



# ***Mental Health Strategies for the Justice System***

Tabled 15 October 2014



## Background

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1–7

- Fifty per cent of the community experience mental illness at some time in life—20 per cent in past year.
- Forty per cent of prison entrants report mental illness.
- Schizophrenia and depression are three to five times more common amongst prisoners.
- Justice, health and human services agencies assist and manage people with mental illness.
- Three mental health plans since 2009—none with a comprehensive framework to improve justice system pathways.



# Audit objective and scope

## Objective

To examine the effectiveness of planning and coordination for mental health across Victoria's criminal justice system.

## Scope

- Each of the key phases of the criminal justice system:

Police  
interventions

Courts  
interventions

Custodial  
interventions

Community  
interventions

- Victoria Police.
- The Magistrates' Court—for which services are now provided by Court Services Victoria.
- Departments of Justice, Health, Human Services.



## Conclusions

- Increasing interactions between people with mental illness and the justice system.
- Justice and health agencies have initiatives to address mental illness, but there are gaps.
- No overarching plan or leadership that focuses on improving outcomes for people with mental illness.
- Agencies are working together, but further collaboration would improve outcomes.
- Unclear responsibility for coordinating agencies, and a lack of accountability for success.

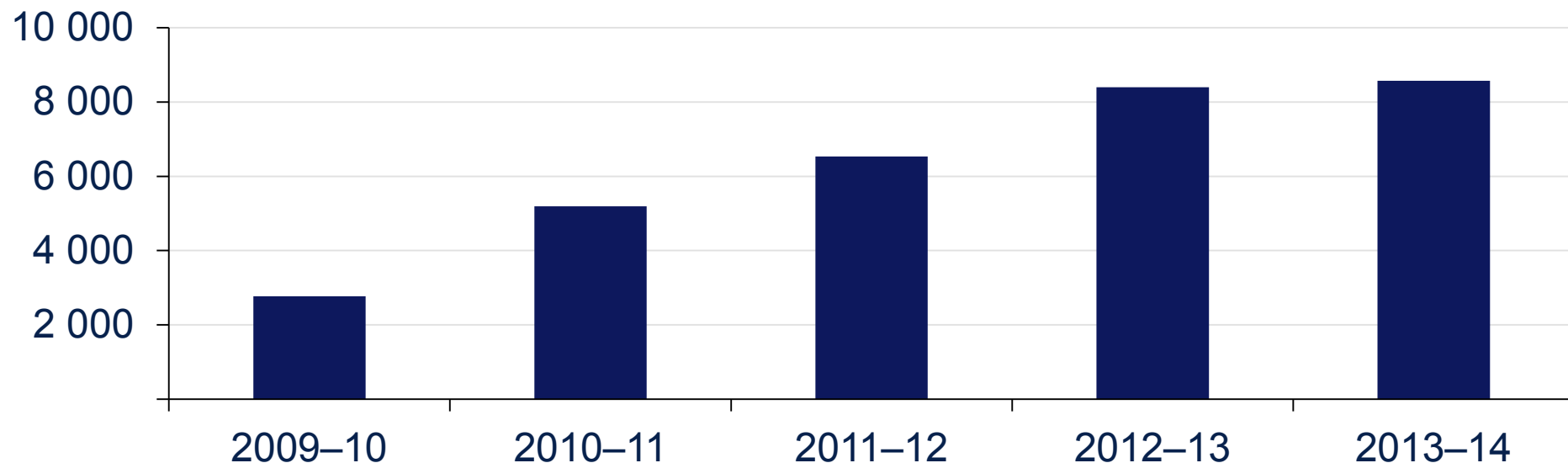


## Key findings – police

- Police incidents tripled 2009–10 to 2013–14.

### Police responses to mental health incidents

#### Number of transfers





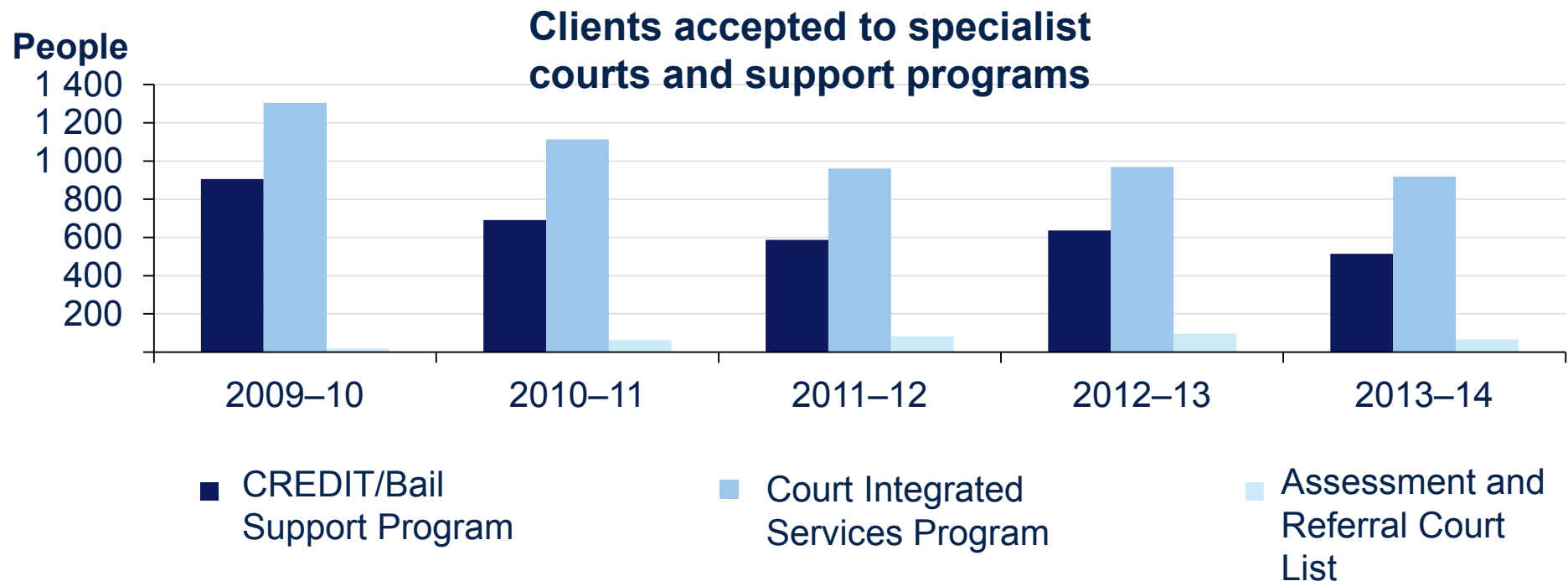
## Key findings – police

- Victoria Police and the Department of Health (DH) developing strategic engagement.
- Attention to governance of local services coordination.



## Key findings – courts

- Mental health courts and programs since 2002.
- Potential to reduce rates of imprisonment
- Client needs becoming more complex meaning fewer can be supported.





## Key findings – courts

- No current plan guiding further development.
- Absence of strategic coordination.
- Opportunities to strengthen existing services.



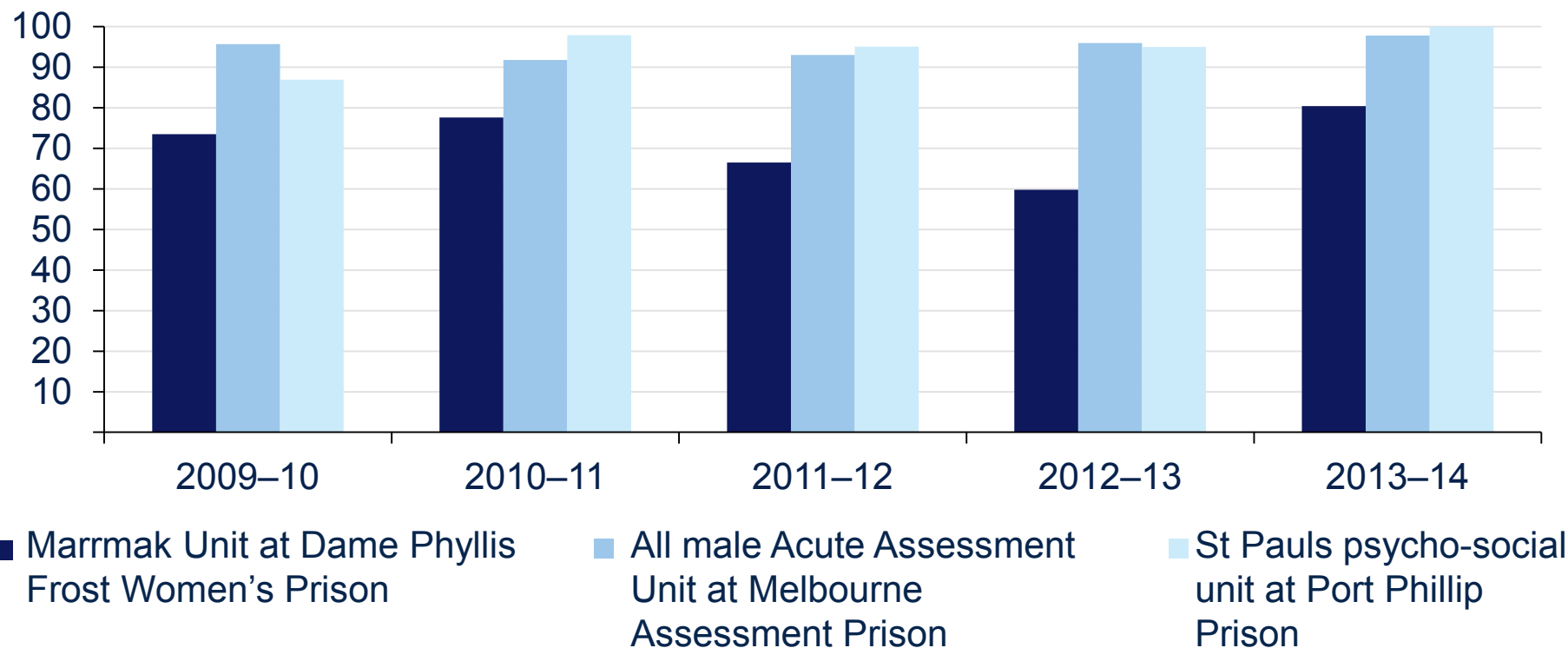


## Key findings – police custody and prison

- Mental health beds have not kept pace with demand.
- Waiting times for Thomas Embling have increased.

Average bed utilisation  
(per cent)

Average utilisation of prison  
mental health beds





## Key findings – police custody and prison

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pages  
29–40

- No integrated plan for mental health.
- Department of Justice (DOJ) and DH are planning.
- Victoria Police not monitoring average time to transfer.



## Key findings – community supervision and post-release

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40–51

- More offenders with high mental health risk under supervision or released.

### Prisoners released with risk rating for mental illness

| Risk rating                                        | 2009–10 | 2013–14 | Increase (per cent) |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| P1 – Serious requires intensive and immediate care | 46      | 67      | 46                  |
| P2 – Significant: requires treatment               | 127     | 119     | -6                  |
| P3 – Stable: requires continuing treatment         | 933     | 1 300   | 39                  |



## Key findings – community supervision and post-release – *continued*

- Support in community can reduce re-offending.
- DOJ, DH and the Department of Human Services not effectively coordinating justice system planning.



## Summary of Recommendations

|                                            |                                                       | Accept |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| That Victoria Police and DH:               |                                                       |        |
| 1.                                         | enhance bilateral arrangements                        | ✓      |
| 2.                                         | improve governance weakness                           | ✓      |
| 3.                                         | update their joint protocol.                          | ✓      |
| That Court Services Victoria:              |                                                       |        |
| 4.                                         | establish a planning framework                        | ✓      |
| 5.                                         | establish strategic relationships.                    | ✓      |
| That Court Services Victoria, DOJ and DHS: |                                                       |        |
| 6.                                         | review the provision of housing and support services. | ✓      |
| That DOJ and the DH:                       |                                                       |        |
| 7.                                         | prepare a joint plan for mental health facilities.    | ✓      |



## Summary of Recommendations – *continued*

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|                                                                    |                                                                      | Accept |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| That DOJ:                                                          |                                                                      |        |
| 8.                                                                 | amends the terms of Joint Management Committee.                      | ✓      |
| That Victoria Police:                                              |                                                                      |        |
| 9.                                                                 | monitors cells holding times.                                        | ✓      |
| That DOJ, DH and DHS:                                              |                                                                      |        |
| 10.                                                                | improve coordination, collaboration and planning                     | ✓      |
| 11.                                                                | review the range of post-release and community corrections programs. | ✓      |
| That DOJ, DH and DHS, Victoria Police and Court Services Victoria: |                                                                      |        |
| 12.                                                                | jointly contribute to the development of a strategy                  | ✓      |
| 13.                                                                | advise about agency roles and responsibilities.                      | ✓      |



## Relevant reports

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- *Responding to Mental Health Crises in the Community*, November 2009.
- *Problem-Solving Approaches to Justice*, April 2011
- *Prison Capacity Planning*, November 2012.
- *Prevention and Management of Drug Use in Prisons*, October 2013.



## Contact details

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