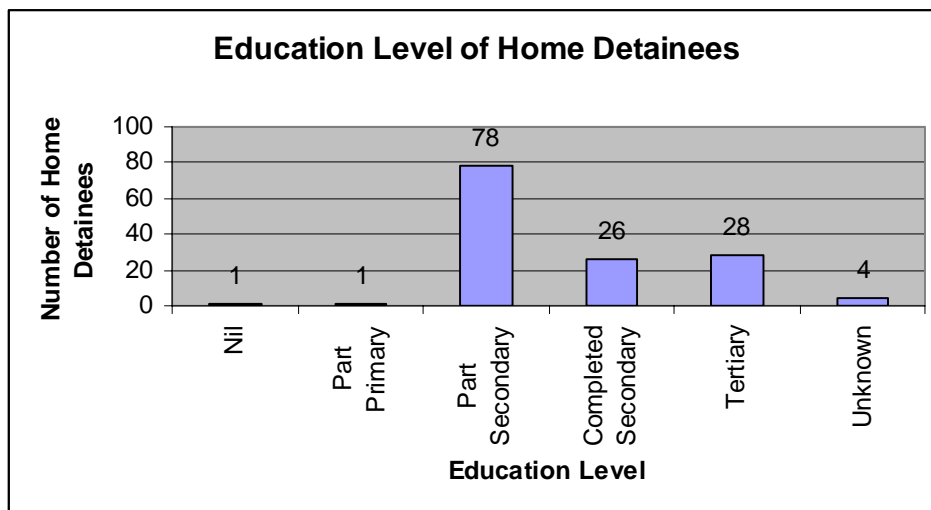


Figure 3.2 Education level of home detainees

Employment Status & Previous Occupation

At the time of their offence or charge, 46% (n=63) of offenders on home detention were employed and 47% (n=64) were unemployed. Other offenders' employment statuses included pensioners, home duties, retirees and a student. Most home detainees (n=118) provided information on their previous occupation, prior to their charge or conviction. As the table below shows, nearly half of participants were employed as professionals (43%) and a third of participants worked as a tradesperson (33%).

Occupation of Home Detainees prior to Charge/Offending:

Previous Occupation	Number	Percentage
Accountant	9	7%
Clerical	10	8%
Administration / Management / HR	13	9%
Other Professional	19	14%
Food Industry	8	6%
Tradesperson	39	28%
Other work	11	8%
Home Duties	3	2%
Pensioner	6	4%
Unknown	20	14%
Total	138	100%

Table 3.3 Stated occupation of home detainees

Offending History

Information was collected on the offences committed by all participants that led to their current conviction and sentencing to home detention. These offences were broken down into broader offence types for analysis, according to the main offence listed in the database. The three most common offence types for offenders accepted onto home detention were burglary and theft (29%), property and/or financial deception (19%) and culpable driving and other driving-related offences (19%).

Main Offence Type	Number	Percentage
Arson	1	1%
Negligently Cause Serious Injury	2	1%
Improper Use of Position & Related Offences	2	1%
Launder Money	2	1%
Breach ICO or Suspended Sentence	6	4%
Drug-Related Offence	15	11%
Defraud Commonwealth & Related Offences	18	13%
Culpable Driving & Other Driving-Related Offences	26	19%
Property &/or Financial Deception	26	19%
Burglary & Theft	40	29%
Total	138	100%

Table 3.4 Offences for which home detention orders were made

Of the 115 offenders for whom information was recorded about the prison sentence they were serving before going onto home detention, nearly half (46%)

had received a minimum sentence of less than 1 year, with 7-12 months being the most common prison term (32%). Thirty percent of HD participants received a minimum sentence between 1 to 2 years and 21% of participants received a minimum sentence between 2 to 4 years. Only 3% of offenders received a minimum sentence of more than 4 years.

Minimum Prison Term	Number	Percentage
3 months or less	1	1%
4-6 months	15	13%
7-12 months	37	32%
13-18 months	20	17%
19-24 months	15	13%
25-36 months	17	15%
37-48 months	7	6%
>48 months	3	3%
Total	115	100%

Tale 3.5 Length of prison term for post-prison orders

In general, home detainees had only limited offending histories prior to the episode for which they received a home detention order. Around three-quarters had not previously served a community corrections order (Figure 3.3), and a similar proportion (70%) had not previously served a term of imprisonment.

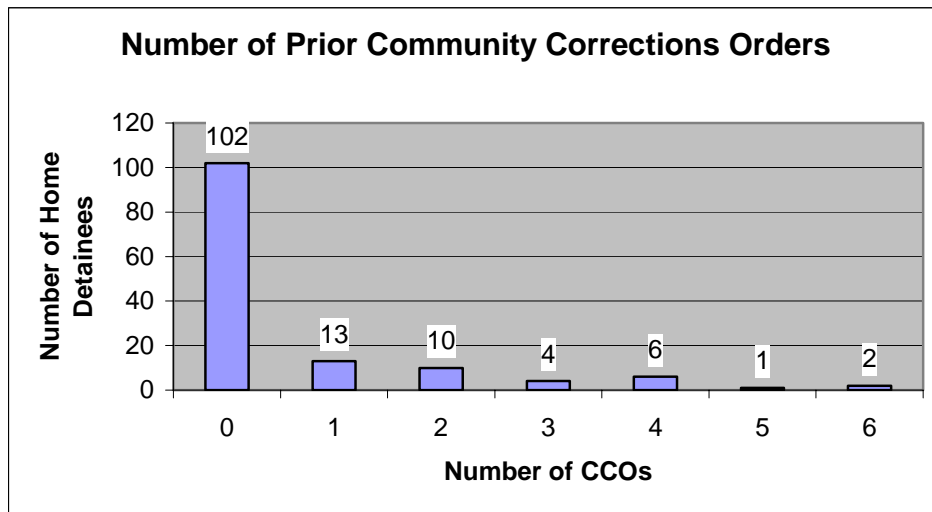


Figure 3.3 Number of previous community corrections orders (excluding fine default orders) served by home detainees.

Section 4

Supervision and compliance monitoring of participants

The Home Detention order places challenges on Home Detention Officers to find a balance between the punitive aspects of Home Detention and the rehabilitative and reintegrative aspects. An overview of the type and extent of compliance monitoring and release from curfew activities has been collated for the evaluation from samples of data collected by the Home Detention Unit.

Supervision & Compliance Monitoring

Offender Monitoring Record data is routinely collected by the Home Detention staff to keep track of the type and frequency of monitoring activities conducted on offenders on Home Detention. A sample of this data was analysed for the purposes of the evaluation. This data involved offenders on HD from May 2004 to January 2006. The sample examined the type and frequency of offender monitoring over set periods of time: - the first, second, fourth and sixth month of offenders' orders. The table below shows the number of offenders in the sample for each period of time.

Stage of Sample	Number
Month 1	58
Month 2	47
Month 4	25
Month 6	6

These sample time-periods were chosen as they represent a good approximation of the progression of an offender through the phases of HD (Phase 1 to Phase 3). According to the HD guidelines, as offenders pass through these phases compliance monitoring (such as urinalysis, breath testing and face-to-face visits) should reduce and time off-curfew (such as work and social activities) should increase. The use of monthly samples as an approximation for the HD phases was validated by comparing the number of offenders in each month according to their HD phase. For instance, in the sample for Month 1 (n=58), 26% of the sample were in Phase 1 and a further 71% were in Phases 1 & 2 in this time-period. Two people (3%) progressed through all 3 phases within the first month of their order. In the sample for Month 2 (n=47), 2% of the sample were in Phases 1 & 2, 68% were in Phase 2 and 17% were in Phases 2 & 3. Only 8.5% (n=4) were in Phase 3 of their order in the second month. In the sample for Month 4 (n=25), 20% of the sample were in Phase 2, 12% in Phases 2 & 3, and the majority of clients (68%) were in Phase 3. By Month 6, although there were only 6 people in the sample, all were in Phase 3 of their HD order.

The types of offender monitoring activities collected in these samples were urinalysis and breath testing, face-to-face visits, phone calls to the residence, place of work and activity, and drive-by testing. As the table below demonstrates, there is a gradual reduction in the total number of offender monitoring activities over time. In Month 1, total offender monitoring activities (OMA's) ranged from 6 to 37 OMA's per offender, with a weekly average of 5.1. In Month 2, OMA's ranged from 4-24 per offender, with a weekly average of 3.4. This reduced to a range of 2-19 OMA's at a weekly average of 3 in Month 4. Interestingly there was an increase in the baseline of OMA's in Month 6, with a range of 7-16 OMA's, although the weekly average remained essentially the same. The small sample size for Month 6 (n=6) does not allow any significant conclusions to be drawn.

Total Offender Monitoring Activities		
<i>Month</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Weekly Average</i>
Month 1	6-37	5.1
Month 2	4-24	3.4
Month 4	2-19	3
Month 6	7-16	2.9
Total Urinalysis and Breath Testing Activities		
<i>Month</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Weekly Average</i>
Month 1	0-14	1.5
Month 2	0-8	0.8
Month 4	0-5	0.6
Month 6	1-3	0.5
Total Face-to-Face Contacts		
<i>Month</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Weekly Average</i>
Month 1	2-14	1.9
Month 2	0-10	1.0
Month 4	0-8	0.8
Month 6	1-5	0.8

Similarly, there is a clear reduction in the weekly average of urinalysis and breath testing activities, from 1.5 tests per week in Month 1, to 0.6 tests per week in Month 4. Face-to-face contacts also showed a reduction across time, however it can be argued that 0.8 face-to-face contacts per week in Months 4 and 6 (essentially, Phase 3) demonstrates a relatively stringent regime of supervision at this late stage in the order. HDU staff noted that regular contact in the final stages of the order was important as a way of ensuring that neither the offender nor the co-residents were experiencing stress.

Release from Curfew

Data was also collected by the HD Unit on the amount of time offenders on HD spent 'off-curfew'. Offenders can apply to spend periods of time outside their residence for particular activities that are considered to be consistent with their reintegration and rehabilitation goals. These off-curfew times have been summarised in the sample and comprise time spent at work or education, participating in physical activity, on business time (e.g. shopping, paying bills), at medical or urinalysis appointments or at family or other social activities (including religious activities). As above, samples of release from curfew information were collated for the first (n=20), second (n=20) and fourth (n=15) months of offenders' orders.

The table below demonstrates that the sample of offenders on Home Detention in Month 1 spent an average of 9 hours and 20 minutes outside of their residence each week. However, this figure may be skewed by some particularly high figures for time spent at work (up to 95 hours for some offenders in the sample⁸) and other activities. This bias can be offset by comparing these figures to the number of offenders who spent no time (e.g. '0 hours') outside their residence in the first month of their order for particular activities. For example, the Month 1 table shows that 13 offenders out of the sample of 20 did not spend any time outside of their residence for work, education or physical activity, and 9 offenders did not spend any time outside of their residence participating in family or social activities. In fact, in Month 1, it can be seen that most offenders spent time outside of their residence to attend to urgent activities such as business and medical matters. Therefore, the median weekly amount of time spent off-curfew - *4 hours* - should be considered.

⁸ Note that this includes travel time.

Release From Curfew – Month 1						
<i>Activity</i>	<i># Ohrs</i>	<i>Range (hrs)</i>	<i>Average (hrs/mth)</i>	<i>Average (hrs/wk)</i>	<i>Median (hrs/mth)</i>	<i>Median (hrs/wk)</i>
Work/Education	13	0-95	11	2.8	0	0
Physical Activity	13	0-24	6	1.5	0	0
Business Time	3	0-12h45	6	1.5	6	1.5
Medical or UA	1	0-39h25	8	2	5	1.25
Family / Social	9	0-46	6	1.5	5	1.25
Total			37	9h20m	16	4
Release From Curfew – Month 2						
<i>Activity</i>	<i># Ohrs</i>	<i>Range (hrs)</i>	<i>Average (hrs/mth)</i>	<i>Average (hrs/wk)</i>	<i>Median (hrs/mth)</i>	<i>Median (hrs/wk)</i>
Work/Education	10	0-251	62	15.5	3	0.75
Physical Activity	10	0-27	9	2.25	0	0
Business Time	0	4-20	10	2.5	9	2.25
Medical or UA	5	0-51.25	9	2.25	4	1
Family / Social	4	0-53h30	17	4.25	13	3.25
Total			107	26h45m	29	7h15m
Release From Curfew – Month 4						
<i>Activity</i>	<i># Ohrs</i>	<i>Range (hrs)</i>	<i>Average (hrs/mth)</i>	<i>Average (hrs/wk)</i>	<i>Median (hrs/mth)</i>	<i>Median (hrs/wk)</i>
Work/Education	5	0-205.7	106	26.5	107	26.75
Physical Activity	5	0-121.25	29	7.25	27	6.75
Business Time	1	0-45	13	3.25	8.5	2.1
Medical or UA	4	0-17.5	6	1.5	3	0.75
Family / Social	0	0-53.5	28	7	21	5.25
Total			182	45h30m	166h30m	41h40

The figures for Month 2 (above) indicate an increase in the amount of time spent off-curfew per week, from an average of just over 9 hours in Month 1, to an average of nearly 27 hours in Month 2. Similarly, some particularly high figures for time spent at work (up to nearly 206 hours for some offenders in the sample) and physical activities (up to just over 121 hours) skewed this average somewhat. However, even the median amount of time spent outside of the offenders' residence from Month 1 (4 hours) to Month 2 (7 hours 15 minutes) demonstrates an increase.

Finally, the figures for Month 4 (above) demonstrate a significant increase in the amount of time offenders in the sample had off-curfew from previous months. In Month 4, offenders spent an average of over 45 hours per week off-curfew (up from 9 hours in Month 1 and 27 hours in Month 2) and a median of nearly 42 hours per week off-curfew (up from 4 hours in Month 1 and just over 7 hours in Month 2). This clearly demonstrates that the sample of offenders experienced an increase in time spent off-curfew and outside of their residence as they progressed through the Phases of their orders and an effort by the HDU to contribute to the reintegration of offenders into the community.

Section 5

Program and service support for participants and co-residents

An important element in the policy framework for the Victorian Home Detention program was that offenders would not simply be confined to their homes, but would be given access to programs and services to assist their re-integration to the community. Offenders' participation in programs and services is recorded in the detailed case notes kept on each offender, but this information is not condensed into an easily retrievable set of figures on the HD database. The limitations of the VHD program database has made it difficult to measure with any accuracy the extent of participant involvement in rehabilitative programs and services, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Drug & Alcohol counseling, and employment services. However, HD staff provided thorough feedback and information on program and service uptake in a meeting with the evaluators, discussing some of the key issues concerning HD and rehabilitative programs and services.

Home detention participants are referred to services and programs on the basis of the HDU's assessment of their risks and needs. This assessment and decision-making can be informed by a general 'assess and treat' condition placed on offenders on post-prison orders by the APB. This condition provides HDU staff with considerable discretion to refer offenders to programs and services. This kind of condition is rarely attached to offenders entering HD on front end (sentencing) orders.

Some of the key areas in which participants require assistance concern post-release support, life skills and employment.

Finding appropriate programs and services for home detainees is complicated by the same issues that apply to community-based services for offenders generally. Many community-based programs are reluctant to accept people while they are serving home detention orders and mainstream services are frequently unable to fully meet the specialized needs of offenders. Offenders with alcohol and drug issues were referred to the ACSO-COATS programs, while the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) was the most commonly used service for home detention participants with family, adjustment or other reintegration needs. However, VACRO encourages self-referral, and its location in the Melbourne CBD causes some significant problems and barriers for many participants living in the outer suburbs, particularly when limited curfew requirements mean that lengthy travel times are problematic.

HDU staff noted that a significant proportion of HD participants experience either acute psychological conditions (such as anxiety or depression) or in a few cases chronic psychological conditions that require expert support and treatment. This observation is reinforced by the feedback we received from participants and co-residents. However, access to appropriate support and treatment for participants is limited by a number of factors. Private treatment is usually not an option because of the cost to participants. Programs in the community service sector frequently have long waiting lists, sometimes extending beyond the time the offender is subject to the HD order. The HDU does not have access to dedicated psychological services, although it is clear that there is significant need for both offenders and co-residents to have access to services dealing with post-release anxiety and adjustment stress.

Some participants have been found to have inadequate life skills (such as domestic management, budgeting, paying bills) or are unprepared for life outside

of prison. After serving a lengthy prison sentence (a quarter of all participants had served minimum terms of two years or more), releasees can find daily tasks such as driving cars, using public transport, or technology such as EFTPOS, BPay and the internet a significant challenge. These offenders have often been overlooked for relevant programs in prison because they are deemed to be 'low risk'. Offenders who have participated in the CCP leave program have been well-prepared for release.

Employment services and outcomes

Finding employment is a key step in successful re-entry after a prison term. HDU staff identified several factors that limit the access of participants to employment or some employment programs. In a frustrating contradiction, participants are frequently ineligible for the CSEPP program, despite the fact that in many cases they would have access to this program if they had remained in custody until their parole date. Job Network agencies and Centrelink provided employment-related assistance to many participants, however HDU staff reported that many offenders who found employment while serving their HD order did so through friends, family or previous employers. Another issue affecting offender employment is the reluctance by some participants to disclose their status as an offender serving a home detention order. Again, this was also reported by a number of participants that we interviewed. Arranging employment necessarily involves contact between the employer and the HDU, and participants' reluctance to be identified as such is a major barrier to seeking employment or undertaking other activities. Participation in education activities was considered to be much less problematic by HDU staff since, unlike employment, there are many opportunities to avoid disclosure of HD status and deal with monitoring requirements (e.g. distance education).

As a rule, for offenders who have work arranged before their release to home detention commence employment after about 2 weeks on the program. Front-enders can recommence employment within a day or two of the order being made to enable a continuation of existing employment.

Detailed information of the employment activities was not recorded in the HD program database, but HDU staff provided employment information from home detainees case files. Just under half of offenders on HD (45%) participated in some form of employment during their order and 46% of offenders did not participate in any form of employment (see Chart). However, this information does not indicate at what point in the order the offender commenced employment, nor to what extent (e.g. full-time or part-time). This is a relatively high rate of post-release employment. Fewer than ten percent of participants in the Bridging the Gap had found employment in the six months after their release.

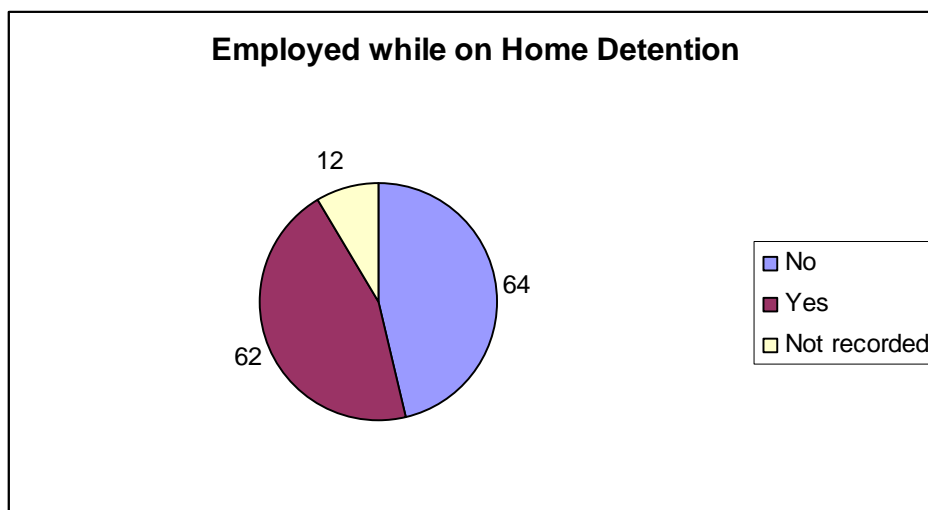


Figure 5.1 Employment status of home detainees

There is a significant difference between male and female participants in their employment outcomes (Table 4.1). More than half (55%) of males were

employed at some time during their order, compared to only 13% of females. However, we note that the feedback from participants and co-residents showed that for many women a primary goal was to reconnect with their children.

Employment Status	Female	Percentage	Male	Percentage
Employed	4	13%	58	55%
Not Employed	27	84%	37	35%
Not Recorded	1	3%	11	10%

Table 5.1 Employment status of male and female participants

Thus, on the one hand it is evident that most home detention participants are able to access at least some programs and services. However, as is typical for prison releasees, they face significant barriers in finding and gaining access to services that are appropriate to their post-release needs. In particular, there is a need for improved access to specialized psychological services targeted at the anxiety and adjustment problems reported by a high proportion of participants. Such services also need to be made available to co-residents.

Section 6

The impact of home detention on participants and co-residents

A central issue for the future of the home detention program is its impact on participants and co-residents. Those who favor home detention claim that it provides a cost-effective alternative to imprisonment that avoids the personal and social problems that are an inevitable part of full-time custody (Roberts, 2004). Those who oppose home detention argue that it is a sanction that transfers many of the costs of custody from the state to the offender and his or her family. When the Victorian Home Detention program was first proposed, concerns were raised about the potential impact of the program on families and others living in the home (referred to here as "co-residents") that was the site of the order. These concerns included:

- home detention would compromise the safety of co-residents;
- relationships between offenders and family members would be adversely affected;
- there would be pressure on co-residents to ensure that the offender does not breach his or her order;
- home detention would turn homes into prisons and families into jailers, and
- co-residents would be exposed to the intensive surveillance associated with home detention.

These are important issues. No matter how cost-effective home detention is, or how well it is able to reduce re-offending rates, it cannot have a long-term future if its success comes at the cost of family violence or disruption. This section of the evaluation reviews what participants and co-residents had to say about the

experience of living through a home detention order. The material presented here draws on the results and analysis of issues that was presented in the interim report *Feedback from Participants and Co-residents*, prepared in November 2005. That report was based on interviews conducted with 20 home detainees and 20 co-residents about a range of issues, including:

- their knowledge about the program and how they made their decisions to apply or support someone else's application
- the advantages and disadvantages of home detention
- the impact of home detention on family relationships
- the quality of interactions with HDU staff, and
- the programs or support services that home detainees and co-residents used or needed.

The analysis presented here extracts the critical issues that need to be considered in thinking about the future of the home detention program. It also integrates the advice and comments we received from participants and co-residents with other material from the evaluation that helps to understand the experience of being on home detention or living with a home detainee. In particular, it aims to answer some fundamental questions about the impact of home detention on families, and what needs to be done in order to maximize the benefits of home detention while avoiding or minimizing its negative impacts.

Do participants and co-residents support home detention?

One of the most striking aspects of the feedback we received was the strong support for home detention that was expressed by both participants and co-residents. While many of those we interviewed were keenly aware of the restrictions that home detention imposed on their lives, these restrictions were

judged as preferable to the problems and restrictions that were associated with having the participant in prison. It is important that these views are seen in perspective. The nature of the eligibility criteria for the VHD program meant that most of those who served home detention orders had already served more than a year in prison. Their families had experienced the emotional and practical impact of imprisonment. Some of the reasons they said they supported home detention were:

- It meant having a person with whom they had a close and important relationship (husband, wife, child, loved one) back at home with them rather than away in prison;
- The father or mother of their children was available to help and be closely involved with their children's upbringing;
- They no longer had to drive long distances each weekend (sometimes more frequently) to visit their partner or relative in prison. These visits imposed a financial burden, were time consuming and disrupted their lives;
- Having a partner or relative in prison also imposed a significant emotional strain associated with having to say goodbye to them after each visit, trying to cope with the anxiety and stress of worrying how they will get through another week in prison, and feeling unable to help them cope with what they knew to be a difficult, dangerous and stressful environment.

A measure of the degree of support for home detention is that there were only three cases where a home detention order was revoked because co-residents withdrew their consent⁹. We acknowledge that there were probably other co-

⁹ In view of the small number of consent withdrawals and the need to maintain confidentiality, no details of these cases are given here.

residents who were unhappy with the situation they found themselves in, but chose not to withdraw consent because of concern about the potential consequences for themselves or the participant. Overall, families displayed a strong level of support for the home detention program, and a resolute determination to get through the home detention order 'no matter what'. Many families explained this resolve as a simple equation – although home detention may be difficult, it was infinitely better than having their partner or relative in prison.

Obviously, a central issue in the responses of participants and co-residents was that they had experienced the impact of imprisonment on themselves and those around them. In part, the responses that we got reflect the preponderance of post-prison orders, and the question obviously arises as to whether the same degree of support will apply if a substantial sentence program is able to develop. This issue is considered in Part Two.

Does home detention have unacceptable impacts on family relationships?

Despite their clear support for the home detention program, many participants and co-residents experienced emotional strains and stresses arising from their involvement in the program. These included feelings of anxiety (especially about compliance with order conditions), guilt about the impact of the order on children or other family members and problems of adjusting living patterns and relationships. In the main, these are the same issues that almost all offenders exiting prison and their families face.

The people we interviewed were families trying to find ways to deal with the difficult problems of re-establishing their lives after the disruption, shame and trauma of having a family member go to prison. By and large, these were not families who face some of the more fundamental problems associated with prison release (finding accommodation, establishing some kind of financial support). However, they do have to deal with an array of complex social and emotional problems. The fact that they are affected by the conditions of a home detention order complicates this process in some ways (by imposing restrictions on activities), and has the potential to assist it in other ways (by providing access to some services), but ultimately doesn't change the basic nature of the situation they face.

In one way, home detention imposes strains on families that are not just part of the normal process of post-prison transition. Many of those that we interviewed talked about the emotional stress associated with conforming to the conditions of the home detention order, and the fear that any breach of order conditions would result in a return to prison. There was an acute awareness by both participants and co-residents of potential breaches and a kind of 'hyper-vigilance' to ensure that they would not be breached. HDU staff were conscious of this issue and their case management practices were designed to minimize these impacts and, where possible, provide families with support.

A critical issue about home detention is the potential for incidents of domestic violence, child abuse and serious emotional impacts on families. While many co-residents indicated that home detention was difficult and at times stressful, in none of the interviews did any respondent assert that the home detention order caused any arguments, conflict or serious disruption to the family.

What are the most difficult aspects of serving a home detention order?

The most commonly reported problem by interviewees was the degree to which home detention imposed restrictions on the activity of participants and indirectly on co-residents. These problems were frequently framed in terms of the restrictions on domestic or recreational activity (especially exercise). These restrictions were sometimes experienced particularly acutely because of the contrast with the level of physical activity at the minimum security prisons where they had been immediately before commencing home detention. Many participants and co-residents noted that the opportunity to exercise formed an important part of the offender's routine in prison and provided a means to cope with stress and frustration, and was at least as important while on home detention.

A second commonly reported problem was the uncertainty associated with progression through the program stages. Many participants found Stage 1 of their order (when activity restrictions were greatest and surveillance most intensive) to be extremely difficult psychologically. This was made more difficult when there was no clear indication how long they would remain on this stage or what was required to move to Stage 2.

These problems point to an obvious tension inherent in home detention. On the one hand, restrictions on activity and uncertainty about progressing to less restrictive conditions are a necessary part of home detention. The effective operation of home detention, and its acceptance by the community, is predicated on detainees experiencing significant limitations on what they can do, and on decisions about progression to less restrictive conditions being subject to discretionary judgments about compliance and risk. However, from the

perspective of participants and co-residents, home detention is an intermediate point between prison and the resumption of their old lives.

A third problematic aspect of the home detention program concerned the relationships between participants, co-residents and case workers. Most co-residents reported a very positive experience with their case-workers. However, there was also sometimes frustration and disappointment that their case-workers appeared more concerned with risk management than forming a trusting and cooperative relationship with the offender and family members. It is clear that participants and their families experience a degree of confusion about the role of case workers, and that this has its source in the dual support and control roles that are inherent in case workers' responsibilities. Many (probably most) participants expressed a need for substantial counseling and support to deal with the demands of the home detention, and more importantly the problems of making a transition back to the community. The role of the home detention officers is complex – at different times they are expected to be risk managers, compliance managers and case managers. These are all important roles, and each one has to be carried out effectively for the program to continue to perform as required. However, participants and their families experience the shifts in role – when staff members change or as the order progresses and case management priorities change – as confusing and not always in their interests.

This problem is likely to get worse if the home detention program expands significantly. A larger offender group will almost certainly mean more offenders with more complex problems, and (in the absence of a significant increase in the funding of the HDU) will also mean less time for case workers to support offenders and co-residents. Our view is that this is one of the key problems facing the home detention program in its next phase.

Overall, home detainees and co-residents found that serving an order presented some difficulties, but these were less problematic than the stresses and practical problems associated with being in prison, or having a family member in prison. The responses of participants and co-residents highlight the need to explain clearly in advance what is involved in a home detention order, and the potential stresses and difficulties associated with this. At present, the HDU uses a New Zealand video that explains home detention and this is supplemented by written material in a "question and answer" format about the Victorian program. There is a need for the development of a comprehensive briefing and resource kit (incorporating both visual and written material) for the Victorian program. This kit needs to set out clearly the eligibility requirements for the program, the surveillance and other conditions that apply to a home detention order, and the issues that co-residents and participants need to consider before they agree to the making of an order.

Section 7

Breaches and re-offending

A primary consideration in assessing the effectiveness of any criminal justice program is how participation in the program impacts on subsequent offending. Two measures of this impact are the rate of program breaches (as a result of failure to comply with the program conditions) and the rate of offending after the completion of the order. This chapter examines breach patterns and post-program offending for home detainees. In particular, it is concerned with two issues that are central to the future development of the program:

- How are breaches related to the selection of offenders for the VHD program, and what might be the implication of extending the pool of eligible offenders?
- How do the recidivism rates of those who complete VHD orders compare with the rates of prisoners released directly to parole?

Major and minor breaches

In considering breaches of VHD orders, it is necessary to distinguish between minor breaches that are dealt with by administrative process (usually, a formal warning by the Home Detention Manager or the Adult Parole Board), and serious breaches¹⁰ that can lead to revocation of the order and the imprisonment of the

¹⁰ S.18ZZI of the Sentencing Act 1991 and s.60P of the Corrections Act 1986 define a "serious breach" as one that compromises the safety or security of the community, co-residents or the offender's family, or that involves the commission of a new offence, or repeated failure to comply with the conditions of the order, or

offender. There were 15 minor and five major breaches recorded from commencement to the end of 2005.

The 15 minor breaches involved five offenders serving sentence orders, and ten serving post-prison orders (Table 6.1). The minor breaches mainly involved failure to comply with the curfew or attendance requirements of the order (not being at an approved activity, or being late returning), or verbal abuse towards staff. The minor breach rate for the sentence program was 29%, and for the post-prison program it was 8%.

	Number of orders made	Number of minor breaches	Minor breach rate
Sentence orders	17	5	29%
Post-prison orders	121	10	8%

Table 6.1 Minor breach rates, November 2004 – December 2005

The five serious breaches comprised two offenders serving post-prison orders, and three serving sentence orders (Table 6.2). These revocations of an order were all the due to positive urine test results¹¹. As with minor breaches, sentence orders had a breach rate that was substantially higher than that of post-prison orders. With such a small number of serious breaches, it is difficult

a breach of the core conditions of the order, or failure to comply with the requirements of a restitution or compensation order.

¹¹ Three orders were revoked because the co-residents withdrew consent and/or the offender was unable to provide suitable accommodation. In one case, the loss of accommodation occurred after the order had been made, but before the offender had been released from prison. While technically involving revocation of the order, this case should probably be considered as a failed application.

to say anything meaningful about their timing over the course of the serving of orders.

	Number of orders made	Number of serious breaches	Serious breach rate
Sentence orders	17	3	18%
Post-prison orders	121	2	2%

Table 6.2 Serious breach rates, November 2004 – December 2005

An issue related to home detention breach rates is that of parole breach rates. Almost all those who completed a post-prison home detention order were also subject to a parole order. Only one home detainee failed to complete his or her parole order (this was the same individual convicted for further offences – see below). This rate of parole success is remarkable. Many releasees find complying with parole difficult, and parole breach rates are high. In 2004-05, the Adult Parole Board made a total of 1,538 parole orders, but breached 803, of which 456 were cancelled and the parolee returned to prison. Like recidivism, the likelihood of any offender breaching a parole order is related to his or her inherent risk associated with age, offending history, drug or alcohol and similar factors. In the absence of data on how risk is distributed across the population of parolees, we are unable to say what kind of parole breach rate would be expected for the population of home detainees. However, it is clear that, as a group, home detainees seem to have coped well with the demands of parole. Some of the implications of this are discussed in Part Two of this report.

The breach rates achieved by the VHD program compare favorably with those achieved by other home detention programs. The intensive surveillance that is integral to electronic monitoring programs means that such programs commonly record high rates of curfew or regulatory violations (Nee, 1999; Smith, 2001). The NSW home detention program recorded a sanction (violation of regulations) rate of 38% of offenders, with drug or alcohol use and failure to comply with curfew or reporting requirements the most common causes (Heggie, 1999). An early (1989) UK trial recorded 216 violations by 50 participants over 6 months, including 17 offenders who cut off the monitor and absconded. A later evaluation of UK programs found that 61% of offenders had at least one curfew violation, but only 5% were recalled to prison (Dodgson et al., 2001).

The rate of serious violations in the VHD post-prison program is also indicative of a high rate of program completion relative to other programs of this type, particularly in view of the relatively stringent revocation criteria applied by the Adult Parole Board. The higher rate of serious breaches in the sentence program seems to be typical of front end programs. The NSW home detention program revoked 20% of orders commenced for a range of reasons including new offences, drug and alcohol use, tampering with equipment and repeated curfew breaches (Heggie, 1999). The Canadian community custody order program (sentence orders) had breach rates of between 10% and 29% across three provinces over four years (Roberts, 2004).

The very large variation between the sentence and post-prison programs in rates of both minor and serious breaches is an important issue. Breaches of home detention orders are an important cause of community concern about home detention programs (Roberts, 2004). To date this has not been an issue for the Victorian program, in large part because of the preponderance of post-prison orders in the program. In Section 8 we consider some of the implications in

regard to order breach rates of a substantial expansion of the sentence program, and some legislative responses that may be appropriate.

Recidivism rates

At the time of writing of this report, one offender who had served a home detention order had committed further offences and been sentenced to a further term of imprisonment, and a second home detainee had been remanded in custody in relation to alleged offences. If we count only the sentenced offender, this gives a crude recidivism rate of less than one percent, and if both are counted, a crude rate of less than two percent. However, if we want to understand what these crude rates mean, it is necessary to compare them with what kind of re-offending rates can be expected from a population of offenders with the characteristics of the home detainees.

It was noted in Section 3 that those selected for home detention are a relatively low risk group in comparison with prison releasees in general. The one-year predicted re-offending rate for home detainees was around 10%, compared with 28% for all prison releasees. In order to calculate the expected recidivism rate for the offenders who completed home detention orders in 2004 and 2005, we need to know how recidivism varies over time for low risk prison releasees comparable to those selected for home detention. The procedure we applied was as follows:

1. No-one approved for home detention had a predicted 12-month recidivism rate of more than 0.3. From the database on all prison releasees (see Appendix 2), we selected only those who had predicted failure rates of less than 0.3.

2. A Kaplan-Meier survival analysis was carried out on the low risk releasees. This yielded the distribution of observed failure probabilities over the first 500 days shown in Table 6.3. It will be noted that the observed failure probability after 12 months is 9%, close to the predicted 12-month failure probability for the home detainees (10%).
3. "Time at risk" was calculated for 99 home detainees¹² who had completed their order. This was the time that elapsed between expiry of their order and the end of February 2006. The distribution of "time at risk" is shown in the third column of Table 6.3. Note that offenders whose orders were revoked are excluded from this calculation. While no-one whose order was revoked committed a further offence, it seems unreasonable to count them as a success (i.e. not a recidivist).

Days after release	Expected probability of failure	Number of home detainees "at risk"	Expected recidivists
0-50 days	.0057	7	0.04
51-100 days	.0163	5	0.08
101-150 days	.0272	7	0.19
151-200 days	.0391	11	0.43
201-250 days	.0540	11	0.59
251-300 days	.0684	8	0.55
301-350 days	.0806	9	0.73
351-400 days	.0908	9	0.82
401-450 days	.1002	4	0.40
451-500 days	.1092	9	0.98
501 days or more	.1290	19	2.45
Total		99	7.26

¹² Date information was missing on two cases

Table 6.3 Observed recidivism rates for low risk releasees and expected number of recidivists for home detainees.

4. The expected number of recidivists for each "time at risk" category was calculated, yielding a total of 7.26 expected recidivists.

The actual number of recidivists (one or two) in the home detention population is therefore substantially (85% to 70%) lower than the expected rate.

Section 8

Cost-effectiveness and cost–benefit analysis

One way to assess the effectiveness of a criminal justice program is to ask whether it produces equal or greater outcomes or benefits than alternative programs or interventions for a given cost. This chapter examines the cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit of the Victorian home detention program. Cost-effectiveness analysis examines the outputs or outcomes from an intervention relative to the input costs required to produce them. Cost-benefit analysis translates program outputs or outcomes into monetary terms, and examines the relationship between input costs and output/outcome values (Cohen, 2000).

In the case of a home detention program, cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis must analyse the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the program relative to the interventions that would have applied had home detention not been available. This chapter:

- Identifies and values the inputs for the VHD program;
- Identifies and quantifies the outputs and outcomes of the VHD program;
- Compares the input costs for the VHD program with comparable costs for sentencing or release alternatives, and
- Compares the program costs with the value of the program benefits.

Inputs for the Victorian Home Detention program

The primary inputs for the VHD program include:

- The recurrent costs of the Home Detention Unit and the Adult Parole Board in operating the program,
- The costs of supplying and maintaining the electronic monitoring equipment;
- The costs to the justice system in dealing with any breaches of orders (that is, the costs of arresting and sentencing home detainees in breach of their orders); and
- The infrastructure costs for the Department of Justice in supporting the home detention program.

An important issue in assessing the recurrent costs of the VHD program is the lower than expected number of offenders under supervision by the HDU. As a result, the HDU has not been staffed to its full complement, and has consistently under-spent its budget. In the financial year to January 2006, the HDU had expended \$532,000 out of a budget allocation of \$656,000 – that is, expenditure was only 80% of the budgeted amount.

Table 7.1 shows the annual recurrent costs for the Home Detention Unit, based on the first seven months of the 2005/06 year. The total recurrent expenditure for the Home Detention Unit is estimated at \$910,700, that of the Adult Parole Board was \$100,100 and the annual rental and service costs for the ComSat electronic monitoring equipment was \$237,500. We were not able to identify costs associated with the processing of breaches (although these were probably small), or the marginal infrastructure costs for the Department of Justice.

Cost item	Annual cost	Units	Unit cost	Notes
HDU Recurrent costs	\$910,700	Average caseload (Aug 2004 – Mar 2006) 26	\$35,027 per offender/year	See Appendix 1, HDU Expenditure 2005-2006
APB recurrent costs	\$100,100	Average caseload (Aug 2004 – Mar 2006) 26	\$3,850 per offender/year	Does not include APB support costs
Lease of ComSat EM equipment	\$237,500	Average caseload (Aug 2004 – Mar 2006) 26	\$9,135 per offender/year	See Appendix 1, HDU Expenditure 2005-2006
Total recurrent	\$1,248,300	Average caseload (Aug 2004 – Mar 2006) 26	\$48,011 per offender/year	

Table 7.1 Recurrent and unit costs for VHD program

Unit costs

Unit costs for the home detention program can be considered in two ways:

- Costs determined by the flow of offenders through the program. These include the costs of recruiting and assessing new participants, setting up monitoring equipment, creating case files and other activities that must be done for every new participant.
- Costs determined by the caseload. These include the costs of day-to-day case management, the contract costs for the electronic monitoring equipment, office and vehicle leasing costs, as well as the costs of general administration, staff training and supervision.

Where a program has a high rate of engagement (that is, where most applicants become part of the caseload), the flow and caseload unit costs will be closely related. However, in the case of the VHD program, the very high rate of attrition between application and active orders means that these two components should be regarded separately. Ideally, we would be able to partition the recurrent costs in Table 7.1 according to whether they were flow or caseload costs, and identify the unit costs associated with each new applicant, and the unit costs associated with managing each order. Unfortunately, this is not possible.

The unit costs shown in Table 7.1 are determined by dividing the recurrent expenditure for the program by the average caseload over the period from August 2004 (when caseload numbers stabilized) to March 2006. This yielded a unit cost of \$48,000 per offender-year. That is, it cost \$48,000 to recruit and assess a pool of applicants large enough to select enough offenders to account for one year of supervised order time. Our rationale for using this as a unit cost base was:

- This kind of unit cost is readily compared with the unit costs associated with other sentencing alternatives like imprisonment where significant flow costs are also involved;
- High flow costs are an integral part of the VHD model. While the need to assess five or six applicants for every one who is ultimately selected to serve an order imposes substantial costs on the HDU and APB, this process is probably important in producing the benefits that offset the costs of the program.

Outputs and outcomes

The primary outputs and outcomes identified by this evaluation for the home detention program include some that can be assigned a monetary value, some that can be quantified, and some that can be described but not quantified. Table 7.2 lists two outcomes of the VHD program that can be assigned a monetary value comparable with those attributed to the program inputs.

Output/outcome	Quantity	Value
Diversion from imprisonment	26 prisoners (9,490 prisoner-days)	\$2,163,200
Reduced imprisonment associated with reduced recidivism	438 prisoner-days	\$99,700
Total benefits		\$2,262,900

Table 7.2: Benefits of the home detention program with a quantifiable value.

Diversion from imprisonment

The VHD program is responsible for managing offenders who would otherwise be in custody. In the case of the post-prison program, we can say with certainty that anyone on the home detention program would otherwise be in prison. The small number of offenders in the sentence program makes any judgment about the diversionary impact of the program problematic. However, the restrictive nature of the sentencing provisions make it extremely likely that most if not all of those who were placed on a sentence order would otherwise have been imprisoned. For both the post-prison and sentence programs, the requirement that the period on home detention should be exactly the same as the period of imprisonment means that the average caseload of the home detention program can be translated directly into the same number of diverted prisoners.

The total cost of imprisonment in Victoria has been calculated as \$227.80 per prisoner per day, or \$83,200 per prisoner per year (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services, 2006). This total cost includes the costs of imprisonment at all security levels, and thus over-states the costs associated with releasees on the post-prison program who would have spent their remaining time in custody in a minimum security institution. However, prison utilization rates in Victoria routinely exceed 100%, so the minimum security beds made available through the home detention program would certainly have been filled by prisoners occupying medium or maximum security beds. On this basis, the system average figure can be taken as a valid measure of the marginal savings associated with the VHD program.

Reduced imprisonment associated with reduced recidivism

In Section 7 it was calculated that the expected number of recidivists for the home detention program was 7.26, and the actual number was one or two. The

net saving is therefore five or six offenders returned to prison over the course of the program. This represents the impact of the program over two years, so the annual impact is half this. We suggest that a saving of 2.5 prisoners each year is a reasonable estimate of this impact. It is also necessary to estimate the period that would have been served by those 2.5 prisoners had they returned to prison. The best simple estimate for this is the average time served for Victorian prisoners. In the comparison group of 5,509 releasees, the mean time served was 175 days. At a cost of \$227.80 per day, this yields a cost saving of \$99,700.

Non-quantified outcomes

There were also a number of program outcomes that cannot be assigned a monetary value. These include:

- *Reduced parole breach rates.* As noted in Section 7, home detainees had a very high rate of parole success. This probably needs to be seen in the context of the order breach and revocation rates. Those home detainees who would have been most likely to breach a parole order were probably the ones who had their home detention order revoked. It is not clear whether return to prison had any impact on their subsequent breach rate when they were eventually released to parole. It was noted above that it was not possible to identify the input costs associated with breaches of home detention orders. This analysis suggests that any input costs associated with breaches of home detention orders are likely to more than offset by the reduced costs associated with lower parole breach rates.
- *Reduced cost of crime.* Those home detainees who didn't become recidivists also didn't commit crimes that would have imposed a cost to the community. The cost of crime to the community varies greatly depending on the form of crime – Australian Institute of Criminology

estimates range from \$1600 for an assault to \$3600 for a robbery. The impact of the home detention program in this respect is likely to be modest.

- *Improved employment outcomes.* The proportion of home detainees who found some kind of employment while on their order (see Section 5) appears to be significantly higher than for prison releasees generally. In the absence of data on comparable releasees not under the home detention program, it is impossible to quantify the extent of this difference.
- *Improved family outcomes.* Our interviews with participants and co-residents showed that families placed a high value on home detention as an alternative to prison. Some of the advantages that they cited had a direct monetary value (for example, reduced travel for prison visits) although it seems likely that these were more than offset by the costs of having the participant living at home. However, the real benefits for families were the intangible ones of relationships that were no longer severed by imprisonment.

Comparison of costs and benefits

The VHD program was established to provide a cost-effective alternative to imprisonment, and it on this basis that the program must be judged. The input unit costs of the program were higher than originally anticipated, although these high unit costs need to be seen in the context of the program as a pilot designed to establish a basis of policy and practice and create a sense of community

confidence in the program. However, even given these high unit costs, the program was able to generate significant savings relative to the alternative of imprisonment. Based only on those benefits that were able to be assigned a monetary value, the VHD program yielded a cost:benefit ratio of 1 to 1.8. That is, for every \$1 spent on the program, a saving of \$1.80 was generated.

Input costs	Outcome benefits	Difference	Ratio of inputs to benefits
\$1,248,300	\$2,262,900	\$1,014,600	1 : 1.8

Table 7.3 Ratio of input costs to benefits

Part Two Where to from here? Policy options and recommendations for legislative and operational reform.

Section 9

Policy Alternatives

This evaluation reveals a complex set of outcomes. Clearly, the VHD program pilot achieved virtually all of the primary goals that were set for it. Two years of operation has seen a respectable number of offenders pass through the program without any significant incidents occurring. Despite initial concerns about the potential for home detention to expose families to risk or unreasonable compliance pressures, there was no evidence of significant risk and the overwhelming response from families was supportive. The outcomes for home detainees were impressive: breach and revocation rates were low (especially for those on the post-prison program) and re-offending rates were much lower than expected. Caseload numbers were lower than expected, but this was a reflection of the stringent assessment criteria adopted, and was partly offset by budgetary economies. Despite the relatively high unit costs that are a consequence of reduced caseloads, the VHD program returned \$1.80 in benefits for every \$1 spent on the program. In terms of overall cost-benefit, the program yielded superior outcomes for less cost than the alternative of imprisonment. All of these achievements provide a strong basis for the continuation of the VHD program into the future.

However, within this overall picture there was one glaring gap. The successes of the VHD program relate mainly to its success as a post-prison program. There were only a handful of sentence orders made during the course of this evaluation, and the (admittedly scant) evidence in this evaluation shows that these offenders had substantially worse outcomes as measured by breach and revocation rates than the majority of home detainees in the post-prison program. So, what this evaluation shows is a post-prison program that was extremely

successful, and a sentence program that, at best, is yet to demonstrate that it can achieve positive results.

This raises a number of important policy questions about the future of the VHD program. Clearly, there is a strong case for the continuance and expansion of the post-prison program, although this should involve a greater emphasis on the transitional nature of the program (see below). However, any future sentence program will require substantial legislative change in order to make this a viable sentence option, and these changes are outlined below.

A central issue in regard to the future of the sentence program is the place of this as a diversionary sentence relative to other sentences. The formative evaluation report noted that one problem for the sentence program was that it occupies a relatively crowded "space" in the sentencing spectrum, along with partially and wholly suspended sentences of imprisonment, intensive corrections orders and drug court orders. Some of the problems inherent in this part of the sentencing spectrum have been set out in detail in the Sentencing Advisory Council discussion paper and interim report on suspended sentences. The question of how the sentence option for home detention should be developed is thus one that probably cannot be solved in isolation for other sentencing reforms.

An important consideration in the development of an appropriate policy framework for home detention is whether the "home detention" should be seen as a generalized criminal justice program with a variety of applications (to prisoners nearing release, offenders facing a sentence of imprisonment, serious sexual offenders etc) or whether it should be regarded as a set of distinct programs that are linked by a common set of surveillance technologies and case management systems. We favour the latter interpretation because we see the

different groups of offenders subject to home detention as presenting such different sets of risks and service and support needs as to require fundamentally different program management systems. Achieving the highest level of success with groups as diverse as prisoners in transition back to the community, drug-dependent offenders being diverted from imprisonment and serious sexual offenders subject to long-term monitoring in the community will require distinctly different risk management and rehabilitative/problem management strategies.

On this basis, we see the overall policy framework for the future of home detention in three parts. The three forms of home detention/electronic monitoring constitute distinct programs with different development trajectories.

Future of the post-release program

The post-prison program should be seen as a “proven” program model. The next step is to refine the case management model to give more emphasis to transitional support, and gradually extend the pool of eligible releasees. Perhaps the most important implication of the feedback we received from participants and co-residents is that, whether intended or not, home detention is a form of post-prison transitional program. The success of the post-prison program probably has a great deal to do with the way that it assists releasees to re-enter the community in a way that provides a degree of support within a framework of substantial restrictions and surveillance. In this sense, it mirrors some of the features of the kind of intensive aftercare or intensive parole models that have been shown to be successful in other transitional programs (Lynch & Sabol, 2001; Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Yanqing Wang, & Thao Le, 2005).

A key policy issue is therefore how home detention fits in to the range of program options available for prison releasees. Its relationship to parole is

straightforward, but there are potential problems associated with the development of other intensive transitional programs. The eligibility criteria for the Judy Lazarus Transitional Centre (JLTC) are very similar to those for home detention, and the pool of releasees who are suitable for these two programs is not large. There needs to be consideration of how flows of offenders into these two programs are managed. These programs might be sequential, with home detention following on from a period in the JLTC, or alternatives, with the JLTC available to offenders with more complex needs or who lack the kind of family support that would make them eligible for home detention.

The low revocation and re-offending rates demonstrated in the evaluation provide a strong argument for extending the post-prison program to higher risk offenders. Note that this should only apply to the offence-based risk criteria in the legislation. We fully support the existing criteria intended to minimize any risk to the families of offenders. In addition, the further extension of the program boundary should also mean a potentially larger pool of eligible applicants. Making home detention available to offenders from regional Victoria is an important element in the development of the post-release program, and will probably demand significant changes to administrative and procedural arrangements for the HDU.

The Formative Evaluation Report estimated that some relaxation of risk-based criteria and changes to the distance limits would result in a doubling of the pilot program caseload from 20-25 to 40-50. We see this estimate as still valid. A larger offender group will almost certainly mean more offenders with more complex problems, and potentially less time for case workers to support offenders and co-residents. While a modest reduction in unit costs for the program is probably reasonable, it is important to bear in mind that the overall success of the program depends on effective case management.

Future of the sentence program

The sentence program should be seen as still in its development phase. This is partly because the small number of sentence orders that have been made do not provide an adequate base for making a judgment about the future of the program, and partly because the final form of the sentence option program will depend on decisions yet to be made about the future of suspended sentences. Even if the proposed legislative changes encourage greater use of home detention sentences, the program should be considered as a pilot for a further two to three years.

An important legislative reform issue for sentence orders concerns the equivalence between the period of imprisonment imposed at the commencement of the sentencing process, and the period of home detention. This is a major barrier to acceptance by the courts, and a variety of appellate court judgments and guideline sentences support the principle that the two sanctions are not equivalent¹³. It is notable that the equivalence principle was initially adopted in the Canadian community custody system but was soon changed following lack of acceptance by sentencers.

A key issue for the future development of the sentence program is how to “capture” the strengths of the post-prison program. The interviews with participants make it clear that one of the primary motivators for compliance was knowledge of the realities of imprisonment, and a strong desire to avoid a return to prison. This motivation is obviously not always present in offenders who are being sentenced. One sentence option that may be worth considering is

¹³ *R. vs Jurisic* NSW Court of Criminal Appeal (1998) 45 NSWLR 209; *R vs Brady* Alberta Court of Appeal (1998) ABCA 7; *R vs Proulx* Supreme Court of Canada (2000) 1 SCR 61

combining home detention with a period of imprisonment in a similar fashion to partially suspended sentences. Alternatively, the assessment of suitability for offenders may need to take into account whether the person has been previously imprisoned.

Most of the revocations of home detention orders were related to substance use. While this is also a problem for releasees, offenders sentenced to home detention are much more likely to have current substance abuse problems and require more active management of these issues if they are to comply with the conditions of the order. The pilot program did require some offenders seeking a sentence order to undertake detoxification and treatment programs as part of their order. Nevertheless, achieving compliance by offenders with complex substance abuse problems is difficult and requires multiple responses and a capacity to tolerate and respond effectively to failure.

The future of the sentence program will not be helped if substantial numbers of orders must be revoked because of frequent breaches associated with substance use. However, a discretionary response to breaches must be consistent with the legitimacy of the sentencing system. The obvious response is to provide for significant breaches of sentence orders to be returned to the sentencing court for re-sentencing. Note that this would not interfere with existing revocation procedures. If it were determined that a serious breach had occurred and that the order should be revoked, the Adult Parole Board would continue to be empowered to issue an arrest warrant leading to immediate return to custody.

Extension of the home detention model to other offender groups

There needs to be consideration of how the potential future demand for electronic monitoring of serious sexual offenders can be integrated with the other two programs. Clearly, serious sexual offenders will pose risks and have offending-related and other needs that will demand a specialized set of case management skills and resources.

Section 10

Recommendations

We have made recommendations in relation to a number of aspects of the program legislation and operations. The recommendations for legislative change fall into three general categories:

- Changes to the sentencing process
- Changes to the eligibility criteria
- Miscellaneous changes to rectify gaps in the legislation.

Changes to the sentencing process

Recommendation 1:

The requirement for equivalence between the term of imprisonment imposed and the term of home detention to be served should be replaced by a provision that allows the court to set a term of home detention proportionate to the seriousness of the offence(s).

Recommendation 2:

If an offender sentenced to a home detention order commits a serious breach, and the Adult Parole Board determines that the home detention order should be revoked, or the offender loses his or her accommodation, or those residing with the offender withdraw their consent, the offender should be returned to prison in the interim and then returned to the original court of sentence. The court should then determine a period of imprisonment to be served in lieu of the order, that

period to be no longer than the term of the home detention order. In setting a term of imprisonment, the court should take account of the period of home detention already served.

Changes to eligibility criteria

Recommendation 3

The offence-related eligibility criteria in Section 18ZV of the Sentencing Act 1991 and Section 60A of the Corrections Act 1986 should be amended so that the court and the Adult Parole Board have discretion to approve orders for offenders who committed prohibited offences:

- more than 5 years prior to the offences for which the home detention order is being considered, or
- where the nature of any violent or sexual offences was such that the court or the Adult Parole Board judges that the offender does not pose a significant risk to the community.

Miscellaneous changes to legislation

Recommendation 4

The following miscellaneous changes should be made to either the Sentencing Act 1991 or the Corrections Act 1986, both:

- The legislation should provide a clear definition of “co-resident”. The terms used in the legislation (variously “persons with whom the prisoners intends to reside”, “a person residing at the approved residence”, “persons who will be residing with the offender”) are inadequately defined for the purposes of making assessments and case management.
- The Home Detention Unit should be empowered to carry out police criminal history checks on co-residents. This will in turn require that co-residents supply certified copies of identification.
- The undertakings required of offenders should include the provision of details of prescription medication to the Home Detention Unit or to a pathology laboratory responsible for carrying out urine tests.
- The definitions of certain offences in Section 18ZV of the Sentencing Act 1991 and Section 60A of the Corrections Act 1986 should be extended or clarified. Specifically:
 - The status of culpable driving in relation to Schedule 1 of the Act needs to be clarified;
 - The definition of firearms and prohibited weapon offences should be extended to include possession offences;
 - Where the description of a weapons related offence does not allow the court or Adult Parole Board to determine whether the weapon falls under the prohibited offence provisions, the legislation should allow discretion as to whether an order may be made;
 - Where the description of a drug trafficking offence does not allow the court or Adult Parole Board to determine whether the offence satisfies the definition of “commercial quantity” or “large commercial quantity” in Schedule 1, the legislation should allow discretion as to whether an order may be made.

Recommendations for procedural and operational changes

The following recommendations relating to procedural or operational changes in home detention are intended to provide a basis for the continued development of the program. They are concerned with the expansion of eligibility to new groups of offenders, the provision of services to offenders and co-residents, and the service infrastructure required to support the Home Detention Unit.

Recommendation 5

The scope of the post-prison home detention program should be expanded with the goal of a caseload of 35 offenders after the first year and 45 to 50 after the second year. This expansion in scope should include:

- Extending program coverage to offenders living in regional Victoria. This will entail changes in the service model, such as using regional Community Correctional Service staff to provide some surveillance and support services.
- Developing options for offenders without access to a residence. This may require establishing supported accommodation arrangements through programs like Housing Pathways or Transitional Housing Managers.
- Gradual extension to higher risk offenders. The recommended changes to the legislative provisions covering eligibility will be a critical pre-requisite for this.

Recommendation 6

The sentence program should be re-established as a two-year pilot program. The recommended legislative changes to sentencing and revocation provisions are a critical requirement for this.

Recommendation 7

The program model for post-prison orders should emphasize the transitional nature of the program. Consideration should be given to the relationship that should exist between home detention and the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre, and the assessment and allocation strategies necessary to make this relationship work effectively. The Home Detention Unit should establish more formal relationships with community-based transitional support agencies, and should involve them in the development of service and support arrangements for releasees and their families.

Recommendation 8

Additional, specific provision should be made to provide counseling and other support to home detainees and their families. This may involve the recruitment of counseling staff to work within the Home Detention Unit, or funding community-based agencies to provide these services.

Recommendation 9

Access to urineanalysis services are inadequate for the current caseload of the HDU, and this problem will become more serious as caseloads increase. An increase in the number and availability of metropolitan testing locations is

required. The extension of the program to offenders in regional Victoria may require the development of a mobile testing capability.

Recommendation 10

The current arrangements for the collection and storage of offender information are inadequate, and there is little likelihood that this gap will be filled by existing prison or CCS systems in the short or medium term. Again, this has been manageable with the existing caseload, but will become much more serious as caseloads increase. The HDU and APB should develop specifications for a common case management and offender records system. Any re-tendering for the electronic monitoring system should include a requirement for supply of a case management and offender records system.

Recommendation 11

A comprehensive briefing and resource kit (incorporating both visual and written material) should be developed for the Victorian program. This kit should set out clearly the eligibility requirements for the program, the surveillance and other conditions that apply to a home detention order, and the issues that co-residents and participants need to consider before they agree to the making of an order.

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Appendix 1 Information management requirements for the Home Detention Program

Early on in the evaluation process we identified the lack of a single information system for managing application and case records as a significant problem for both the evaluation and the management of the home detention program. Despite the efforts of both the Adult Parole Board and the Home Detention unit in maintaining records, there were gaps and inconsistencies in the data available to the evaluation. It was difficult to determine exactly how many applications had been made and what the outcomes of eligibility screening and assessment were. Our analysis of the demographic, risk and need characteristics of home detainees was based on incomplete data or material extracted from case files, and our analysis of curfew and order management was based on samples of files.

The lack of a comprehensive data system has significant implications for the APB and HDU as well. One consequence is that a variety of manually compiled forms have been generated to keep track of various aspects of the application and case management processes. We identified 37 different forms used by the HDU (see Table A1.1), requiring a substantial degree of multiple recording of basic details. The existing arrangements depend on staff members having a detailed, up-to-date knowledge of individual cases, and are only viable while the number of active orders remains small. If the VHD program is extended and order numbers increase significantly, these manually based systems will be inadequate.

A major part of the problem lies in the inability of the central Corrections Victoria data bases to cover the processes involved in the administration of the VHD program. The data requirements for the program are not complex. An adequate

database could be developed using proprietary software and three data entry points (assessment, APB and HDU decision, and order completion). Some arrangement would be required to ensure that the HDU and APB shared a common data set. The HDU and APB should develop specifications for a common case management and offender records system. Any re-tendering for the electronic monitoring system should include a requirement for supply of a case management and offender records system.

FORMS USED BY HOME DETENTION UNIT
1. Offender Goal Actions (<i>details of offender goals, actions</i>)
2. Premises Checklist (for SMU) (<i>check for anomalies w proposed SMU position e.g. front yard, back yard, different areas of house</i>)
3. Business Time – Release from Curfew Application (<i>2hrs, regular time/day</i>)
4. Confirmation of Approved Activity [HD Program Schedule 7.8(17)].
5. Verification Form [HD Program Schedule 7.8(18)] (<i>verification form for offender to have signed when they go somewhere</i>)
6. Registration Form for Offenders (<i>Name, CRN, Address, Phone, DOB, Order Dates, HDO, Equipment, SMU Charged, Authorised Activities</i>)
7. Appendix 3 – Consent by Child to Disclosure of Information by Department of Human Services to the Home Detention Program.
8. Appendix 2 – Consent by Parent to Disclosure of Information by Department of Human Services to the Home Detention Program.
9. Return of Equipment (<i>client, SMU #, PID #, SMU, Phone Cord, Phone, Phone Jacks, PID, Strap, etc</i>)
10. HDU – Case Note (<i>Date & Time, Notes</i>)
11. Application to Cancel Order by Offender [HD Program Schedule 7.8(29)]
12. Employment Application [HD Program Schedule 7.8(29)]
13. National Criminal History Request Form
14. Yellow Form – Activity Form (<i>offender name, end date, activity, date, from & to times, requested by, date, approved by, entered by, date</i>)
15. Strength Test (<i>appears to be v similar to the Premises Checklist</i>)
16. Home Detention On Call Log (<i>Staff member, date, time start & end, time, task, outcome/action required, duration, staff initial, manager approval</i>)
17. Home Detention Unit Urinalysis Record (<i>Name, CRN, date attended,</i>

<i>directed by (HDO name), escorted by (HDO Name), test result)</i>
18. Home Detention Unit Breath Test Record (<i>Name, CRN, date tested, tested by (HDO Name), test result</i>)
19. Offender Monitoring Record (<i>Monthly set up, shaded = planned and non-shaded = actual events, inc time, contact code and staff member initials – for staff to plan contacts at least 1 week ahead (minimum std) - inc PH, PE, DB, FF, UA, BT</i>)
20. As above, but with Compliance Monitoring Statistics for the Month (<i>summarises # BT, # UA, date of last confidential co-res interview, # of phone verifications at activities, # of Drive By Verifications at Activities</i>)
21. Client Monitoring Record (weekly) w more prescription on contacts (<i>week from – to, name, address, contacts, phase, minimum weekly contact dates for P, FF, AH, WE, CO, X, Urine, Breath Test, Employment P and DB) – lines for multiple offenders names (e.g. used as a planning/accountability device for staff?)</i>)
22. Offender Induction Checklist [HD Program Schedule 7.8(11)]
23. HDU Assessment Form [HD Program Schedule 7.8(2)]
24. Authority to Exchange Information [HD Program Schedule 7.8(6)]
25. Consent of Co-Resident to Undergo Checks [HD Program Schedule 7.8(7)]
26. Acknowledgement and Consent by a Co-Resident [HD Program Schedule 7.8(9)]
27. Consent to Making of an Order [HD Program Schedule 7.8(10)]
28. Assessment Checklist
29. Eligibility Checklist (Back-End Access) [HD Program Schedule 7.8(3)]
30. Eligibility Checklist (Front-End Access) [HD Program Schedule 7.8(4)]
31. Home Detention Intake Form (<i>CRN, JAID, HDU #, Name, Aliases, DOB, Age, Sex, Address, Phone, SMU etc, emergency contact, Co-Resident Details, Other Phone Numbers, Employment / Community Work Details, Admin Tasks, Personal Details e.g. birthplace, nationality, aboriginality, employment status, education level, occupation, marital status, history of violent or sex offences, health details, HD details etc.</i>)
32. Front-End Notification of HD Order & Hook Up [HD Program Schedule 7.8(10a)]
33. Back-End Notification of HD Order & Hook Up [HD Program Schedule 7.8(10b)]

Table A1.1 Forms used by Home Detention Unit

Appendix 2 Re-offending analysis

The expected number of recidivists within the population of unrevoked home detention orders was calculated as follows:

1. Selection of a comparable pool of prison releasees.

The primary data source was an extract of sentenced prisoners discharged from Victorian prisons between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2004. There were 5,509 prisoners in this discharge cohort. No-one approved for home detention had a predicted (using the VISAT predictive algorithm) 12-month recidivism rate of more than 0.3. From the database on all prison releasees (see Appendix 2), we selected only those who had predicted failure rates of less than 0.3. This yielded a sample of 1,628 "low risk" prison releasees most of whom had been released before the commencement of the home detention program.

2. Calculation of survival function for low risk releasees

Follow-up data on return to prison was collected on the sample of low-risk releasees to September 2005. There were 219 recidivists in the sample of 1,628 releasees, and the minimum "time at risk" was 457 days. The crude recidivism rate was therefore 13%. A Kaplan-Meier survival analysis was calculated which yielded the survival curve shown in Figure A2.1. Note that this curve plots the "one minus survival" function, and in effect shows the actual and projected number of recidivists from 0 to 800 days after release. The one minus survival function for each releasee was saved and means were calculated for time at risk intervals of 50 days from 0 to 500 days. This yielded the expected proportion of recidivists for each time at risk interval shown in Table A2.1.

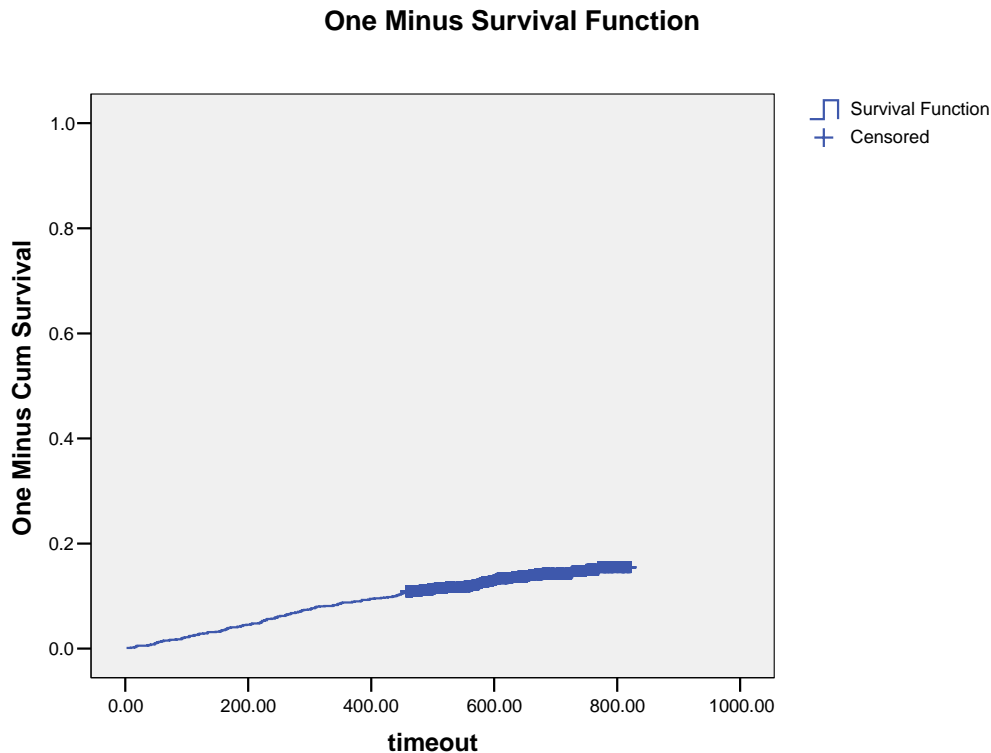


Figure A2.1: One Minus Survival function for 1,628 low risk prison releaseses

3. Calculation of predicted number of home detention recidivists

The 99 persons who had completed their home detention orders without having the order revoked were then grouped according to the period elapsed since the expiry of their home detention order, using the same 50-day intervals as in step 2. The expected probability of recidivism from Table A2.2 was then applied to the number of home detainees at risk, yielding the expected number of recidivists shown in the right hand column of Table 6.3. This yielded an estimate of 7.25 recidivists – a crude recidivism rate of 7%.

Report

Survival_minus_fn

Timeout categories	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0-50 days	.0057	17	.00305
51-100 days	.0163	18	.00335
101-150 days	.0272	17	.00318
151-200 days	.0391	22	.00400
201-250 days	.0540	26	.00483
251-300 days	.0684	21	.00379
301-350 days	.0806	19	.00342
351-400 days	.0908	14	.00268
401-450 days	.1002	17	.00314
451-500 days	.1092	12	.00217
501 days or more	.1290	36	.01101
Total	.0685	219	.04031

Table A2.1 Mean One Minus Survival function by time after release from prison.

Appendix 3: Cost-benefit analysis calculations

Table A3.1 Calculation of Home Detention Unit full-year expenditure 2005-2006

Table A3.2 Home Detention Unit Budget by month 2005-2006

Table A3.3 Electronic Monitoring equipment leasing costs

Table A3.1 Calculation of Home Detention Unit full-year expenditure 2005-2006

Category	Category subtotal to Jan 2006	Estimated full-year expenditure	Item	HDU Expenditure to January 2006	Notes
Salaries & on-costs	\$366,220	\$626,017	Salaries	\$260,441	
			Annual Leave	\$26,500	
			Penalty Rates	\$34,471	
			Overtime	\$4,379	
			Salaries/Payroll Accrual	-\$18,417	
			Payroll Tax	\$19,331	
			LSL Exp to Provision	\$7,716	
			WorkCover Levy	\$3,262	
			DOJ Super Cont - Vic Super	\$23,773	
			DOJ Super Cont - Private Funds	\$4,764	
Office rental & cleaning	\$42,655	\$72,915	Office rental	\$37,425	Note 1
			Cleaning Serv - Contract	\$2,226	
			Cleaning Serv - Waste Disposal	\$98	
			Electricity	\$2,906	
Vehicle and transport costs	\$15,495	\$26,487	Vehicle lease payments	\$15,204	Note 2
			MV Fuel & Oil	\$52	
			Casual Car Parking Fees	\$80	
			Taxi,City Link & Rail	\$159	
Office supplies	\$4,467	\$7,636	Stationery/Consumables/Supplies	\$2,571	
			External Printing	\$420	
			Office Equipment Maintenance	\$382	
			Couriers	\$822	
			Postage - Bulk/Stamps/PO Box Rental	\$272	
Equipment and maintenance	\$11,372	\$19,439	Telephone - Reimbursements (Credit)	\$11,212	
			Communications		
			(<\$1,000)	\$160	

Category	Category subtotal to Jan 2006	Estimated full-year expenditure	Item	HDU Expenditure to January 2006	Notes
IT and support	\$17,040	\$29,128	Software Licences & Maintenance	\$17,040	
Offender service costs	\$4,440	\$7,590	Interpreter Services	\$815	
			Urine Analysis	\$3,625	
			Light Working Lunches/Meeting Expenses/Non-Employee		
Miscellaneous	\$71,071	\$121,489	Entertainment (Not FBT)	\$473	
			Security - Contract Fees	\$364	
			Contractors - No Payroll Tax Liability	\$70,234	
Total	\$532,760	\$910,700	Total	\$532,760	

Notes to Table A3.1

- 1 Office rental does not appear as an expenditure item. The budgeted office rental amount has been applied.
- 2 Vehicle lease cost does not appear as an expenditure item. The budgeted office rental amount has been applied.

Table A3.2 Home Detention Unit Budget by month 2005-2006

Budget Item	Budget full- year 2005-06	Budget to		Month	Budget	Cumulative	Cumulative %
		January 2006					
Salaries	\$449,300	\$262,735.43		Jul-05	\$86,000	\$86,000	7.7%
Ann leave	\$40,700	\$23,799.98		Aug-05	\$94,500	\$180,500	16.1%
Penalty rates	\$93,100	\$54,441.73		Sep-05	\$94,600	\$275,100	24.5%
Payroll tax	\$31,200	\$18,244.70		Oct-05	\$90,600	\$365,700	32.6%
LSL	\$16,300	\$9,531.69		Nov-05	\$104,400	\$470,100	41.9%
Workcover	\$2,800	\$1,637.35		Dec-05	\$94,900	\$565,000	50.3%
Super	\$52,500	\$30,700.22		Jan-06	\$91,400	\$656,400	58.5%
Personal Expenses	\$5,000	\$2,923.83		Feb-06	\$86,700	\$743,100	66.2%
Office supplies	\$40,000	\$23,390.65		Mar-06	\$98,200	\$841,300	74.9%
Phones (excl mobiles)	\$45,000	\$26,314.48		Apr-06	\$87,900	\$929,200	82.8%
Contractors	\$212,600	\$124,321.28		May-06	\$96,600	\$1,025,800	91.4%
Training	\$15,000	\$8,771.49		Jun-06	\$96,700	\$1,122,500	100.0%
MV lease	\$26,000	\$15,203.92		Fin year total	\$1,122,500		
IT services & support	\$12,000	\$7,017.19					
Term maintenance	\$10,000	\$5,847.66					
Rental	\$64,000	\$37,425.03					
Electricity	\$7,000	\$4,093.36					
	\$1,122,500	\$656,400.00					

Table A3.3 Electronic Monitoring equipment leasing costs

Item	Rate	No.	Months	Annual cost
Lease of Central Computer Unit	\$95.89 per day	365		\$ 35,000.00
ComSat Support Services	\$44.83 per day	365		\$ 16,363.00
Lease of SMU July 04-June05	\$236.37per unit per mth	45	12	\$ 127,639.80
Lease of SMU Jan 05 - June 05	\$236.37per unit per mth	15	6	\$ 21,273.30
Lease of SMU April 05 - June 05	\$236.37per unit per mth	15	3	\$ 10,636.65
Lease of PID July 04-June05	\$32.72per unit per mth	45	12	\$ 17,668.80
Lease of PID Jan 05-June05	\$32.72per unit per mth	15	6	\$ 2,944.80
Lease of PID Apr 05-June05	\$32.72per unit per mth	15	3	\$ 1,472.40
Lease of FMU July 04-June05	\$32.72per unit per mth	3	12	\$ 3,600.00
Lease of FMU Jan 05-June05	\$32.72per unit per mth	1	6	\$ 600.00
Lease of FMU Apr 05-June05	\$32.72per unit per mth	1	3	\$ 300.00
TOTAL				\$ 237,498.75