The Objective Detainee Classification System

Classification is the process for determining the security level/safety requirements of detainees and for assigning them to juvenile justice centres, programs and custody levels according to safety and security issues, their assessed needs and existing resources.

Following more than two years of research, careful planning, development and testing, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has implemented the Objective Detainee Classification System.

In May 2002, the Department's Executive endorsed the establishment of an interdepartmental steering committee to investigate the development of an objective classification system.

In February 2003, the Director General approved the engagement of the services of Professor James Austin who is the foremost authority on objective classification systems and is Director of the Institute on Crime, Justice, and Corrections at the George Washington University in Washington, DC, US and his associate Dr Garry Coventry, who was a senior lecturer in Criminology at Deakin University.

The objective classification approach was chosen because this system assumes that detainee placement decisions are initially based solely on safety (public, staff and other detainees) considerations. This is particularly relevant to DJJ, as the Department regards safety of detainees and staff equal to the importance of rehabilitation and education of juvenile offenders.

The previous system consisted of A & B classification categories:

- A classification - detainees who committed murder, manslaughter and all sexual assaults and those detainees who committed violent incidents in custody such as staff/detainee assaults, disturbances, escapes with violence (subjectively determined) or more than two escapes in current custodial period.
- B classification – all other detainees

The Objective Detainee Classification System, implemented in December 2004, referred to within DJJ as simply the Classification System, identifies 6 specific categories:

Classification	**Security/Safety requirements**
Unclassified	High / Medium
A1 (o) (offence) and A1 (b) (behaviour)	High

A2	High / Medium
B1	Medium
B2	Low / Medium
B3	Low

Offences of murder, manslaughter, aggravated sexual assaults, acts of terrorism results in a mandatory A1 (o) classification. The Classification System uses locally developed and validated instruments, one at admission (Initial Instrument) and another after a period of detention (Review Instrument). These instruments assign a numerical value to objectively derived criteria and are logically related to detainee classification decisions. Additionally, the instrument incorporates those elements of law and policy that created restrictions related to custody placements. The derived custody rating guides the classification decisions.

The *Initial Classification Instrument (ICI)* performed on newly admitted detainees, scores the severity of current offence, severity and number of prior convictions, history of institutional violence and escapes, drug usage, mental health and community stability factors (Appendix 1).

The *Classification Review Instrument* (CRI) scores the severity of current offences and prior convictions, history of institutional violence and escape, current behaviour in custody including number and severity of incidents and misbehaviours and participation in case planning. A process through which detainees access programs aimed at addressing the offending behaviour (Appendix 2).

With the introduction of the new system, classification rather than case management is now the primary determinant of detainee placement.

It is important to note that the long-term benefit in jurisdictions where objective classification systems have been implemented, the most dramatic impact has been the economic benefits reaped from the ability to place larger proportions of detainees to lower custody levels without jeopardising detainee, staff, or community safety. Such systems have also been recognised as important for planning future facilities and the development of detainee programs.

The DJJ model utilises objective criteria proven by research to be associated with detainee violence and determines the appropriate classification category that is consistent with detainee's threat to the safety and security of the juvenile justice centre, other detainees, staff and self. As such, it is expected that the level of violence, assaults and escapes in juvenile justice centres will be reduced.

Essentially, what distinguishes the new system from the old practice is objectivity versus subjectivity. Under this system, solid research and testing identifies factors that are valid and reliable before they are used to assess a detainee's classification level.

Rather than using subjective judgments this system relies on those explicitly defined and validated criteria. The objective criteria are organised into classification instruments accompanied by operational procedures for applying the instruments to detainee's cases in a systematic way.

Leadership

The DJJ Classification System has received strong support from the top down. This is evidenced through the following actions and documents:

- The Steering Committee was sponsored by the Assistant Director General (Operations) and assigned a dedicated project officer for the duration of the development.
- The Director General approved the engagement of the services of an international consultant, the foremost authority on objective classification systems.
- Implementation featured in DJJ Bulletin (Appendix 3).
- Mentioned in NSW Parliament – "The policy was endorsed by the Department Executive on 27 July 2004".
- Creation of positions to manage and apply the system i.e. a senior Manager and dedicated Classification Officers in each juvenile justice centre
- Submitted to Budget Estimates Committee as departmental strategies to reduce escapes, reduce workers compensation and staff injuries and to manage safety and security in juvenile justice centres (Appendix 4).
- Development of the *Objective Detainee Classification System Policy and Procedures* (Appendix 5).
- Procedures – *Detainee Placement and Relocation (Between Juvenile Justice Centres)* (Appendix 6).
- Inclusion into the Interdepartmental *Risk Management of Detainees and Programs Policy and Procedures* – DJJ/DET
- Inclusion into the *Serious Young Offenders Review Panel* (*SYORP) Policy and Operational Procedures* (Appendix 6).
- Inclusion in the *Framework for Programming Policy.* (Appendix 6)
- Inclusion in the *Policy on the Urinalysis Program.*
- Inclusion in the development of Client Information Management System (CIMS).
- Numerous procedures included in "Procedures for Juvenile Justice Centres Manual" and in forms involving external leave/escorts of detainees for various reasons.
- Included in DJJ Drug Prevention Strategy (Draft) and Transport, Placement and Drug Intelligence Branch overview.
- Executive memorandum 20 April 2006 *Movement Out Procedures – Staff Supervision.*
- Executive memorandum 22 February 2006 *Supervised Community Activities/Outings for Serious Children Indictable Offenders.*
- Classification appears as an agenda item for Centre Manager Meetings (Appendix 7).
- Classification Sub –Committee Winner of the 2005 Director General's Excellence Awards for excellence in implementing effective interventions for young people (Appendix 8).

Internal Audit Bureau (IAB) Services completed a comprehensive enterprise-wide business risk assessment for the DJJ in accordance with the Internal Audit Plan for 2004/2005. (Appendix 9)

The main objective of the project was to:

- identify risks across the Department
- measure and quantify identified risks; and
- identify areas of possible improvement in risk control and risk minimisation.

A secondary objective of the project was to prepare a new Three Year Strategic Audit Plan based on the findings arising from the risk assessment.

DJJ in consultation with the IAB has developed a risk register. One of the risks to the Department not achieving its objectives was identified as “detainees not be classified at the correct security level”. The impact area or implications if this were to happen are:

- Detainee held in inappropriate accommodation
- Unnecessary infringement on rights of detainee
- Escape Risk

To measure and quantify this risk IAB conducted a review of the Classification System at the Baxter, Juniperina, Reiby and Riverina Juvenile Justice Centres during the months of November 2005 to February 2006 (Appendix 10).

The purpose of this review was to provide the Director-General and senior management with independent assessment, advice and suggestions concerning the operation of the recently introduced Classification System for detainees, specifically, to provide an assurance to the DJJ that the recently revised policy on detainee classification meets the policy objectives.

The Classification System utilises other risk assessment tools within the organisation to inform the classification process. These include:

- Intelligence gathered through telephone monitoring providing information on gang affiliations, drug trafficking within the centre and potential to incite disturbances, escapes or assaults on staff or other detainees.
- Random and targeted urine sampling
- Searches conducted using drug detector dogs
- Electronic records of all Incidents
- Alerts Register pertaining to individual detainees
- Records of misbehaviours
- Individual Risk Assessments, Daily logs and Behaviour Observation Records
- Violence Risk Information (VRI)
- The Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument, which identifies potential mental health, behavioural, and substance use problems in need of immediate attention. (MAYSI –2)
- Youth Level Service Inventory – risk of re-offending instrument (YLSI – CMAA)
- Daily Briefings and weekly Client Service Meetings (CSM)

Strategic Planning and Implementation

The Classification System encompasses a number of decision-making points and links risk assessment, programming and case management.

Firstly, case management is the primary organising process for determining interventions to maximise each detainee's capacity and opportunity to choose positive alternatives to offending. This involves assessing, identifying, intervening with and reviewing detainee needs. The case plan outlines the overall intervention for a detainee, including programs to address his or her identified needs. Objective classification linked to case management, is a system of assessing each detainee to determine the level of risk they pose to themselves and others and using this information to ensure program placement is linked to the detainee's level of risk. Furthermore, it assigns detainees to the appropriate indicated level of supervision and intervention.

Programming is another decision-making point. Programming must be planned within the context of classification and case management. The Classification System combined with the case management process facilitates safe program participation by assessing program needs and detainee supervision needs. All detainees are aligned to programs/interventions that match/address their assessed level of risk and take into account individual needs.

Case reviews are the key mechanism for reviewing a detainee's progress in programs, adherence to program goals, their needs and their program requirements. Information from case review feeds back into the classification/reclassification process.

The reclassification process provides incentives for positive behavior and disincentives for negative behavior, thereby holding detainees accountable for their actions in juvenile justice centers, and serving, in part, as an institutional management tool.

Moreover, given that all detainees' progress through a continuum of care, the aim of reclassification together with case management is to prepare detainees for the transition from custody to the community.

Community safety has been enhanced with the introduction of the new Classification System as a detainee cannot participate in leave or outings unless a certain classification level is achieved.

Classification may also prove useful for future planning of DJJ services in the area of therapeutic programs and an increase in specialist staff to address offending behaviour. The Department may also use information gathered from the Classification System when considering the security level of any new accommodation being planned.

As the Objective Detainee Classification System was the first of its kind developed for any Juvenile Justice jurisdiction in Australia there was a comprehensive process in its establishment. A consultant and Project Officer were engaged to develop the system in consultation with a high level Inter-departmental Steering Committee including representatives from the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Corrective Services overseeing the entire process.

Classification is managed (and costed) within the Classification Unit of the Transport, Placement and Drug Intelligence Branch. Positions that were created with the implementation of the Classification System included a Senior Manager (grade 12) and nine Classification Officers (grade 5/6). Three of the nine Classification Officers are employed full time, the other six are part time.

There is one Classification Officer at each of the eight juvenile justice centres and one located at Kariong Juvenile Correctional Centre. The positions are fully resourced through the Branch at each of the Centres where they are located.

The Department's replacement Client Information Management System (CIMS) was being developed concurrently and included specifications for the introduction of the Classification System. In August 2005 CIMS stage 1 was launched and Classification Officers now complete classifications electronically. This allows for a better flow of information and allows for Classification Officers to complete the classifications remotely if required.

Every six months the Classification Team, along with their Manager, meet for a classification meeting. This has taken the form of a meeting on one day and professional development/training on the following day. This meeting is important as it provides Classification Officers with an opportunity to discuss issues around classification refine procedures and coding manuals and discuss legislative, policy and procedure changes as a result of the implementation of the Classification System. This time also allows for team building, which maintains a high level of staff retention and morale within the team.

Data, Measurement and Corporate Knowledge

Both internal and external reviews into a number of serious incidents (including the *Ombudsman's Report, 2000* and the *Interdepartmental Review of Safety and Security Issues, 2001*) found that a meaningful classification system would have minimised the likely occurrence of incidents where staff and detainee safety is placed at risk or where life may be threatened.

The Department had become concerned about the increasingly violent nature of young people coming into custody, the corresponding rise in levels of staff and detainee assaults and events where safety and security were compromised in juvenile justice centres. These concerns reinforced the Executive's commitment to implement an objective classification system that focuses initially on a detainee's threat to the safety and security of staff, other detainees, the public, and the self.

Examination of the previous system identified that DJJ classification was impeded by the legislative provision of only two classes of detainees A and B. In effect, the Department was restricted in how and where it placed detainees with distinct program and management needs. The previous system was reactive to serious events targeting prevention using evidence based predictive indicators. Detainees were previously classified as A if they were on remand for, or had been convicted of, serious children's indictable offences. Detainees were also classified as A if they presented with management problems in juvenile justice centres such as violence towards staff or other

detainees, attempted escapes or escapes, persistent defiance, subversion or abuse towards staff. All other detainees were classified as B.

A restrictive Classification System constrains government in having confidence to place detainees who have committed serious children's indictable offences anywhere but in a maximum-security facility. The single 'A' classification also failed to distinguish detainees with different security risks e.g. a detainee who is high public profile, escape risk or gang member etc.

The Classification Systems main function is to indicate the level of risk a detainee poses to themselves, other detainees, centre staff and the community.

In addition to this, and as a consequence of the process, classification also serves to maintain consistent procedures across NSW juvenile justice centres. The Classification Officers, although located at the centres, are still managed through the Central Support Office (CSO). This allows Classification Officers to pick up on anomalies or deficiencies in information that effects the classifications. This includes reporting of incidents, minor misbehaviours, use of behaviour management plans, provision of specialist services (psychologists etc) and educational/vocational programs.

Classification officers complete a status report monthly and included in that status report are issues Classification Officers recognise with classification procedures, DJJ procedures and any other issues within the centres. This information gives an over view of all issues across the Department within the centres. As the Manager Classification, Transport and Placement compiles these status reports often state wide issues and trends can be bought to the forefront and addressed.

Classification also recognised a need for more categories within the Minor Misbehaviour (MMB)/serious incidents. A change to regulations to include these new categories to MMB/serious incident is occurring (Appendix 11).

When the Classification System was first implemented, Classification Officers trained centre staff and detainees on how the system works, its background and the impact on individual detainees and the centre. Additionally, centre staff were made aware that the information they provided would be used to complete the classifications. This led to a tightening of procedures around reporting serious incidents and minor misbehaviours.

The implementation of the Classification System has identified high needs groups in several community areas across NSW. For example in the Western Region classification identified large numbers of detainee admissions that have required specialist intervention services. Previously this was not detected (if detected at all) until assessments were made, as the former classification system did not look at indicators such as mental health issues and community stability factors.

Since the implementation of the Objective Detainee Classification Policy the corresponding procedures and coding manuals (Appendix 12) have been written and are in use. These tools are particularly important to maintain consistency across all DJJ centres in NSW from individual to individual and to assist new or relief Classification Officers to perform their duties. It should be noted that the Classification Procedures are in draft form. They will be finalised when the Risk Management of Detainees and Programs Policy and Procedures are approved by the Minister of Department of Education and Training (DET).

People

Eight of the nine current Classification Officers were responsible for implementing the Classification System in December 2004. Prior to being trained in classification all nine officers had had extensive experience working in the area of Juvenile Justice and in particular juvenile justice centres. Each Classification Officer has a high level of expertise at accessing legislation and understanding legal issues and mandates. The training for classification was over five days and involved an introduction to the policy and procedures, the interaction with other centre-based policies and procedures and extensive practise at completing the classification instruments.

Classification Officers meet regularly (6 monthly) to discuss issues relating to classification and/or its interaction with other departmental policies and procedures. Additionally, Classification Officers make use of the departmental email system to consider anomalies in particular offences or circumstances surrounding an incident, to concur that other Classification Officers would score these anomalies the same. This assists to maintain consistency and objectivity across NSW.

The Classification Team have a shared folder on the email system where the current classification procedures, coding manuals, instruments and pertinent legal rulings are maintained. They also have high-level access to the CIMS incident database that gives information for all incidents that occur in the NSW juvenile justice centres.

Given that classification relies on information supplied from other departmental staff it is important that they know of this impact and what information is required from them in order for the classification instrument to be scored accurately. Classification Officers initially trained centre staff on how the Classification System worked, its interaction with other procedures and what information is collected that may have an impact on a detainee classification. Training Officers have now taken over that role and train new inductees.

Information about the Classification System is included in the letter to parents advising of an admission to custody and the revised detainee handbook and induction video – *play by the rules* (Appendix 13). Classification Officers at each centre have instigated a process to inform detainees about classification including group sessions as part of the induction program and individual explanation. The impact of classification is particularly reinforced when they are assigned their classification, including opportunity to appeal.

Only Classification Officers and their direct line of management have access to the classification forms on CIMS. Only senior managers with delegated responsibility are able to approve over rides and accept/reject appeals.

Classification Officers consistently apply the classification procedures and use their professional judgment when considering over rides. Only the Manager Classification, Transport and Placement approves over rides. The Assistant Director General (Operations) approves all A1(o) and A1(b) classifications and the Manager approves all A2 class detainees as this may have implications for placements.

If a detainee appeals their classification and there was no over ride used, the Manager Classification, Transport and Placement can consider the appeal. If an over ride is used it is considered by the Director transport, Placements and Drug Intelligence Branch. If there is a further appeal it is considered by Assistant Director General (Operations). The Director General makes final decisions regarding SYORP detainees.

Further to this any complaints to the Official Visitor or the Ombudsman is investigated by the Manager Classification, Transport and Placement.

Risk Assessment and Management Tools

Following is a case study that outlines the process followed in the application of the Classification System. For privacy reasons distinguishing details have been changed and only a selection of classifications have been included over time (Appendix 14).

Communication and Consultation

In July 2002 the Classification Steering Committee was established. This committee included representatives of the DJJ, the Serious Young Offender Review Panel, the Department of Education and Training who operate schools within juvenile justice centres and the Department of Corrective Services who operate an inmate classification system.

A best practice communication strategy was implemented and by September 2003, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee and the Project Officer had briefed staff in all juvenile justice centres about the classification system. By May 2004 this process of conducting communication sessions at each juvenile justice centre had been repeated.

Throughout 2003 and 2004 other stakeholders were also been briefed including the Ombudsman's Office, Department of Education and Training, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, Serious Young Offender Review Panel, Official Visitors and Justice Health. In particular the PSA union was regularly briefed and has been monitoring the system closely since commencement

As part of the implementation of the Classification System in December 2004, Classification Officers provided training to centre staff and existing detainees around the use of and impact of the Classification System on the centres.

Representatives from classification were invited to provide information and feedback on a number of internal procedures and policies that were impacted on, and therefore were required to be revised, following the implementation of the Classification System.

DJJ has a purpose built Client Information Management System (CIMS) which allows role based access to information about detainees. CIMS displays a detainee's current classification to all staff to ensure staff are aware of the level that each detainee should be managed.

The Classification Officers uses CIMS to complete the classification instruments. If any information is not found in CIMS the Classification Officer refers to the D file. At times confirmation is required from the centre counsellors, Justice Health or a Juvenile Justice Officer (JJO) in the community.

Classifications can be completed remotely if the Classification Officer for that centre is not on-site (part-time staff in particular). As centre staff receive training in the Classification System they are able to provide any supporting information required. Once completed the Initial Classification Instrument (ICI) is explained to the detainee and signed. It is then filed in the D file and CIMS is updated electronically.

Classification Officers are required to attend Client Services Meetings (CSM) held weekly in the centres. The CSM is a multidisciplinary team consisting of Assistant Managers, operational and residential unit staff, centre counsellors, Classification Officers and representatives from the DET and Justice Health. At the CSM information is gathered by Classification Officers for the purpose of completing the Classification Review Instrument (CRI). Additionally, Classification Officers inform the CSM of other issues including involvement in incidents that they may have come across while completing the classification.

The Drug Intelligence Unit informs the classification process particularly where over rides may be utilised for known drug suppliers, positive urinalysis, escape risks and gang or racial tension.

When detainees are transferred between centres, the Classification Officers provide information to the receiving CSM through the Classification Officer about any relevant issues concerning a detainee.

As Classifications Officers have examined the available information to assess risk, they also provide information to centre staff about known relationships between detainees if there was an incident during a prior admission. This is important as it may prevent subsequent incidents.

If over rides are being considered by the Classification Officer the Centre Manager is usually consulted and given the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations. The Centre Manager is also able to appeal the classification.

Classification may also trigger a report to be written by centre staff and submitted to SYORP to approve reclassification or grant leave for detainees with particularly serious offences.

The Classification System is a transparent process that can be used to resolve a complaint made to the PSA, the Official Visitor and/or the Ombudsman.

Establishing the Context

The aims of the Objective Detainee Classification Policy are:

- Protection of the community
- Protection of the detainees safety and interest
- Protection of staff and other detainees

- Placement of detainees in least restrictive custodial environment consistent with the detainees risk
- Principles of case management underpin the objective classification system
- To promote rational, consistent and equitable decision making regarding a detainee's classification level.

Across NSW classification informs the placement of detainees based on the security level of the centre. Case management is a secondary consideration in this decision. Classification also determines a detainees access and security requirements for programs, escorted absences, supervised community activities and leave into the community.

On the ICF Detainee X is an A1(b) classification. He will be accommodated in a centre designated as being able to securely house detainees of that classification. He will be placed in a highly structured unit with strict routines and is he is required to leave the centre e.g. Court, funeral or medical purpose, he will be escorted by two DJJ Officers, in a secure vehicle and handcuffed. He does not have access to any community activities e.g. community services or leave (must be B2 or B3 classification to access these) and is only able access low risk level programs within the centre.

Identify Risks

As a Classification Officer completes an ICI (Appendix 1) many risks become evident. As Classification Officers progress through the information required to complete the ICI they consider current and prior offence history (question A, B and E of ICI), past escape history from the Department or Police (question C), past violent incidents in custody (question D), alcohol and other drug use (question F), mental health issues (question G) and community stability factors of educational/work status (question H). MAYSI – 2 may identify areas requiring immediate specialist intervention such as self-harm, serious drug withdrawal or mental health issues including drug induced psychosis. Community stability factors such as being able to attend education or employment are indictors of a lower risk level.

This process is not just a matter of assigning a number on the ICI but serves to form an overall picture of the detainee. It also allows Classification Officers to decide if an over ride may be required.

The CRI (Appendix 2) as well as identifying risk in current and prior offence history (question A and B in CRI), escape (question C) and violence in custody (question D), it also considers negative behaviour in custody (question E and F) and behaviour that promotes positive change (question G and H).

The ICI is graded higher to allow detainees time to settle into custody. Often when a detainee first enters custody they are upset and angry at being there. They also require time to adjust to other detainees on the residential unit. Factors such as AOD use or withdrawal effects their behaviour and medication may be reviewed to stabilise any detainees with a mental health diagnosis.

In the case study shown it is evident that detainee X has had a violent incident in the past (question D of ICI). This suggests that he has the potential to be violent again but given the length of time past without further incidents of violence, the likelihood of him

being violent is reduced. Had the incident occurred more recently then he would be considered more of a risk. This factor would be taken into consideration when reviewing his classification especially if an over ride is required for pre release preparation (Last CRI in Appendix 14).

It is evident that detainee X's prior offending and associated drug and alcohol use is substantial. Both of these factors would indicate a greater risk on admission, however after he withdraws from the drugs and alcohol his risk should lower. His classifications in previous admissions to custody may also indicate the path his behaviour takes as he settles into custody.

Analyse Risks

There are five classification levels, with A1 having two sub levels. Within the Objective Detainee Classification Policy there is a brief description of what characteristics you would expect detainees of each of the classification levels to possess (Appendix 5 pgs 11-14). Additionally there are controls to be implemented for each of the classification levels. The Classification System uses past behaviour to predict future behaviours of detainees. The higher the classification i.e. A1(o), A1(b) and A2, the more likely the detainee will present with challenging behaviours.

Detainee X was an A1(b) on admission and centre staff would expect behaviour similar to that described in the Policy.

Evaluate Risks

As indicated above, the classification of a detainee may determine the centre and the unit where the detainee is accommodated, the security conditions they are managed under for escorted absences, leave or programs. The higher the classification the higher the security placed around that detainee. There are times when decisions are made by Classification Officers and approved by the Manager Classification, Transport and Placement to reduce or increase a detainee's classification for security or case management purposes. If a Classification Officer had evidence that suggested a detainees classification should be higher i.e. positive urinalysis, gang affiliation or current management problem, they could use an over ride to a higher level. In the reverse, if the Classification Officer thought a detainee would benefit by having a lower classification i.e. pre release, and their behaviour and participation in their case plan supported this, then an over ride could be used to reduce the classification. Refer to ICI and CRI over ride checklist and definitions at the back of each coding manual (Appendix 12) they would be used in.

In detainee X's case it is evident that given his history of violence and escape from custody and his high level of offending, he would never achieve lower than a B1 i.e. section A to D on the forms. However it is recognised that all of this behaviour was prior to 2003 and since then he has been stable and participating in case plan goals. Given this scenario, when completing a CRI, the Classification Officer could over ride his classification using the prior good behaviour over ride or pre release preparation depending on length of sentence yet to be served.

Treat Risks

There is a fine balance between the safety and security of staff and detainees and allowing a detainee to participate in programs that would ultimately assist him to re integrate into the community. Previously the Department were very focussed on the best interest of the detainee often allowing detainees to participate in programs without considering the risk that may pose. With the introduction of program risk assessment and the Classification System detainees are now placed in programs appropriate to the risk they pose firstly then according to their case management needs. Controls can be implemented to maintain safety without necessarily taking away the opportunity to participate in programs to facilitate re integration.

Within the classification levels there are built in controls or security requirements to be implemented when required. These are in the areas of placement, external movement, programs/case management, escorted absences and leave (Appendix 5 pgs 11-14).

For example, initially detainee X would be accommodated in a centre that accommodates A1 detainees, in a highly staffed and structured unit with tight consistently applied routines and when on an escorted absence, would be handcuffed and accompanied by two staff. As he progressed and his classification decreased the security around placement and escorted absences would decrease to a less structured program, possibly at a lower classification centre and not wearing handcuffs to finally accessing leave where he is only required to have a supervisor in the community to take responsibility of him.

Under the new Risk *Management of Detainee and Program Policy and Procedures*, detainee X at an A2 classification may only have access to low or medium level programs. If detainee X requested access to a specific program of a high level, which is outside of his classification range, the CSM would need to consider this and make a recommendation to the Centre Manager and DET Principal for approval. If access is granted certain controls may be put in place to increase the level of safety for that program. This could be in the form of increase staff/detainee ratio, limit access to materials used or pre prepared materials are used. It is the classification of the detainee that predetermines the program access range.

Monitor and Review

The Classification System is continually being reviewed and refined. Internally Classification Officers communicate any concerns or rare occurrences and these are discussed and instigate changes to the coding manuals if required. They may be put on the agenda to be discussed at the next Centre Managers and/or classification meeting if further discussion/input needs to occur.

The Classification System was the subject of an audit by the Internal Audit Bureau (IAB) completed in February 2006. This audit recommended some minor changes to the Classification System (Appendix 10).

This application to the TMF awards will provide rigorous and valuable feedback. A consultancy agreement is currently being negotiated to evaluate all classification instruments to ensure the Classification System is achieving its objectives.

Results

The most evident benefit that the Classification System has had to date is the dramatic decrease in number of staff assaults – 58% reduction over past three years. (Graph Appendix 15).

This reduction in staff assaults has led to a corresponding reduction in worker compensation claims and premiums. The Department's 2006/2007 premium reflects a decrease of $1.737m compared to the 2005/2006 financial year. The three-year hindsight refund for 2001/2002 was $3.489m with a projected five-year refund of $1.545m (subject to finalisation by the TMF). Self Insurers Corporation reports indicate new workers compensation claims have decreased from 281 in 2003/2004 to 207 in 2005/2006.

With an increase in safety of staff one would expect a decrease in staff turn-over and associated costs of recruiting and training new staff.

The implementation of the Classification System has contributed to reducing the number of escapes from custody in 2003/2004 from 21 down to 13 in 2005/2006 offering further protection to and meeting the expectations of the community (Appendix 4).

The rigorous testing process and initial classification of existing detainees resulted in adjustments to the classification instruments to reduce over classification and use of overrides.

The validity and integrity of the Classification System is dependent on consistent, reliable, defensible and independently taken decisions. Through the development of standardised tools such as the Coding Manuals, Offence Severity Scale (attached to ICI and CRI coding manuals appendix 12), Disciplinary Matters Scale (attached to CRI coding manual appendix 12) and CIMS, the separate independent staffing structure and carefully planned implementation and monitoring, the impediments associated with implementation have been minimised.

The ongoing commitment to the delivery and improvement of programs through this Department, DET and Justice Health is imperative to ensuring the viability of the Classification System.

Research has suggested that classification systems require evaluation and adjustments regularly as the behaviour and programs within the organisation improve.

The current audit and planned evaluation within the next six months is likely to result in some adjustments to ensure that the instruments and tools remain valid and that risk of complacency does not occur.