



# Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time

Connect42

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

SGS Planning and Economics acknowledges the First Nations Peoples of Australia and on whose Country we live and work.

SGS Planning and Economics acknowledges that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia are one of the oldest continuing living cultures on Earth, have one of the oldest continuing land tenure systems in the World, and have one of the oldest continuing land use planning and management systems in the World.

We pay our respects to the First Nations Peoples, past and present, and acknowledge their stewardship of Country over thousands of years.

# Contents

Executive summary .....	5
1. Introduction.....	7
1.1 Background.....	7
1.2 Purpose and objectives.....	7
1.3 Report structure .....	7
2. Just Time program context .....	9
2.1 Overview.....	9
2.2 Key figures: 2018 to 2021 .....	9
2.3 Program features.....	11
3. Effects of prison interventions.....	13
3.1 Benefits to parents in the criminal justice system .....	13
3.2 Benefits to children of incarcerated parents .....	19
3.3 Benefits to society .....	20
3.4 Evidence from stakeholder engagement.....	21
4. SROI of Just Time .....	22
4.1 Method.....	22
4.2 Costs and benefits .....	26
4.3 SROI results.....	30
4.4 Summary and conclusions .....	33

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Method detail for monetising benefits .....	34
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# Executive summary

SGS was engaged to undertake a retrospective analysis of Just Time, a program for parents living in prison, to support a clear and robust statement of benefits through an economic lens.

Since its inception in 2014, Just Time has garnered wide esteem for empowering incarcerated parents and caregivers with the tools for secure relationship-building with their children.

Delivered in Tasmania's Risdon Prison by the not-for-profit, non-government organisation Connect42, Just Time embodies a human and dignified approach to supporting incarcerated parents forge healthier attachments with their children, their peers, and the broader community. The program combines the internationally renowned Circle of Security (CoS) Parenting<sup>1</sup> model, delivery by speech pathologists, and Connect42's expertise as a purpose driven not-for-profit organisation that works with people to create positive connections through language, literacy and love.<sup>2</sup>

Between 2018 and 2021, 352 participants enrolled in Just Time, of which 224 completed the program. The number of enrolled participants each year has grown 35 per cent from 97 to 131 between 2019 and 2021, and the average annual completion rate has grown from 55 per cent to 75 per cent over this period. The pandemic and related policies disrupted the delivery of parts of the program, and sometimes resulted in lower participation and completion rates.

In early 2023, SGS undertook a retrospective Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to compare the costs and community benefits associated with the Just Time program as it was delivered 2018 and 2021.

Key social benefits of the program include:

- The avoided costs of social harms, specifically from alcohol, tobacco and other drug use,
- The benefits of improved mental health in parents (the program participants),
- The improved employment outcomes to parents,
- The improved lifetime earnings of children of parents who participate in Just Time, and
- Reduced rates of reoffending and associated societal costs.

Other benefits, not quantified, include:

- Enhanced social networks upon reintegration in society,
- Improved self-worth, and
- Improved relational trust.

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<sup>1</sup> Circle of Security International (2022), Resources for Parents, <https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

<sup>2</sup> Connect42 (2022), About Us, <https://connect42.org/>

Our modelling indicates that the Just Time program yields significant welfare benefits in Tasmania, generating a benefits to cost ratio (BCR) of 3.23 and a net present value (NPV) of \$1.23 million. For every dollar invested in the program, \$3.23 of benefits are returned to the wider community.

Projects with a BCR above 1 and a NPV above zero are considered viable from a welfare economics perspective based on a comparison of monetised social, economic and environmental costs and benefits.

Just Time is a robust investment that continues to return positive performance indicators. Just Time continues to perform well under scenarios of a lower (4%) and higher (10%) discount rates, and even when a +/- 25% buffer in both costs and benefits is introduced.

The key beneficiaries of Just Time are (formerly) incarcerated parents, their children, and society as a whole. It is important to note the program Just Time:

- **Embodies a human and dignified approach to supporting incarcerated parents forge healthier attachments with their children, their peers, and the broader community.** Participants reported more positive behaviours in their day-to-day lives, greater self-belief in their own progress outside of the prison context, and an improved ability to cope with challenges.
- **Has a reach where the benefits extend far beyond the beneficiary groups of parents and their children.** Just Time relies on the support of facilitators, volunteers and Tasmanian Prison Service personnel to embed program concepts, communication skills and, most importantly, relational trust between all stakeholders. In doing so, every individual partakes in the rehabilitative and restorative process. Participants reported that facilitators offered unwavering support and often go above and beyond to help in the transition to community after life in prison.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Since its inception in 2014, Just Time has garnered wide esteem for empowering incarcerated parents and caregivers with the tools for secure relationship-building with child.

Delivered in Tasmania's Risdon Prison by the not-for-profit, non-government organisation Connect42, Just Time embodies a human and dignified approach to supporting incarcerated parents forge healthier attachments with their children, their peers, and the broader community. The program combines the internationally renowned Circle of Security (CoS) Parenting<sup>3</sup> model, delivery by speech pathologists, and Connect42's expertise as a purpose driven not-for-profit organisation that works with people to create positive connections through language, literacy and love.<sup>4</sup>

To date, Just Time has graduated hundreds of parents in prison. As citizens returning to society, they are supported to grow the bonds of love and positive emotion with others.<sup>5</sup>

It is well-established that, compared to the general population, the Australian prison population is disproportionately characterised by disadvantage, marginalisation, and diminished access to the relationships that drive meaningful communication. Just Time responds by equipping parents in prison with the tools for secure attachment as a means of disrupting the cycle of crime and reoffending.

## 1.2 Purpose and objectives

SGS was engaged by Connect42 to undertake a retrospective Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of Just Time for the period between 2018 and 2021. The objective is to quantify the social and economic returns of Just Time to bolster the rationale for continued public and private investment. Our analysis implements a robust method to ensure that study results are suitable for incorporation into business cases and funding applications.

## 1.3 Report structure

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 summarises the program and policy context of Just Time,
- Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the effects of prison programs on incarcerated parents, their children, and society, and
- Chapter 4 introduces the SROI method, analytical framework, and presents the analysis results.

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<sup>3</sup> Circle of Security International (2022), Resources for Parents, <https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

<sup>4</sup> Connect42 (2022), About Us, <https://connect42.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Connect42 (2022), Just Time, <https://connect42.org/just-time>

**A note about terminology**

This report uses 'welfare benefits' to describe the collective social, economic, and environmental dividends to society. The term derives from the field of welfare economics, which is concerned with how market structures and the allocation of goods and resources in the community determine the overall wellbeing of society. The use of 'welfare' in this study is distinct from its commonplace application to describe services and payments to people and households in response to employment, housing, family support, or other need.



## 2. Just Time program context

This chapter summarises the policy and program context of Just Time as background to the economic appraisal.

### 2.1 Overview

Since 2014, Just Time has attracted wide esteem for empowering incarcerated parents and caregivers with the tools for secure relationship-building with their children. The program has grown considerably in scale, from being championed and delivered by Connect42, initially on a wholly voluntary basis in 2014, to its present-day attendance throughout the year by inmates living in Risdon Prison.

Just Time is grounded in the CoS model of intervention, backed by decades of research on the value of secure attachment. Nonetheless, the program has necessarily and gradually evolved to incorporate program learnings and feedback. This is so that delivery is tailored to the diverse needs of the men and women living at Risdon Prison, located in Risdon Vale near Hobart, Tasmania, and operated by the Tasmania Prison Service (TPS), an agency of the Tasmanian Government's Department of Justice.

In addition to Just Time, Connect42 also administers a suite of complementary programs that provide relationship-based support for men and women in and exiting prison. These have included the Just Sentences<sup>6</sup> literacy program and also now include the Just Moving On<sup>7</sup> throughcare program. Therefore program continuity over the last decade and the longstanding partnership between Connect42, TPS and other proponents are a major asset for continued success.

More broadly, independent evaluation<sup>8</sup> and stakeholder feedback also indicates alignment between Just Time and the mission of the TPS, which is to provide a safe, secure and constructive environment for prisoners that encourages rehabilitative prospects, personal development and safer communities.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2 Key figures: 2018 to 2021

Between 2018 and 2021, 352 participants enrolled in Just Time, of which 224 completed the program.<sup>10</sup> These figures include a small proportion of prisoners who repeat the program, either to make up for earlier non-completion or to refresh their knowledge. Discontinuation of Just Time generally coincides with the following factors: participants exiting prison before program conclusion, the disruptions

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<sup>6</sup> Connect42 (2023), 'Just Sentences', <https://connect42.org/just-sentences>

<sup>7</sup> Connect42 (2023), 'Just Moving On', <https://connect42.org/just-moving-on>

<sup>8</sup> Reid, Burton & White (2019) Connect42's Just Time Program Evaluation Report.

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf). A desktop study of the impact of *Just Time* upon recidivism and prisoner outcomes is also underway.

<sup>9</sup> Tasmanian Department of Justice (undated), 'Vision and Purpose', <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/prisonservice/about>

<sup>10</sup> Summary figures calculated from Just Time Quarterly Reports (unpublished) for the period 2018-2021, supplied to SGS by Connect42.

imposed by the evolving coronavirus pandemic from 2020, and/or competing commitments in prisoners' activity schedules. Just Time completion rates per cycle varied between 44 per cent and 79 per cent, averaging 64 per cent across the study period (Table 1). The number of enrolled participants each year has grown 35 per cent from 97 to 131 between 2019 and 2021, and the average annual completion rate has grown from 55 per cent to 75 per cent over this period.

**TABLE 1: JUST TIME PARTICIPANTS, CYCLES 1-15, 2018-21**

Year	Cycle	# participants commencing	# participants completing	Completion rate <sup>^</sup>
2018	1	18	10	55%
2019	2	18	13	72%
	3	18	8	44%
	4	33	20	61%
	5	28	13	46%
2020	6*	24	14	58%
	7*	23	13	57%
	8**	16	11	69%
	9**	21	12	57%
	10**	22	12	55%
2021	11**	29	23	79%
	12**	25	19	76%
	13**	30	21	70%
	14**	20	14	70%
	15**	27	21	78%
<b>Total</b>		<b>352</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>64%</b>

Source: Collated from Just Time Quarterly Reports (Connect42, 2018-21). MHWP = Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison; RBMSP = Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison; RPC = Risdon Prison Complex. \*Denotes cycles significantly disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. \*\*Denotes cycles whose delivery was adapted to the changing circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic. ^Excludes partial completions.

15 cycles were funded under three delivery agreements (established in October 2018, April 2020 and January 2021) between Connect42 and the Tasmanian Government.

In August 2021, additional government funding of \$1.5 million was committed toward rehabilitation programs under the Tasmanian Department of Justice's Reduce Re-offending Program. Almost \$610,000 over the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years was allocated for Just Time.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Tasmanian Government (2021), 'Continuing the focus on rehabilitation for our State's Corrections system', [https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/budget\\_2021/budget\\_releases/continuing\\_the\\_focus\\_on\\_rehabilitation\\_for\\_our\\_state\\_s\\_corrections\\_system](https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/budget_2021/budget_releases/continuing_the_focus_on_rehabilitation_for_our_state_s_corrections_system)

## 2.3 Program features

### Service delivery model

At present, Just Time operates with Tasmanian government funding under a model that contracts Connect42 to administer the program. Just Time facilitators are accredited speech pathologists working for Speech Pathology Tasmania. All facilitators receive training in the CoSP program by CoS International,<sup>12</sup> a TPS induction as preparation for prison attendance, and ongoing support from a Just Time Clinical Manager and Liaison Manager.

In earlier cycles 1-3 of Just Time (running from late 2018 to early 2019), speech pathologists who were trained by CoS International but who had yet to deliver the program in the prison context held the role of volunteer. This helped to train prospective facilitators, who would observe delivery under the guidance of a more experienced facilitator.<sup>13</sup>

The role of Just Time volunteers has since shifted. Notable community figures are now invited to volunteer to carry out several functions, such as transporting teaching aides, note-taking, preparation of morning or afternoon tea, and providing session feedback. This is with the aim of designing the Just Time experience to cue the innate universality of the parent-child relationship as a basis for other connections, no matter the many (in)visible barriers between the 'general' and prison populations:

*'Another early motivating variable...is the intentional engagement of highly influential volunteers into the program. I drew on my networks to invite many persons who have their hands on the levers of power and voices on the airwaves of influence, to participate with us in the prison-based circles. This included the Tasmanian Governor, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Children's Commissioner, ABC radio presenters and other journalists, law professors, human rights activists, politicians and emerging politicians, leaders of social-change organisations, senior bureaucrats from within justice and communities, practitioners within employment agencies, donors, sponsors, and business influencers.'*

*The intention in inviting these people to participate was/is to give them a powerful embodied experience of the forging of positive, trustful relationship across diverse life experiences, and within the rigid context of the prison. These simultaneous yet contrasting experiences counterpoint each other in ways that cause the invited participant to reflect newly and deeply. And to take some of their reflections, and thereby changed selves, back into their lives, dinner parties and influential workplaces. The invited participants' positive experiences in attending the program with the prisoners and facilitators, energises their renewed and 'lived' flow of insights and hope, into extant cultural narratives - for paradigm change. These participants gain new insights about restoration, redemption, punishment, humanisation of prisoners, equity of human dignity, equity of opportunity, the agency of oral language and literacy, possibility, hope, the damaging reality of structural violence and disempowerment, and so much more. Through the influences of their lives, these insights in our invited participants contribute to reform of society's response to crime in ways that will help to create flourishing for both individuals and communities.'*

Rosalie Martin, Founder of Connect42 and Just Time Facilitator

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<sup>12</sup> CoS International (2022), Circle of Security International – Company History, <https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/about/company-history/>

<sup>13</sup> Reid, Burton & White (2019) Connect42's Just Time Program Evaluation Report. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf)

## Delivery structure and format

Just Time consists of the CoSP DVD Program<sup>®</sup>, an 8-week program of attachment, relationship and wellbeing. In week 1, facilitators interview potential participants. This is not part of the main CoSP content; instead, it serves to introduce the program, provide opportunity to better understand prisoners' communication skills and to address any concerns.<sup>13</sup>

From weeks 2 to 8, participants partake in weekly, two-hour sessions that combine CoSP video content, guided reflections and discussions. Just Time is designed to support interactivity and shared dialogue by providing a safe space for expression and communication, however, participants are invited but not obligated to share responses. Rather, self-reflection is key.

In week 9, a graduation ceremony is held to mark successful program completion. This event is typically attended by special guests invited by Connect42.

Just Time is delivered in person. As experienced by many other close contact settings in 2020 and 2021, several cycles of Just Time were either significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic or faced logistical challenges in adapting to the changing circumstances of pandemic management and recovery. On some occasions, this led to lower than anticipated completion rates, for example where sessions were cancelled or not delivered per their intended design.<sup>14</sup>

## Delivery setting

Each of the 15 cycles between 2018 and 2021 were delivered in three facilities at Risdon Prison:

- The Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison for female prisoners of all security classifications,
- The Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison for male prisoners, and
- The Risdon Prison Complex for male prisoners of medium and maximum security classification.

In time, there is potential for the program to be rolled out to other parts of the prison per recommendation 4 of the University of Tasmania's Just Time Evaluation Report (2019).<sup>15</sup>

## Eligibility and enrolment

There are no eligibility requirements for Just Time, apart from being based in one of the three facilities at which the program is delivered.

Just Time enrolment is largely attributable to several drivers: word of mouth recommendations from previous participants, promotional material placed on notice boards and in the prison bulletin, and through a recommendation for candidature by TPS staff. A proportion of prisoners also repeat the program, either to pick up from where they left off or to refresh their knowledge of CoSP concepts.

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<sup>14</sup> This was the reason provided for 0 of 4 participants completing Cycle 7 in Risdon Prison Complex in 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Reid, Burton & White (2019) Connect42's Just Time Program Evaluation Report.

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf)

## 3. Effects of prison interventions

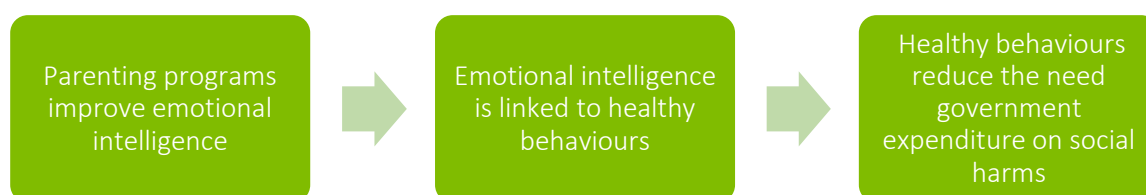
SGS undertook a literature review to investigate how prison-based rehabilitation programs benefit three primary stakeholder groups: incarcerated parents, their children, and society.

In responding to a research gap on the links between prison-based COSP program delivery and wider social and economic benefits, this study compiles evidence from the literature on several elements that motivate program investment: benefits to parents who attend the COSP program, parent-child attachment as a foundation for healthy childhood development, and the link between language, literacy and positive interpersonal behaviours throughout life.

By considering the 'logic' of each benefit below, this chapter provides the evidence underpinning the analytical framework in Chapter 4.

### 3.1 Benefits to parents in the criminal justice system

#### 3.1.1 Avoided costs of social harms



The literature shows a significant positive link between prison-based parenting programs and parents' emotional intelligence. Across a range of program types, methodological bases, and contact time with attendees, participants experienced improved attitudes toward parenting,<sup>16</sup> increased empathy<sup>17</sup> and self-understanding,<sup>18</sup> and better understanding of child behaviours.<sup>19</sup> Evaluations of the COSP program

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<sup>16</sup> Kennon, S. S., Mackintosh, V. H., & Myers, B. J. (2009). Parenting education for incarcerated mothers. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 10-30.

<sup>17</sup> Simmons, C., Noble, A., & Nieto, M. (2013). Friends outside's positive parenting for incarcerated parents: An evaluation. *Corrections Today*, 74(6), 45-48. ISSN:01902563

<sup>18</sup> Bell, L. G., & Cornwell, C. S. (2015). Evaluation of a family wellness course for persons in prison. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 66(1), 45-57. ISSN:07402708

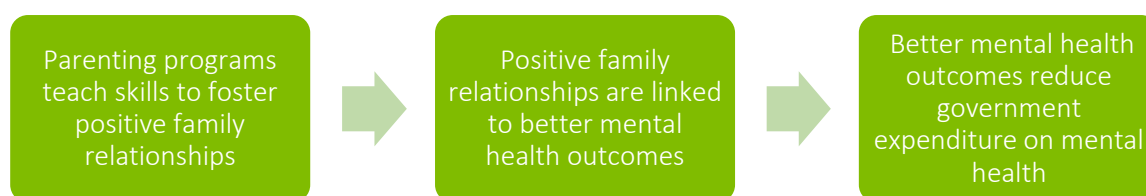
<sup>19</sup> Rossiter, C., Power, T., Fowler, C., Jackson, D., Hyslop, D., & Dawson, A. (2015). Mothering at a distance: what incarcerated mothers value about a parenting programme. *Contemporary Nurse*, 50(2-3), 238-255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10376178.2015.1105108>

have also demonstrated large improvements in caregiving behaviours maintained at one-year follow up,<sup>20</sup> although the range of effects and their longevity may vary with program design and duration.<sup>21</sup>

Emotional intelligence refers to a person's 'self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills at appropriate times and ways in sufficient frequency to be effective in the situation'.<sup>22</sup> Research shows that having higher emotional intelligence reduces one's physical and psychological health risk behaviours across the life course, such as drug and alcohol dependence, poor relations with friends, poor diet and exercise.<sup>23</sup>

The welfare-economic case for improving population health is clear. Public health policy has long recognised that many leading causes of death and disability arise from largely preventable risk factors, and that 'addressing those risk factors is an efficient use of governments' money'.<sup>24</sup> Recent estimates place the economic impacts of alcohol use in Australia at \$66.8 billion, \$4.5 billion for cannabis use, and \$5 billion for methamphetamine use, derived from the costs of premature death, lost quality of life, and workplace costs and absenteeism.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.1.2 Improved mental health



Similarly, studies show that prison-based parenting programs have positive effects on family relationships and parenting capacities. Studies into the effectiveness of a 20-week intensive CoS program have found that parents experienced decreased levels of caregiver helplessness,<sup>26</sup> negative emotions and rejection towards the child.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Huber, A., McMahon, C. A., & Sweller, N. (2015). Efficacy of the 20-week circle of security intervention: Changes in caregiver reflective functioning, representations, and child attachment in an Australian clinical sample. *Infant mental health journal, 36*(6), 556-574.

<sup>21</sup> McMahon, C., Huber, A., Kohlhoff, J., & Camberis, A. L. (2017). Does training in the Circle of Security framework increase relational understanding in infant/child and family workers?. *Infant mental health journal, 38*(5), 658-668.

<sup>22</sup> Boyatzis, R. E., Goleman, D., & Rhee, K. (2000). Clustering competence in emotional intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI). *Handbook of emotional intelligence, 99*(6), 343-362.

<sup>23</sup> Brackett, M. A., Mayer, J. D., & Warner, R. M. (2004). Emotional intelligence and its relation to everyday behaviour. *Personality and Individual Differences, 36*(6), 1387-1402.; Saklofske, D. H., Austin, E. J., Galloway, J., & Davidson, K. (2007). Individual difference correlates of health-related behaviours: Preliminary evidence for links between emotional intelligence and coping. *Personality and individual differences, 42*(3), 491-502.

<sup>24</sup> World Health Organization. (2015). *Promoting Health, Preventing Disease the Economic Case: The Economic Case*. OECD Publishing.

<sup>25</sup> AIHW (2022), Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia: Economic impacts, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/impacts/economic-impacts>

<sup>26</sup> Huber, A. McMahon, C., & Sweller, N. (2015). Improved child behavioural and emotional functioning after Circle of Security 20-week intervention. *Attachment & Human Development, 17*(6), 547-569.

<sup>27</sup> Kohlhoff, J. Stein, M. Ha, M., Mejaha, K. (2016). The Circle of Security Parenting (COS-P) intervention: pilot evaluation. *Australian Journal of Child and Family Health Nursing*.

Access to a ‘positive’ environment in which one enjoys stable and harmonious family relationships is linked to better mental health outcomes.<sup>28</sup> For example, a 2016 survey of Victorian parents found that parents’ mental health was positively associated with receiving understanding and support from a partner or other caregiver, as well as satisfaction with how parenting duties were shared and their confidence in parenting.<sup>29</sup>

Poor population mental health results in a range of direct and indirect economic implications for individuals and governments: lower productivity, higher welfare payments, lost taxes, and health system burden. Therefore the ‘avoided costs’ method may be applied to monetise the economic value of improving mental health outcomes.

In 2019-20, \$11 billion or 7.6 per cent of government health expenditure in Australia was spent on mental health related services; equivalent to \$431 per capita.<sup>30</sup> In 2019-20, the Tasmanian government spent \$136.9 million on specialised mental health services, or \$253.59 per capita. In terms of hospital care, a report from 2011 estimated the cost of one night in an Australian mental health facility to be \$1,745.<sup>31</sup> This represents a cost of \$2,099 in 2021 (after adjusted for inflation).<sup>32</sup>

### 3.1.3 Improved earning potential



Speech language pathologists play a key role in literacy development and functional communication needs, combining expertise in language development, language acquisition and diagnostic-prescriptive approaches to assessment and intervention.<sup>33</sup> Unlike the Just Sentences program, improving literacy is not the primary objective of Just Time. However, evidence from the literature suggests that many features of Just Time delivery – facilitated by an accredited speech pathologist, a small-group peer to peer discussions, reflective dialogue – may nonetheless lay the foundations for improved literacy.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Torres-Soto, N.Y., Corral-Verdugo, V. Corral-Frías, N.S. (2022). The relationship between self-care, positive family environment, and human wellbeing. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Millward, C. Matthews, J. Wade, C. Forbes, F., & Seward, A. (2018). Parent mental health Research Brief. *Parenting Research Centre*.

<sup>30</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). *Expenditure on mental health services*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/030bb981-9de2-4520-8831-d9dfff1f6c4a/Expenditure-on-mental-health-related-services-2019-20.pdf.aspx>

<sup>31</sup> MacKenzie, D. Flatau, P. Steen, A., & Thielking, M. (2016). The cost of youth homelessness in Australia.

<sup>32</sup> Reserve Bank of Australia. (2023). *Inflation Calculator*. <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html>

<sup>33</sup> Spracher, M. M. (2000). Learning about literacy: SLPs play key role in reading, writing. *The ASHA Leader*, 5(8), 1-19.

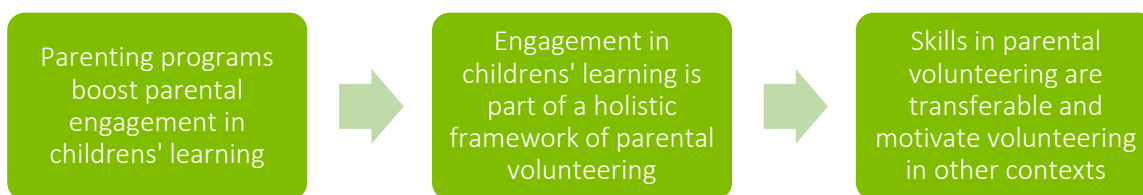
<sup>34</sup> Bennett, J., Hogarth, S., Lubben, F., Campbell, B., & Robinson, A. (2010). Talking science: The research evidence on the use of small group discussions in science teaching. *International Journal of Science Education*, 32(1), 69-95.

Literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning is particularly important for vulnerable populations who have been ‘excluded from or failed to acquire basic competencies through formal schooling’.<sup>35</sup> The Australian prison population has lower levels of educational attainment and a higher prevalence of learning difficulties compared to the general population.<sup>36</sup> Two per cent of Australian prisoners have not had formal schooling, while more than a third have not completed secondary education beyond Year 8.<sup>37</sup>

Work is already underway to ensure that Just Time attendees with lower literacy levels are supported in their ability to effectively and meaningfully participate in sessions and to achieve desired outcomes. This is in response to a 2019 evaluation of Just Time, which recommended pre-program literacy checks, modifying program materials to suit comprehension levels, and strategies for encouraging participants to ask questions.<sup>38</sup>

Literacy, numeracy and educational attainment are widely recognised determinants of labour market and economic success.<sup>39</sup> Econometric modelling in the Australian context estimates that an increase in one skill level<sup>40</sup> in literacy is associated with an increased probability of employment of 2.4 and 4.3 percentage points for men and women respectively.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, studies have calculated average Australian wage rates by literacy skill level and gender.<sup>42</sup> This report applies these metrics to the data assess the benefit of improved literacy skill level that may be achieved from Just Time participation.

### 3.1.4 Higher propensity for volunteering



<sup>35</sup> Hanemann, U. (2015). Lifelong literacy: Some trends and issues in conceptualising and operationalising literacy from a lifelong learning perspective. *International review of education*, 61(3), 295-326.

<sup>36</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Mental Health Services in Australia. (2015). *The health of Australia's prisoners 2015*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/9c42d6f3-2631-4452-b0df-9067fd71e33a/aihw-phe-207.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

<sup>37</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Mental Health Services in Australia. (2019). *Adult prisoners*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/adult-prisoners>

<sup>38</sup> Reid, C., Burton, P., & White, R. Connect42's Just Time Program Evaluation Report 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Chiswick, B. R., Lee, Y. L., & Miller, P. W. (2003). Schooling, literacy, numeracy and labour market success. *Economic Record*, 79(245), 165-181.

<sup>40</sup> Skill level here refers to the OECD's (2013) 5-level classification of literacy skills. A description of each skill or proficiency level is provided in Table 2.2 of Desjardins, R., Thorn, W., Schleicher, A., Quintini, G., Pellizzari, M., Kis, V., & Chung, J. E. (2013). OECD skills outlook 2013: First results from the survey of adult skills. *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 30(7), 1144-1168.

<sup>41</sup> Shomos, A., & Forbes, M. (2014). Literacy and Numeracy Skills and Labour Market Outcomes in Australia, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid



Parenting programs share a common aim to enhance parenting capacity by imparting the tools and techniques that promote positive behaviours and parent-child relationships. Parents who enrol in these programs are typically motivated to help their children succeed, and value their own relationship with others as part of the holistic educational and social development of their children. It is this motivation that also shapes how and why parents become and stay engaged in their childrens' learning.<sup>43</sup>

According to the 'Framework of Six Types of Involvement' developed by Joyce Epstein, volunteering is part of parental involvement, along with parenting, communicating, learning at home and decision making.<sup>44</sup> The framework also considers volunteers to be any parents that can support school goals and childrens' learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time not just during the school day and at the school building.<sup>45</sup> Thus, outside of the school context, the communication and relationship-building outcomes achieved with the learnings from Just Time contribute to the broader context of volunteering and modelling positive behaviours for others.

To quantify the monetary value of volunteering, SGS adopts the leisure time method of the Australian Transport Assessment and Planning Guidelines. All volunteering hours are treated as leisure time and valued at 40 per cent of seasonally adjusted full time Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) for Australia.<sup>46</sup> Data from ABS 2022 shows that AWE for an adult full-time worker is \$1,835.2,<sup>47</sup> or \$48.3/hour, assuming a 38-hour work week. As a result, volunteering is valued at approximately \$19.32/hour.

### 3.1.5 Established social networks on reintegration to society

While included in the discussion here, this benefit is not monetised in the SROI framework. In the absence of established methods, valuation is complex with potentially wide margins of error, and therefore the benefit was not quantified.

Recently released prisoners face a range of social, economic and personal challenges upon their release into the community. As noted earlier, the link between offending and social disadvantage means that upon release from prison, many formerly incarcerated individuals often grapple with poor educational attainment, a lack of employment history, debt, and/or poor mental and physical health.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the period spent in prison to disrupt pre-established social and familial networks, causing former prisoners to lose contact with their children and others in their lives.

During the Just Time program, prisoners have the opportunity to establish relationships of trust with other participants, facilitators, volunteers, and TSP personnel. Post-release, the 2019 program evaluation recommended investigating the feasibility of connecting recently released participants with an external CoSP provider or TPS case worker to facilitate smoother transitions into the community.

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<sup>43</sup> Mapp, K. L. (2003). Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children's learning. *School Community Journal*, 13(1), 35.

<sup>44</sup> Epstein, J. L. (1992). School and Family Partnerships. *Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning*.

<sup>45</sup> Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(9), 701–712.

<sup>46</sup> Australian Transport Assessment and Planning. (2016). Australian Transport Assessment and Planning Guidelines/PV2 Road Parameter Values

<sup>47</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/average-weekly-earnings-australia/may-2022>

<sup>48</sup> Borzycki, M., & Baldry, E. (2003). Promoting integration: the provision of prisoner post-release services. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice*, no. 262. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Such actions may help to break the cycle of reoffending by addressing the predisposing factors to criminal activity and by supporting physical and social needs in prison and via throughcare.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.1.6 Improved sense of self-worth

This benefit is included in the discussion here, but not monetised in the SROI framework. In the absence of established methods, valuation is complex with potentially wide margins of error.

Feedback from Just Time participants indicates that an improved sense of self-worth was a benefit of participating in the program, both as a parent and as a valued member of the community. Consultation with former participants of the program showed clear evidence of improved self-worth and with that, improved relationships with loved ones and neighbours. Additional detail from consultation with Just Time participants is included in section 3.4 below.

### 3.1.7 Improved relational trust

This benefit is not included in the SROI framework as it is considered a flow-on or secondary effect of several other benefits: improved mental health, established social networks on reintegration to society, and improved sense of self-worth. However, the concept of relational trust is outlined here as core to the practices and relational dynamics between parents, caregivers and children that are promoted by Just Time.

Relational trust is based on the belief that ‘the behaviour of another person or a group will be altruistic and personally and professionally beneficial’.<sup>50</sup> Although the concept originated in the educational setting to describe the types of exchanges that occur within the school community,<sup>51</sup> the benefits of relational trust offer useful guidance when designing the pre- and post-release pathways for people exiting prison.

Creating relational trust has many benefits. Through the principles of mutual respect, personal regard, integrity, and confidence in the competence of Just Time facilitators and volunteers, relational trust may help to reduce the sense of risk associated with imminent change<sup>52</sup> and forge a more certain pathway to more constructive social exchanges outside of prison. Within the prison setting, relational trust is shown to be a latent yet powerful element of cohesion between prisoners, whereas declining trust leads to fractured relationships and negative impacts to prisoner wellbeing.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Makkai, T. (2003). Promoting Integration: The Provision of Prisoner Post-release Services.

<sup>50</sup> Charteris, J., Page, A., Anderson, J., & Tomkinson, E. (2020). What is relational trust and how do we foster it in our schools?. *Good Teacher Magazine*.

<sup>51</sup> Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement. *Russell Sage Foundation*.

<sup>52</sup> Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational leadership*, 60(6), 40-45.

<sup>53</sup> Liebling, A. & Arnold, H. (2012). Social relationships between prisoners in a maximum security prison: Violence, faith, and the declining nature of trust. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40(5).

## 3.2 Benefits to children of incarcerated parents

### 3.2.1 Improved lifetime earnings



The quality of a child's attachment relationship with his or her primary caregiver is a key determinant of emotional development.<sup>20</sup> Yet the Australian prison population is disproportionately characterised by disadvantage and diminished access to the relationships that drive meaningful communication. 18 per cent of prison entrants had at least one parent or guardian in prison as a child.<sup>54</sup> Negative externalities often result, such as the 'psychological strain from the separation experience, learnt harmful behaviour or a reduction in household income with subsequent adverse effects on human capital investment'.<sup>55</sup>

Just Time and similar interventions equip participants with the communication skills to nurture a more positive household environment for childhood development. The benefits of healthy childhood development extend far into overall life opportunity, with children more likely to do well at school and earn more as adults.<sup>56</sup>

In the development of cost-benefit analysis framework for non-capital educational initiatives in New South Wales, SGS (2022) has previously estimated that improvements in school performance, measured by test score increases, is associated with a 14 per cent uplift in lifetime earnings for primary school students and a 7 per cent uplift for high school students.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Note that in some cases, imprisonment of a parent or caregiver may afford a degree of protection to the child and other family members, however this statistic demonstrates the adverse intergenerational effects. Productivity Commission (2021), *Australia's Prison Dilemma – Research Paper*, <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/prison-dilemma/prison-dilemma.pdf>

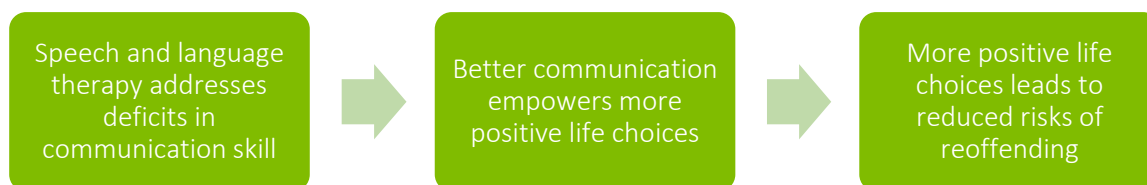
<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Hansen, K. (2016). Early childhood development: A smart investment for life. *The World Bank Blogs*.

<sup>57</sup> SGS Economics and Planning. (2022). 'Cost-benefit analysis framework for non-capital educational initiatives'.

### 3.3 Benefits to society

#### 3.3.1 Reduced recidivism



Studies have found that education and training is positively associated with reduced recidivism. Both the content of the programs (for example: raising literacy levels, programs teaching skills for positive transition to society) and the number of classes completed by prisoners appear to be correlated with improved post-release outcomes.<sup>58</sup> Recidivism within two-years post release for ex-inmates is estimated to be 50.4 per cent in Tasmania in 2022.<sup>59</sup>

A recent economic evaluation of speech pathology interventions for Australians with speech, language and communication needs estimates between \$3,637 and \$7,635 in incremental cost savings per individual for adults at the point of justice custody and who participate in an oral communication intervention.<sup>60</sup> In the UK, the first-year reconviction rate among ex-prisoners who had begun a general education course was moderately lower than the national average, at 28 per cent compared to 44 per cent.<sup>61</sup> Other evidence presented shows a reduction in recidivism of between 4.5 per cent to 23 per cent if an intervention program has taken place<sup>62</sup>.

A reduction in recidivism results in the benefit of avoided costs to the governments. In 2020-2021, Tasmania's real net operating expenditure was \$385 per prisoner per day.<sup>63</sup>

The median length of sentence for Tasmanian inmates of between 5 and 36 months (excluding Homicide and sexual assault)<sup>64</sup>, any reduction in recidivism will have a benefit to the state through lower costs, in addition to the benefits to others as well.

In addition, and this was not monetised, reduced recidivism results in less crime and associated societal costs in terms of damages to assets and goods and health due to harm.

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<sup>58</sup> Giles, M. (2016). Study in prison reduces recidivism and welfare dependence: A case study from Western Australia 2005-2010. *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice*, (514), 1-9. ; Mohammed, H., & Mohamed, W. A. W. (2015). Reducing recidivism rates through vocational education and training. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 204, 272-276.

<sup>59</sup> Productivity Commission (2022) – Report on Government Services 2022 Part C

<sup>60</sup> Dowse, L., Cronin, P., Reeve, R., & Addo, R. (2020). Economic evaluation of the impact of speech pathology services on criminal justice outcomes.

<sup>61</sup> Hartshorne, M. (2006). The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication. *I CAN Talk Series - Issue 2*

<sup>62</sup> Productivity Commission (2021) – Australia's Prisoners Dilemma

<sup>63</sup> Tasmania Prison Service - Department of Justice. (2022). *Budget Estimates Brief*.

[https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF](https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF)

<sup>64</sup> ABS (2021) – Prisoners in Australia – Table 25

### 3.4 Evidence from stakeholder engagement

SGS supplemented the above research with additional consultation. This took the form of 1:1 phone interviews and participation in a cycle of the Just Time program.

#### 3.4.1 CoSP program

At the beginning of this study, Connect42 invited the SGS project team to participate in a cycle of the CoSP program attended by fee-paying members of the community. These sessions took place over 8 weeks between October and December 2022.

While acknowledging the differences in delivery mode and target audiences of Just Time and the sessions attended by SGS team, the experience nonetheless highlighted the richness of the CoSP framework and the role of the facilitator and the group setting in realising program benefits. This experience also provided a valuable frame of reference for subsequent consultation, outlined below.

#### 3.4.2 1:1 interviews

In February 2023, SGS interviewed former participants of Just Time. We are grateful to these individuals who volunteered their time and feedback. 2 interviewees were formerly incarcerated and attended Just Time while in prison, while 1 interviewee was the mother of a former prisoner who upon release participated in a Circle of Security program delivered by a speech pathologist in community as part of the Just Moving On program.

Several common themes emerged from these conversations. Interviewees said that Just Time:

- Marked an important inflection in their self-belief, and that they would be a different parent if not for the program,
- Enabled their discovery of the ‘possibilities for a different life’,
- Renewed their motivation and drive to seek out positive social influences and to make better life choices,
- Improved their relationships with family members and neighbours, and
- Gave them the courage to face day to day stresses head-on.

It was also clear from speaking to these individuals that the Just Time facilitator was a critical enabler of many program benefits. Volunteers were grateful for their facilitators being on hand to offer practical advice on making friends, resolving grievances, and fostering healthy behaviours.

Some paraphrased comments made by the interviewees included:

- ‘I wouldn’t know where I would be without her (the facilitator). I’ve been three years out of jail now.’
- ‘The program provided me the confidence to make friends with the neighbours. I now bring out the rubbish for my elderly neighbours, and she makes lasagna for us for dinner. I would have never thought about doing things like that.’

## 4. SROI of Just Time

To bolster the justification for Just Time investment, SGS undertook a SROI analysis to compare the estimated program costs with the social and community benefits associated with the Just Time program.

**SGS' modelling indicates that the Just Time program yields significant welfare benefits, generating a benefit to cost ratio (BCR) of 3.23 and a net present value (NPV) of \$1.23 million.**

Projects with a BCR above 1 and a NPV above zero are considered economically viable based on the quantification of costs and benefits.

An overview of the method is provided below (section 4.1), followed by an outline of how costs and benefits are monetised (section 4.2), and the results of the analysis (section 4.3). An efficiency assessment and sensitivity analysis are also applied as part of quality assurance and to mitigate bias in the conclusions. Section 4.4 discusses several program costs and benefits not included in the modelling, either because data was not available to enable monetisation or because there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate the independent effect of Just Time on those outcomes. Nonetheless, they are relevant factors in future investment decisions.

### 4.1 Method

SROI analysis is derived from the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) method, a widely used tool for assessing the monetised costs and benefits of a policy, intervention or investment. Compared to CBAs, SROIs typically entail a stronger emphasis on stakeholder engagement to understand first-hand the effects of the investment being analysed, as well as the returns being generated for various stakeholder groups – not just the investor.<sup>65</sup>

The aim of SROI is to determine whether a net benefit to society was, or will be, created. Evaluative SROIs like the present study are conducted retrospectively and reference actual outcomes that have taken place, while forecast SROIs aim to predict social value creation should the program or policy meet its intended outcomes.<sup>66</sup> The Australian Social Values Bank (2018) provides that:

*An SROI is an outcomes-based measurement tool that helps organisations to understand and quantify the social value they are creating...SROI calculates a ratio score which outlines for every dollar invested in the program, how many dollars of social return have been created.*

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<sup>65</sup> Hamelmann C, Turatto F, Then V, Dyakova M. Social return on investment: accounting for value in the context of implementing Health 2020 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2017 (Investment for Health and Development Discussion Paper).

<sup>66</sup> Social Value UK (2012), A guide to Social Return on Investment, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60dc51e3c58aef413ae5c975/t/60f7fa286b9c6a47815bc3b2/1626864196998/Th e-SROI-Guide-2012.pdf>

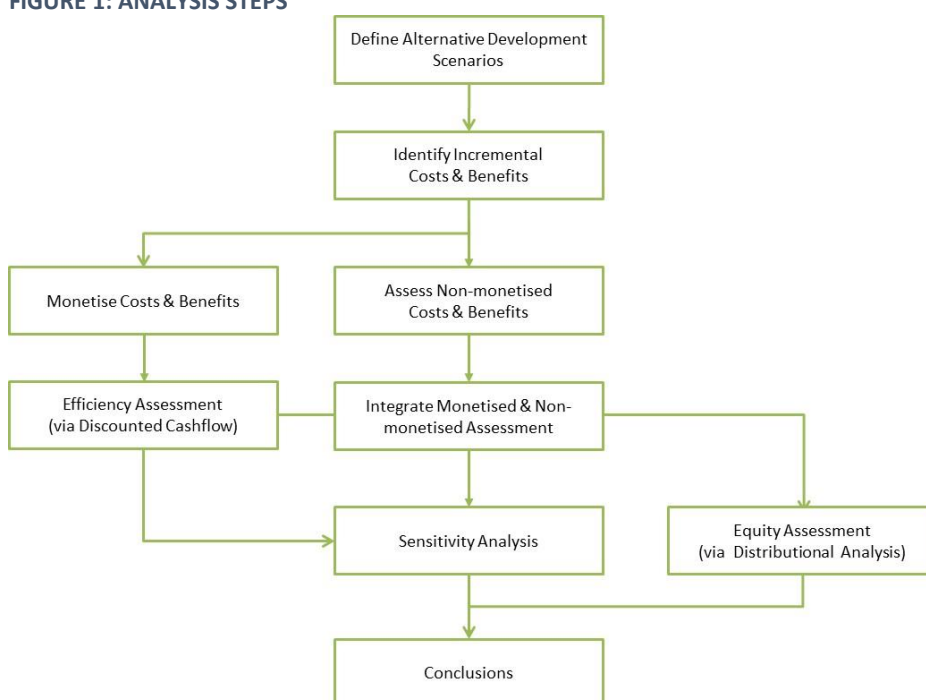
Any ratio where the return is higher than 1:1 is worth doing, but the larger the difference in the ratio in favour of social benefit, the larger your impact has been.<sup>67</sup>

CBAs and related methods are increasingly popular in numerous areas of policy research. Faced with competing investment options, access to a clear and concise statement of cost effectiveness is a powerful tool for policymakers. That is, while the primary purpose of prison intervention programs may not be economic, defensibility on economic grounds is often required. So too has public demand for accountability and transparency in the allocation of government expenditures led to the growing application of CBA and related methods to inform decision-making.

In the field of criminal justice research, there is a relative paucity of Australian case studies investigating the economics of prison programs compared to the work undertaken in the United Kingdom and in the United States.<sup>68</sup> This study therefore contributes to the body of literature on the benefits of rehabilitation within the Tasmanian prison context and the mechanisms by which crime prevention may be mediated through the effects of secure attachment.

The main steps in a CBA/SROI analysis are summarised in Figure 1. The first step involves scoping the analysis to identify which options are being compared. In this analysis, the base or reference case is where incarcerated parents do not participate in Just Time before they exit prison. Under the project case, incarcerated parents attend a cycle of Just Time during their time in prison.

**FIGURE 1: ANALYSIS STEPS**



Source: SGS (2022)

<sup>67</sup> Australian Social Values Bank (2018), 'CBA vs SROI – Which is the better social impact measurement approach?', [https://asvb.com.au/2018/12/11/cost\\_benefit\\_analysis\\_vs\\_sroi/#:~:text=CBA%20is%20the%20oldest%20and,stakeholders%20in%20the%20measurement%20process](https://asvb.com.au/2018/12/11/cost_benefit_analysis_vs_sroi/#:~:text=CBA%20is%20the%20oldest%20and,stakeholders%20in%20the%20measurement%20process).

<sup>68</sup> Dossetor, K. (2011). *Cost-benefit analysis and its application to crime prevention and criminal justice research*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Next, costs and benefits are identified and monetised where possible. Direct costs incurred through program implementation are generally straightforward, however other cost elements may also need to be included. These include indirect (e.g. when programs run after hours and incur additional overhead in utilities; venue hire), intangible (i.e. costs lacking direct market value) and opportunity costs (i.e. the loss of other opportunity through the pursuit of the investment being analysed).

Determining and monetising the benefits of a program is commonly regarded as the most difficult step in the analysis,<sup>68</sup> and there are inherent complexities in ascribing an effect or benefit to a program. Care should be taken to avoid double counting benefits, biases in the valuation technique, and to canvass established evidence of benefits' independent effects.

The efficiency assessment involves adjusting the value of monetised costs and benefits to account for inflation and the time value of money. This step relates to several major features of the CBA, which is to control for differences in comparative monetary value and differences in study periods.<sup>69</sup> A discount rate of 7 per cent is generally accepted. Since discount rates are utilised to account for risk, past costs and benefits do not require discounting. That is, it is only future cashflows that require adjustment for risk and therefore, discounting.

Distributional assessment is undertaken when an intervention is likely to impact population cohorts in different ways. A qualitative description may suffice if disparity in the effect appears low, otherwise an in-depth calculation of the gains and for whom they are concentrated may be required.<sup>70</sup>

Lastly, sensitivity analysis is performed to strengthen the analysis and minimise bias in the conclusions. Sensitivity analysis tests how well the project case withstands changes to certain assumptions or other influencing factors. For example, by lowering or raising the discount rates in the efficiency assessment, or assuming an altered degree of program benefit.

#### **4.1.1 Valuation framework**

The valuation framework is set out in Table 2. It is based on our synthesis of primary and secondary sources:

- The literature review in Chapter 3,
- Established methods for monetising costs and benefits,
- SGS participation in the Just Time program between October and December 2022,
- Interviews facilitated by SGS with Just Moving On participants in February and March 2023
- Viewing of short films (unpublished) commissioned by Connect42 to showcase learner journeys.

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<sup>69</sup> Welsh BC & Farrington DP 2001. Monetary value of preventing crime, in Welsh B, Farrington D & Sherman L (eds), Costs and benefits of preventing crime. Colorado: Westview Press

<sup>70</sup> Australian Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2020), Distributional Analysis: Guidance Note, <https://oia.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/distributional-analysis-guidance-note.pdf>



**TABLE 2: COST AND BENEFIT PARAMETERS IN THE SROI FRAMEWORK**

Costs *		Monetised?
Speech pathologist (facilitator) hours		Y
Administration / Project management		Y
Events, mandatory registrations, sundry		Y
Benefits	Stakeholder group	Monetised?
Avoided costs of social harms	Parent	Y
Improved mental health	Parent	Y
Improved employment outcomes	Parent	Y
Improved lifetime earnings	Child	Y
Reduced recidivism	Society	Y
<i>Higher propensity for volunteering</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Established social networks on reintegration to society</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Improved self-worth</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Net present value</b>		Total benefits less total costs
<b>Benefit-cost ratio</b>		Total benefits / by total costs

Source: SGS (2022). \*Ad hoc and other costs that do not occur under all scenarios and in any event (for example research and program evaluation costs) are excluded to ensure results are representative of the net benefits generated by Just Time delivery in the future.

One-off or ad hoc costs incurred by Connect42 and/or other stakeholders are not included in the framework, for example, working with vulnerable people registrations for facilitators. This is to ensure consistency of costs referenced in the economic appraisal.

The avoided costs of insecure housing are excluded for reasons of double counting, since the cost elements (avoided healthcare costs; avoided domestic and family violence costs) are captured in other benefit categories. Additional program benefits such as established social networks on reintegration to society and parents' improved sense of self-worth are qualitatively discussed at section 4.4. For these benefits, there was either insufficient data to support monetisation, or their independent effect as a program benefit was not clear from the literature.

#### 4.1.2 Key inputs and assumptions

The SROI analysis adopts several key assumptions, specified below:

- **Age of Just Time participants.** For the purposes of this analysis, we assume that participants are aged 18 and over.

- **Number of children of incarcerated parents.** For the purposes of this analysis, we conservatively estimate that, on average, each participant in the program has one child. We note that the benefits of attending Just Time would also extend to additional children of parents living in prison.
- **Scope, content, structure and delivery of Just Time.** This analysis assumes that the substance and quality of program features is consistent across all sessions and cycles.

#### 4.1.3 Limitations

Like any evaluation tool, SROI analysis involves a degree of judgement in the development and application of the analytical framework. To the best of our ability, we have mitigated risks to the representativeness of the results through carefully selecting cost and benefit parameters, applying established methods for monetisation, and taking guidance from SROI best practice regarding model construction and data sources.

## 4.2 Costs and benefits

This section itemises costs, benefits, and their monetisation method.

### 4.2.1 Monetising costs

As outlined in section 4.1.1 Valuation framework, the primary cost categories for modelling are facilitator hours, administration, and events and other costs typically incurred by Just Time delivery. Costings provided by Connect42 have been adjusted for CPI and expressed at the 2023 price level (Table 3).

**TABLE 3: JUST TIME PROGRAM COSTS (IN 2023 DOLLARS)**

Cost category	2018	2019	2020	2021
Project Management		11,156	16,470	16,520
Speech Pathologist hours	41,004	120,483	164,702	112,334
Volunteer hours*	1,584	7,759	6,110	7,660
Connect42 – TPS training			22,399	22,467
Conference and Events			659	661
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,589</b>	<b>139,398</b>	<b>210,340</b>	<b>159,642</b>
<b>Total over evaluation period</b>				<b>551,968</b>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023), compiled from data provided by Connect42. All values have been Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjusted and are expressed in 2023 dollars. \*A cost of \$19.32 per hour is used to estimate the total cost of volunteer hours.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, the total undiscounted program costs are **\$551,968**.

Cost elements are described below:

- Project management – this includes program administration and organisation.
- Speech pathologist / facilitator hours – this is the cost of engaging speech pathologists to facilitate the Just Time program.
- Conference and events – costs associated with the Week 9 graduation ceremony for participants who successfully complete Just Time.

#### 4.2.2 Estimating benefits

This section estimates the value of each benefit on a per program attendance, per annum basis. These values flow into the comparison of costs and benefits in section 4.3.1 and are described below. A more detailed method is provided in Appendix A.

##### Avoided costs of social harm

SGS quantifies the avoided costs of social harms due to Just Time completion at \$159 per participant per annum.

To avoid overlap with other benefit categories, we assume that social harm in the framework refers specifically to the costs of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; a reporting category used by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.<sup>75</sup> The total annual avoided costs of social harms is equivalent to the number of parents in prison who will go on to experience alcohol and other drug use after exiting prison, if not for the healthier behaviours promoted by Just Time, multiplied by the annual social cost of alcohol and other drug use. Please refer to Appendix A for the method detail.

An estimated benefit of \$159 per program attendance per annum is applied annually to 2043 (20 years to 2043, where Year 0 = 2023), to account for the cumulative accrual of benefits to participants.<sup>71</sup> That is, the full benefit of  $224 \times \$159 = \$35,618$  is realised annually between 2021 to 2043, while between the years 2018 to 2020 inclusive. This results in a total avoided social harm of \$851,004 to 2043 (Table 4 in the next section).

##### Avoided costs of poor mental health

SGS quantifies the avoided costs of poor mental health due to Just Time completion at \$70.53 per attendance per annum.

The calculation is based on the number of parents in prison who will go on to experience poor mental health after exiting prison, if not for the improvements to parenting confidence from attending a parenting program, multiplied by the annual cost of poor mental health. The valuation method assumes that prevalence of mental illness in Tasmania is the same as in Australia.

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<sup>71</sup> Refer to Table 1. Based on data from Connect42 on actual attendances, this assumes that in 2018, there were 10 participants, 54 in 2019, 62 in 2020 and 98 in 2021 and a total of 224 participants who are experiencing the benefits for each of the years 2022 and beyond.

The benefit of avoided mental health costs is applied annually to 2043 (20 years to 2043, where Year 0 = 2023), to account for the cumulative accrual of benefits to participants.

That is, the full benefit of  $224 \times \$70.53 = \$15,800$  is realised annually between 2021 to 2043. The total avoided mental health cost is \$377,502 to 2043 (Table 4).

### Improved lifetime earning potential of Just Time participants

SGS quantifies the benefits of Just Time completion at \$1,715 (in 2023 dollars) per program attendance, per annum with respect to parents' improved earnings potential.

The valuation method assumes the following:

- A baseline of 39.5% of former inmates will be employed at 6 months post release,<sup>72</sup>
- Just Time participation increases the probability of employment by 19%,<sup>73</sup>
- The improved earning potential that is attributable to Just Time is strongest immediately after completion and lessens in following years. The method makes a conservative assumption that the benefit is sustained for only 1 year.
- Average weekly hours worked for females working <35 hours is 21.12 hours per week and 20.2 hours per week for males. A weighted average for the calculation below is based on the gender split of Just Time participants: 20.6 hours per week,<sup>74</sup>
- Minimum wage is \$21.38 per hour.<sup>75</sup>

The annual benefit is based on an 'earnings uplift factor' applied to the number of Just Time program completions. This factor is derived from the probability of employment (at 6 months post release) multiplied by the comparative employment advantage of parents who complete Just Time compared to their peers who exit prison without Just Time attendance. The benefit is realised two years after the program was undertaken.

This benefit is 'once-off' for each participant. That is, the benefit is realised once per program completion, in the year of release from prison. This results in a total lifetime earnings benefit of \$384,267 until 2043 (Table 4).

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<sup>72</sup> Cutcher, Z., Degenhardt, L., Alati, R., & Kinner, S. A. (2014). Poor health and social outcomes for ex-prisoners with a history of mental disorder: a longitudinal study. *Australian and New Zealand journal of public health*, 38(5), 424-429.

<sup>73</sup> This statistic is derived from Graffam et al (2008), which finds that likelihood of hiring increased by 38% if ex-inmate completed two training programs. This figure (38%) has therefore been divided by 2 (19%) to reflect that the increased likelihood is only partly attributable to Just Time, with the rest attributable to the participation in a second program.

<sup>74</sup> Average weekly hours worked was based on the population (female and male) working 35 hours or less. Higher weekly hours worked were not included in the average as this would skew representativeness of the assumption: Only 54% of Australian prisoners working prior to incarceration and approximately 20% reported working full-time. AIHW (2018), The Health of Australia's prisoners, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/2e92f007-453d-48a1-9c6b-4c9531cf0371/aihw-phe-246.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

<sup>75</sup> Based on the national minimum wage as of 1 July 2022. Fair Work Australia (2023), Minimum wages, <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay-and-wages/minimum-wages>

### Improved lifetime earnings of children

SGS quantifies the benefits of Just Time at \$2,417 (2023 dollars) per program completion as a lump sum benefit with respect to the improved earnings potential of children whose parents complete Just Time. The valuation method assumes:

- Improvements to childrens' emotional intelligence as a result of Just Time-informed parenting leads to a 4 per cent improvement on children's test scores,<sup>76</sup>
- An increase in children's test scores translates to a 14 per cent improvement in children's lifetime earnings,<sup>57</sup>
- On average, each parent in prison has one child aged 10 years and who is attending primary school. The child is assumed to enter the workforce at age 21 (11 years later). Nonetheless, the benefit is assumed as a lump-sum in the year that the child enters the workforce, which is a very conservative estimate, as higher earnings at the start of a person's working life will likely continue and escalate over time,
- The improvement in test scores improves earnings over the whole working life, as it is related to an improvement in skill level,
- Average weekly earnings of \$1,163.80 per individual in Tasmania,<sup>47</sup>
- That the parent-child relationship is one of many determinants of children's economic attainment<sup>77</sup>, and;
- The average age of the children is 10 years, and the benefit is realised 11 years after the participant completes the program (when they are 21 years old). That is, the benefit is realised once per program completion, 11 years after their participation.

Assuming This results in a total lifetime earnings benefit of \$541,449 ( $224 \times \$2,417 = \$541,449$ ) until 2043 (Table 4).

### Reduced recidivism

SGS quantifies the benefits of Just Time completion at \$2,811 (in 2023 dollars) per program participant with respect to reduced recidivism based on avoided prison system costs. In reality, reduced recidivism also results in lower costs to society in terms of avoided damages and harm. These important flow-on benefits have not been included, and therefore the estimate is conservative.

The valuation method assumes the following:

- A daily cost of \$385 per prisoner, per day to the state<sup>6363</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> MacCann, C., et al (2020). *Emotional Intelligence Predicts Academic Performance: A Meta-Analysis*. Psychological Bulletin, 146(2), 150-186.

<sup>77</sup> The implicit value of parents who nurture, monitor, teach and care for their children is a significant determinant of children's attainment, see for example Haveman, R., & Wolfe, B. (1995). The determinants of children's attainments: A review of methods and findings. *Journal of economic literature*, 33(4), 1829-1878. While labour market success is 'transmitted from parents to children', quality of education and a raft of other factors have been shown to be robust predictors of earnings: Bowles, S., Gintis, H., & Osborne, M. (2001). The determinants of earnings: A behavioral approach. *Journal of economic literature*, 39(4), 1137-1176.

- A 4% reduced recidivism rate among imprisoned people who attend the program based on research on a prison nursery program,<sup>78</sup>
- That the average parent in prison may enrol in more than one program prior to exiting prison,
- The average length of a prison sentence in Tasmania (excluding homicide and sexual related crimes) is 663 days.<sup>64</sup>
- This benefit is once-off. That is, the benefit is realised two years after program completion.

This benefit is \$354,123 to 2043 (Table 4).

### 4.3 SROI results

This section presents the cost benefit analysis results. It assesses if a net gain in community welfare will result after comparing program costs with the monetised wider benefits.

#### 4.3.1 SROI parameters

Overarching assumptions for the discounted cashflow analysis are as follows:

- Values 2023, real (i.e. no escalation)
- Timeframe 20 years from 2023, to 2043 (Year 0 = 2023)
- Discount rate 7 per cent real

#### 4.3.1 SROI results

Our analysis supports the finding that the Just Time program generates a net gain in welfare benefits in Tasmania, with a BCR of 3.23 and NPV of \$1.23 million. In other words, for every \$1 invested in the program, \$3.20 of benefits are generated to the wider community. Table 4 shows the incremental costs and benefits in discounted terms.

**TABLE 4: SROI PERFORMANCE RESULTS**

Costs and benefits	Undiscounted value (\$)	Discounted value (\$)
<b>Costs</b>		
Program costs	551,968	551,968
<i>Total costs</i>	<i>551,968</i>	<i>551,968</i>
<b>Benefits</b>		
Avoided costs of social harms	851,004	515,986

<sup>78</sup> Goshin, L. S., Byrne, M. W., & Henninger, A. M. (2014). Recidivism after release from a prison nursery program. *Public Health Nursing, 31*(2), 109-117. Other studies have shown that vocational and other education programs have resulted an approximate 18% reduction in recidivism (8.75% among vocational completers compared to 26% who had not participated in any educational program): Gonzalez, P., Romero, T., & Cerbana, C. B. (2007). Parent education program for incarcerated mothers in Colorado. *Journal of Correctional Education, 357-373*.

Avoided mental health costs	377,502	228,890
Improved lifetime earnings of Just Time participants	384,267	384,267
Improved lifetime earnings of children	541,449	313,465
Reduced recidivism	354,123	342,723
<i>Total benefits</i>	<i>2,508,345</i>	<i>1,785,331</i>
<b>Net value</b>	<b>1,956,376</b>	<b>1,233,363</b>
<b>Benefit-cost ratio</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>3.23</b>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)

#### 4.3.1 Distributional analysis

SROI also includes a cross check to ensure that the ‘economic efficiency’ results are sustained when interpreted with broader considerations of social equity. That is, are any members of the Tasmanian community disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged from the proposed investment? Connect42 bears project costs of \$0.55 million through a combination of funding from the State Government and private benefactors.

As a result, the State and Federal governments, and individuals and the wider community enjoy a net present benefit of \$1.17 million and \$0.61 million respectively due to the range of benefits generated through Just Time.

**TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTIONAL ANALYSIS**

Stakeholder group	Present value (\$)
Connect42	-551,968
State & Federal governments	1,172,175
Individuals & wider community	613,156

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)

#### 4.3.2 Sensitivity analysis

This section assesses how the NPVs and BCRs change based on varying assumptions around the discount rate, costs and benefits. The impact of these changes in assumptions on the investments’ NPVs and BCRs is summarised in the tables below.

##### Discount rate

Sensitivity testing on the discount rate (Table 6) tests the effect of a change in the adopted discount rate on the NPV and BCR of the project. The project returns a positive BCR under all three discount rates. The BCR is highest under a four per cent discount rate, when greater weight is placed on

monetary flows further into the future. This is because most of the benefits are experienced well into the future in comparison to the costs.

**TABLE 6: SENSITIVITY TESTING ON DISCOUNT RATE**

Discount rate	NPV (\$'000)	BCR
4%	1,472.89	3.67
7%	1,233.36	3.23
10%	1,059.49	2.92

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2022)

### Costs and benefits

Table 7 and Table 8 below show the effects of a 25 per cent increase or decrease in overall costs and benefits to the key performance indicators. Under the lowest performing scenario (in terms of economic viability), the project still returns a net positive benefit to community welfare. It also shows that, due to the relative timing of the costs and benefits, the project's performance is more sensitive to changes in benefits than costs (indicated by the broader range of BCRs under changes in costs). This is largely attributable to the relative size of the benefits compared to costs.

**TABLE 7: SENSITIVITY TESTING ON COSTS AND BENEFITS (NPV)**

NPV (\$'000)		Change in costs		
		25%	0%	-25%
Change in benefits	-25%	649.04	787.03	925.02
	0%	1,095.37	1,233.36	1,371.35
	25%	1,541.70	1,679.70	1,817.69

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)

**TABLE 8: SENSITIVITY TESTING ON COSTS AND BENEFITS (BCR)**

BCR		Change in costs		
		25%	0%	-25%
Change in benefits	-25%	1.94	2.43	3.23
	0%	2.59	3.23	4.31
	25%	3.23	4.04	5.39

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)



#### **4.4 Summary and conclusions**

The SROI shows that the Just Time program increases economic welfare levels across Tasmania, with the benefits (\$1.79 million) outweighing the costs (\$0.55 million). This is equivalent to a NPV of \$1.23 million and a BCR of 3.23.

Additional sensitivity testing of these suggests that under a range of scenarios differentiated by discount rate, cost base, and estimated benefits, a net positive benefit in community welfare is still returned by the Just Time program.

# Appendix A: Method detail for monetising benefits

This Appendix sets out the detailed method for monetising each benefit.

## Avoided costs of social harms

Calculation steps	Data	Input / Output
1. Determine number of Just Time program completions	This is 224 participants in total across 2018-2021, as per the Just Time quarterly report data (Table 1).	224
2. Calculate annual per capita social cost of alcohol and other drug use	The estimated social cost of alcohol use in Australia was \$66.8 billion <sup>25</sup> in 2017-18. This is equivalent to \$74.5 billion in 2023 dollars.  <b>Divided by:</b> 25.69 million = total Australian population in 2018 <sup>79</sup>	\$2,901
3. Determine attribution rate	39% of prisoners reporting consuming alcohol at high-risk levels prior to prison entry <sup>80</sup> .	39% attribution
4. Determine success rate	Participation in a COS program is associated with a 14.1% decline in alcohol and other drug use <sup>81</sup> .	14.1%

<sup>79</sup> ABS (2020), Nation, state and territory population, [https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/jun-2020#:~:text=Media%20releases-,Key%20statistics,was%20321%2C300%20people%20\(1.3%25\).Australia's%20population%20grew&text=ABS%20Demography%20Director%20Beidar%20Cho,were%20male%20and%20153%2C000%20female](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/jun-2020#:~:text=Media%20releases-,Key%20statistics,was%20321%2C300%20people%20(1.3%25).Australia's%20population%20grew&text=ABS%20Demography%20Director%20Beidar%20Cho,were%20male%20and%20153%2C000%20female).

<sup>80</sup> AIHW (2015), The health of Australia's prisoners 2015, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/prisoners/health-of-australias-prisoners-2015/contents/risky-alcohol-consumption>

<sup>81</sup> This association has two parts. Firstly, there is a 46.4% improvement in child behaviour (externalising problems) after their parent completed a 20-week COS program (Huber, A. McMahon, C., & Sweller, N. (2015)). SGS assumes the same relationship for participants of the program. SGS also assumes that the improvement is directly proportional to the length of the program, and therefore scales this benefit by 8/20 (to reflect the length of the Just Time program). This association is multiplied by the association between externalising problems and alcohol and other drug use. Those with

5. Multiply attribution rate, success rate and upper limiting estimate of avoided costs of social harm per annum, 2018-21	39% multiplied by 14.1% multiplied by \$2,901	\$159 per program participant per year
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Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023). All values have been Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjusted and are expressed in 2023 dollars. \*Combined data for alcohol and drug use not available. Statistic for alcohol consumption used on the basis that it was the most common principal drug of concern among clients seeking treatment for their own drug use (AIHW, 2022).

### Avoided costs of poor mental health

Calculation steps	Data	Input / Output
1. Determine number of Just Time program completions	This is 224 participants in total across 2018-2021, as per the Just Time quarterly report data (Table 1).	224
2. Calculate annual per capita cost of providing mental health services	The estimated cost is \$431 per capita in Australia.	: \$431
3. Calculate upper limiting estimate of avoided costs of poor mental health per annum	224 program completions <b>Multiplied</b> by \$431	\$96,544
4. Determine attribution rate	37.0% of former inmates reported a previous diagnosis of a mental health condition <sup>82</sup> .	37.0% attribution
5. Determine success rate	Those with high parenting self-efficacy are 44.2 per cent more likely to have better mental health. <sup>83</sup>	44.2% likelihood of avoided mental health costs
6. Multiply avoided costs by attribution and likelihood to estimate total avoided costs of poor mental health per annum, 2018-21	37.0% multiplied by 44.2% <b>Multiplied</b> by \$431	\$70.53 per participant per year

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023). \*An estimated 1 in 5 Australians experience mental illness in any given year (AIHW, 2022).

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externalising problems are 75.8% more likely to engage in alcohol and other drug use (Heradsveit, O., et al, (2018)). Together, this is  $46.4\% \times (8/20) \times 75.8\% = 14.1\%$ .

<sup>82</sup> AIHW (2018), The health of Australia's prisoners 2018, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/prisoners/health-australia-prisoners-2018/summary>

<sup>83</sup> Parenting Research Centre (2018). Parent Mental Health, <https://www.parentingrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Mental-Health-Research-Brief-Oct-2018.pdf>

## Improved lifetime earning potential of Just Time participants

Calculation steps	Data	Input / Output
1. Determine number of Just Time program completions	This is 224 participants in total across 2018-2021, as per the Just Time quarterly report data (Table 1).	224
2. Calculate minimum per capita salary per annum based on average hours worked	\$21.38 per hour <b>Multiplied</b> by average 20.6 hours worked per week <sup>84</sup> <b>Multiplied</b> by 52 weeks a year	\$22,857
3. Timeframe	The improved earning potential that is attributable to Just Time is strongest immediately after completion and lessens in intervening years. The method makes a conservative assumption that the benefit is sustained for only 1 year.	1 year of attribution
4. Attribution rate	39.5% of former inmates are employed 6 months post release <sup>85</sup> <b>Multiplied</b> by 19.0% improvement in employment prospects due to participation in Just Time <sup>73</sup> <b>Equals</b> 47.0% of former inmates who complete Just Time are employed 6 months post release. <b>Minus</b> 39.5% baseline <b>Equals</b> 7.5% likelihood	7.5% increased likelihood of employment

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023).

<sup>84</sup> SGS (2023) weighted average calculation based on ABS (2023) - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed December 2022

<sup>85</sup> Cutcher, Degenhardt, L., Alati, R. and Kinner, S.A. (2014), Poor health and social outcomes for ex-prisoners with a history of mental disorder: a longitudinal study. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 38: 424-429

## Improved lifetime earnings of children whose parents participate in Just Time

Calculation steps	Data	Input / Output
1. Determine number of Just Time program completions	This is 224 participants in total across 2018-2021, as per the Just Time quarterly report data (Table 1).	224
2. Calculate incremental salary increase (improved annual earnings) from the minimum annual salary of an individual in Tasmania	The average weekly earnings for an individual in Tasmania is \$1,163.80 <sup>47</sup> <b>Multiplied</b> by 52 weeks <b>Equals</b> \$60,518.60 annual salary <b>Multiplied</b> by 14% improvement in earnings potential due to a 1 standard deviation increase in test scores <sup>57</sup> . <b>Equals</b> \$8,472	\$8,472
3. Determine attribution rate	Assumption that 50.0% of child's labour market success is attributable to the household environment	50.0% attribution
4. Determine success rate	Improved emotional intelligence is associated with a 4.0% increase in test scores.	\$339
5. Multiply improved annual earnings by attribution factor to find annual improvement in earnings	\$8,472 incremental improvement in annual earnings <b>Multiplied</b> by 50.0% and multiplied by 4.0% <b>Equals</b> \$169 per year of working life	\$169 per child of program participant per year of working life
6. Calculate the present value of lifetime earnings using the annuity formula <sup>86</sup> , 2018-21	Applying a discount rate of 7.0% and assuming a working life of 39 year (age 21 to 60), the present value of lifetime earnings is equal to: $\$169 + \$169 \times (1 - (1/(1+7.0\%)^{39}))/7.0\%$ Which <b>equals</b> \$2,417 per child of participant	\$2,417 per child of program completion

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023).

<sup>86</sup> Present value of cashflow in annuity = annual cashflow + annual cashflow\*(1-(1/(1+discount rate)<sup>39</sup>))/ discount rate

## Reduced recidivism

Calculation steps	Data	Input / Output
1. Determine number of Just Time program completions	This is 224 participants in total across 2018-2021, as per the Just Time quarterly report data (Table 1).	224
2. Source per prisoner cost to the state	Cost per day is \$385 based on annual cost of \$140,525 <sup>87</sup>	\$140,525
3. Determine attribution rate	50.4% recidivism rate 4% lower probability of recidivism among ex-prisoners who attend a parenting program	4% reduced recidivism
4. Cost savings per participant and program total	$\$140,525 * 4\% = \$5,621$ $\$5,621 * 224 \text{ participants} = \$1,259,104$	\$5,621 per participant (1 year incarceration) \$1,259,104 (1 year incarceration)
5. Attribution due to JT	Assumed to be 50%, as other programs may also be contributing	50%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023).

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<sup>87</sup> Tasmanian Prison Service (2022), Budget Estimates Brief, [https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF](https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF)

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