

Community Corrections and Restorative Justice^{*}

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Introduction

The aim of the paper is to sketch out a few thoughts on the link between community corrections as a form of professional practice, and restorative justice as a philosophical framework for intervention. The paper discusses why community-based responses to offending are preferable to institution-based responses, from the point of view of financial costs, opportunities for rehabilitation and implementation of restorative forms of justice.

Positive correctional practice demands close scrutiny of the philosophical basis for intervention and acknowledgement of the importance of social context in relation to 'what works'. In the light of this, the paper argues that *we need to spend more* (on programmes and expertise), *in order to spend less* (on prisons and escalating punishments). It also argues that *we need to take more time now* (to re-make community networks and to nest offenders in supportive community contexts), *so that we don't repeat the time later* (due to offender recidivism).

Fundamentally, it is argued that community corrections has to be seen as an integral part of community building — a strategic means by which to translate social justice concerns and offender rehabilitation into workable practices and real life situations. The challenge posed by the paper is how to translate such ideals into realities that practitioners themselves can tune into and carry out in their daily work tasks.

Philosophy as the Driver of Intervention

Once a person has been drawn into the formal processes of the criminal justice system there are several institutional approaches which might be adopted in regards to their offending behaviour. The usual debate here is over a perceived split between a 'justice' approach and a 'welfare' approach. This divide has now been supplemented by reference to a third path — that of 'restorative justice' (see Bazemore 1991). The relationship between these three perspectives is uneasy at best, and often results in various hybrid formations at an organisational level. Nevertheless they do signal quite different ways of doing justice regardless of the ambiguities associated with their practical implementation.

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Generally speaking, the first approach emphasises such things as ‘responsibility’ for one’s actions, punishment, control oriented objectives and a focus on what the offender has actually done wrong. Justice is thus *something that is done to you*. Often this involves the use of incarceration in a prison or detention centre, or stringent penalties of some other kind. The idea is to get tough on the offender, and to punish them for what they have done.

The second approach places the emphasis on the offender, and favours greater use of community-based sanctions, individual treatment services and attempts to re-socialise or address the ‘deficits’ within the person which are seen to be associated with the commission of crime. In this case, justice is *something that is done for you*. The point of this kind of intervention is rehabilitation, taking into account the vulnerability and special needs of many people who offend. Most justice systems around the country embody elements drawn from the justice and welfare models.

The third approach has gained popularity in recent years and emphasises ‘restorative justice’. This type of approach wishes to maintain a relationship of respect with the offender while simultaneously making amends for the harm caused. In its more developed form, this approach attempts to weigh up the specific requirements of each case of offending, and to variably respond to each offender in terms of (a) personal accountability, (b) development of individual competencies, and (c) the need for community-based incapacitation (Bazemore 1991; Bilchik 1998). Here, justice is *something that is done by you*.

The most popular example of the restorative justice approach in the Australian and New Zealand context is the Family Group Conference or juvenile conferencing model (see Daly & Hayes 2001; Cunneen & White 2002). This type of intervention is based on the idea of bringing the young offender, the victim, and their respective families and friends together in a meeting chaired by an appropriate independent adult (juvenile justice worker or police officer). Collectively, the group goes through the reasons for the crime, the harms suffered, and the best ways to resolve the issues. Usually some kind of apology is made by the offender to the victim, and often the offender has to repair the damage they have caused in some way (through undertaking community work, or mowing the lawns of the victim for a month). There are in fact a range of practical approaches to restorative justice, including conferencing, as well as victim-offender mediation, circle sentencing and peacemaking circles, reparative probation and the balanced restorative approach (see Bazemore 1997; Braithwaite 1999; Bilchik 1998).

Translated into specific assumptions and principles, the restorative philosophy is largely based upon three interrelated propositions (Zehr & Mika 1998):

- Crime is fundamentally a violation of people and interpersonal relationships.
- Violations create obligations and liabilities.
- Restorative justice seeks to heal and put right the wrong.

In abstract terms, clear differences can be drawn between a system of justice based primarily upon the concept of retribution, and one based upon restoration. This is recognised in most of the literature dealing with restorative justice (see for example, Bazemore & Umbreit 1995; Zehr 1990). There are nevertheless different analytical emphases within the broad restorative justice literature — some writers placing greater importance on community than others, some putting the victim at the centre of the criminal justice process, and others paying most attention to how best to respond to the offender (Bazemore 1997; Church Council on Justice and Corrections 1996). Different approaches thus emphasise different objectives. These include victim restoration, shaming and denouncing offenders, citizen involvement, through to community empowerment (Bazemore 1997).

Under the restorative justice umbrella there are differences between those who see restorative justice as, essentially, a form of diversion from the formal criminal justice system, and those who view it as a potential alternative to that system and thus as something that could supplant the existing system in toto (see Bazemore & Walgrave 1999). Whatever the specific differences, the central thread underlying restorative justice is the spirit within which 'justice' is undertaken — the intent and outcomes of the process are meant to be primarily oriented toward repairing harm that has been caused by a crime, and this means working to heal victims, offenders and communities that have been directly injured by the crime (Bazemore & Walgrave 1999; Zehr & Mika 1998).

The mission of community corrections as a specific form of justice intervention is likewise informed by how punishment is viewed and what the intended outcomes of intervention are meant to be (see Worrall 1997). The main philosophies of community corrections generally include two main orientations (White & Tomkins 2003):

Community incapacitation in which the main emphasis is on concepts of community safety and offender control. This involves intensive monitoring and supervision of offenders in community settings. The aim of community corrections, from this perspective, is to keep offenders under close surveillance and to thereby deter them from re-offending.

Community-level rehabilitation in which efforts are made to change offender behaviour in positive ways as well as improving community relationships by use of supportive, participatory measures. The aim of community corrections, from this point of view, is to prevent recidivism through behaviour modification via some type of therapeutic or skills-based intervention. The emphasis is on personal development and enhanced capabilities.

There may be a tension between 'control and contain' strategies and 'rehabilitative' strategies. So too, there may be differences between interventions designed as prison alternatives, and those related to post-prison transitions. Nevertheless, how community corrections workers actually carry out their work will largely be dictated by the dominant service philosophy. A third, and emergent service philosophy is also evident, if not particularly well articulated (see for example, the Tasmania Community Corrections mission statement). This is one that focuses on building stronger communal relationships through positive and constructive offender activities.

Restorative justice involves the offender in activities intended to repair the harm to victims and the wider community. The aim of community corrections, based upon restorative assumptions, is to restore harmony through the offender doing something for and by themselves to make things better in the community. The emphasis is on improving the well-being of offender, victim and community (White & Tomkins 2003).

The challenge, for supporters of the latter perspective in particular, is to defend the importance of community corrections generally in contrast to reliance upon imprisonment; and secondly to construe 'good practice' within community corrections in the light of the theoretical and practical impetus of restorative principles.

There are numerous ambiguities and contradictions in the area of community corrections and, if anything, these have intensified in recent years. Changes to the overarching political environment, in which 'law and order' has come to the fore in many jurisdictions, have placed greater emphasis on punitive rather than rehabilitative or restorative principles. And yet the latter has become the guiding diversionary philosophy in areas such as juvenile justice (see Cunneen & White 2002). Meanwhile, government concerns with fiscal matters

have frequently translated into more work but less resources being allocated to the corrections area, a problem not uncommon across the human services (White 2002). As the American experience seems to indicate, very often there are changes at the level of professional ideology and practice as well, and these too are making community corrections ever more complicated. For example, the heightened concern about victim involvement and perspectives in dealing with offenders, new procedures and instruments in risk assessment, and the slowly permeating influence of restorative justice ideals, are currently being re-worked into the professional lexicon and tool-kits of parole and probation officers (see Burke 2001). Where, and how, community corrections fits into the overall scheme of things is an issue of ongoing concern.

Spending More For Less

How much money is spent on corrections, and where the money is spent within corrections, are vital issues in any consideration of system goals and operational efficacy. I want to argue that we need to spend more (on programmes and expertise), in order to spend less (on prisons and escalating punishments). These are matters of both quantity (i.e., how much to spend on which parts of the corrections system) and quality (i.e., how much to spend in order to ensure adequate 'return' for the money being allocated). To put it differently, assessment of budgets and finances is both a matter of determining system prioritisation and of evaluating service quality.

Table 1 provides an outline of adult offender participation in each state and territory over the period 1996–97 to 2000–01. A few brief observations are warranted regarding the table.

The table shows that participation rates in imprisonment and in community corrections have varied across jurisdictions, and within each jurisdiction over time. A simple interpretation of the data would suggest that:

- Where there is an *increase* in the use of imprisonment, and a *decrease* in the use of community corrections [as in Victoria, Tasmania, and Australia as a whole], this represents a significant reliance upon the most harsh and coercive forms of intervention and punishment;
- Where there is an *increase* in the use of imprisonment, and an *increase* in the use of community corrections [as in the ACT, WA and NSW], this seems to represent a form of net-widening vis-à-vis the overall correctional system;
- Where there is a *decrease* in the use of imprisonment, and a *decrease* in the use of community corrections [as in SA and QLD], this indicates greater reliance upon diversionary measures, whether these be restorative conferences or fine default schemes;
- Where there is an *uneven trend pattern* relating to participation across either or both imprisonment and community corrections, this seems to indicate local factors affecting fluctuations in offender numbers, and corrective services and policies that are highly contingent upon immediate political, judicial or operational variables.

Table 1:
Imprisonment and Offender Rates per 100,000 Adults 1996–97 to 2000–01

	<i>NSW (b)</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT (b)</i>	<i>NT (c)</i>	<i>Aust (b)</i>
Imprisonment									
1996–97	132.2	70.6	137.6	165.0	128.5	75.6	60.6	427.7	120.0
1997–98	133.0	76.2	179.2	166.9	124.4	75.8	65.5	458.6	130.3
1998–99	143.4	79.1	191.5	196.1	121.9	93.3	70.5	462.3	139.1
1999–2000	150.3	83.6	188.5	213.1	116.4	100.6	79.9	445.9	143.4
2000–01	153.2	88.1	172.2	220.3	115.0	105.3	87.8	483.4	144.2
Periodic detention									
1996–97	32.7	-	-	-	-	-	14.1	-	-
1997–98	32.0	-	-	-	-	-	18.0	-	-
1998–99	28.9	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	-	-
1999–2000	26.0	-	-	-	-	-	29.4	-	-
2000–01	22.6	-	-	-	-	-	29.2	-	-
Community corrections (d)									
1996–97	305.4	201.1	1238.1	345.0	645.7	497.3	267.5	885.0	482.4
1997–98	292.8	200.1	1312.3	332.6	727.7	493.4	322.9	753.4	479.5
1998–99	284.5	200.7	736.2	314.0	683.4	367.7	425.4	447.4	387.1
1999–2000	387.3	182.6	732.2	302.4	583.2	341.7	476.6	427.8	407.4
2000–01	373.8	174.7	718.6	342.3	581.9	265.8	550.9	971.2	407.4
Total correc- tive services (e)									
1996–97	470.3	271.7	1376.0	510.0	774.2	572.9	342.2	1312.7	602.4
1997–98	457.8	276.3	1492.0	499.5	852.1	569.2	407.4	1212.0	609.8
1998–99	456.6	279.8	927.7	510.1	805.2	461.0	508.9	909.7	536.1
1999–2000	563.6	266.2	920.7	515.5	699.6	442.3	586.0	873.7	560.0
2000–01	549.5	262.7	890.8	562.6	696.9	401.1	667.9	1454.6	551.6

a) Rates are based on the daily average prisoner, detainee and offender populations supplied by States and Territories. The population figures used to calculate rates in 2000–01 are persons as at December 2000 aged 17 or over for Victoria and Queensland, and persons aged 18 or over in the other jurisdictions, reflecting the age at which persons are remanded or sentenced to adult custody (Source: ABS National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics).

b) ACT and NSW data both include ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. Australian totals exclude any double counting of ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.

c) Data from the NT are significantly affected by the inclusion of offenders on inactive orders in 2000–01.

d) In line with national counting rules introduced in 1999–2000, offenders with inactive orders are included in the count of the daily average number of offenders currently awaiting outcome of a breach of an order or currently imprisoned. Figures prior to 1998–99 for Queensland, Tasmania, and the NT were calculated against the number of orders for community correction offenders, not the Queensland, Tasmania, and the NT were calculated against the number of orders for community correction offenders, not the number of distinct persons, and therefore are not directly comparable with data for other jurisdictions or with current year figures.

e) Total corrective service rates for NSW and the ACT include periodic detention. As of 1998–99, the Australian rates also include periodic detention.

Sources: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS 1998b, *Experimental Projection of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population*, cat. No. 3231.0; ABS 2001, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, cat.No. 3101.0

Source: Productivity Commission, 2002, Table 10A.5

Table 2 provides a snapshot of the recurrent expenditure on Australian prisons and community corrections in 2000–01. Before commenting on the table, it is worth bearing in mind that this does not include capital expenditure (such as the cost of building new prisons).

The table demonstrates one major fact. This is, that the use of imprisonment is considerably more expensive than community corrections. Secure detention can cost as much as \$253 a day in the ACT [Australian average being \$149 per day]. By contrast, offenders placed into community corrections cost, at most, just under \$12 a day in WA [Australian average being \$6.5]. Even the ‘cheapest’ form of imprisonment — open plus periodic detention — still costs \$72 a day.

What the table cannot reveal is the way in which the money is actually spent within each type of service provision. Specifically, it does not tell us how much money is allocated to ‘security’ and how much goes into ‘services and programmes’ for offenders. This is also crucial to know, since the success or otherwise of imprisonment and community corrections depends to at least some degree on the services and programmes on offer. For instance, although sex offender programmes are expensive, they do have an impact in terms of preventing some offenders from re-offending. But, their expensive nature means that in some jurisdictions they are deemed to be prohibitive (e.g., Tasmania had no sex offender programme at Risdon prison for many years, due to the costs involved). An adequate evaluation of prison costs and the costs of community corrections would need to include specific detailed information about services provided and programmes on offer.

Nevertheless, a comparison of the two tables in the light of the observations made above concerning Table 1, highlights several things. First, any trend toward greater reliance upon prisons relative to community corrections will cost considerably more than otherwise might be the case. Likewise, net-widening represents a significant increase in expenditure on corrective services. Conversely, decreased use of prisons and community corrections either represents a real saving, or the transfer of monies into diversionary areas that, at the least in the case of imprisonment, are much less expensive than incarceration as such. Fluctuating numbers are also cost ineffective, insofar as systems have to be designed to cater for growth in numbers, as well as accepting lower numbers of participants. Projections and perspectives on capacity, as well as actual use, have cost implications.

Table 2:
Australian Prisons and Community Corrections, Net Recurrent Expenditure, 2000–01

	<i>Units</i>	<i>NSW (b)</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT (b)</i>	<i>NT(c)</i>	<i>Aust (d)</i>
<i>Prisons and periodic detention</i>										
Open plus periodic detention	\$'000	195 876	17 968	29 721	42 684	10 382	3 019	7 105	na	306 754
Secure	\$'000	263 589	170 396	208 824	155 702	91 699	23 497	9 106	na	922 813
Total all prisons	\$'000	459 465	188 364	238 545	198 386	102 081	26 516	16 210	35 740	1 265 307
Transport & escort services	\$'000	36 549	2 490	na	6 895	na	na	1 015	na	46 949
Cost per prisoner per day										
Open plus periodic detention	\$	131.2	105.8	72.3	100.5	159.5	101.8	151.8	na	117.4
Secure	\$	160.4	130.6	116.5	197.2	169.9	159.4	253.2	na	149.3
All prisons	\$	146.5	127.6	108.4	163.5	168.7	147.7	195.9	142.0	139.5
<i>Community corrections</i>										
Total	\$'000	47 267	23 901	25 795	20 915	19 279	3 097	2 972	5398	148 624
Cost per offender per day	\$	6.7	9.4	3.3	11.7	7.3	7.8	6.3	10.5	6.5
All Corrections										
Total cost of service (e)	\$'000	543 280	214 755	264 340	226 196	121 360	29 613	20 198	41 138	1 460 880
Population	'000	6 564	4 831	3632	1923	1507	469	316	199	19 445
Cost per head of population per year (f)	\$	82.8	44.5	72.8	117.6	80.5	63.1	63.9	206.7	75.1

a) Net recurrent expenditure includes payroll tax capital asset charges and other associated expenses, such as debt servicing fees, depreciation or accommodation fees but is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). Unit costs are calculated against recurrent expenditure excluding all these items, in order to enhance comparability across jurisdictions.

b) The ACT contracted management services fees to NSW are included in the ACT and excluded from NSW figures.

c) The NT unit costs do not take into account the impact of juvenile detainees supervised by community correction officers, as these young offenders do not fall within the scope of the daily average offender population. Data from the NT are significantly affected by the offenders on inactive orders in 2000–01.

d) Australian unit cost figures for open and secure custody are calculated against Australian total daily average numbers minus NT prisoners in each level of custody.

e) Total cost of service refers to combined prison, transport and escort services, and community corrections recurrent expenditure net of recurrent receipts.

f) Calculated per person (refers to persons of all ages, not just adult population) based on June 2000 estimated resident population (ABS cat.3201.0).

na Not available.

Sources: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 10A.2.

Source: Productivity Commission, 2002, Table 10A.6

In-depth cost analysis would also have to consider the relative growth in expenditure relative to any changes to staff numbers, offender numbers and number of professional staff. Furthermore, expenditure patterns can be tracked over time in both the case of prisons and community corrections. For present purposes, it can be argued that much more needs to be spent on the human infrastructure of corrections (rather than bricks and mortar) given the central importance of programmes in opening the door for offenders to achieve futures in which offending becomes less of an option. When security costs outweigh service and programme outlays then prisons, and community corrections, become places of (temporary) containment and offender management, not opportunities for rehabilitation or restorative justice. Money is not spent for the purposes of change (on the part of individual offenders, or with respect to community environments). The result inevitably is 'more of the same': the failure of prison and corrections generally as reflected in high recidivism rates.

For prisons, the issue is how best to reduce populations to the extent that expenditure can be used efficiently and effectively to cater to the small number of hard-core, serious and recalcitrant offenders. The issue of 'what works' in a prison context, is dictated by size of prison population in relation to service, programme and security budgets. In addition, we need to bear in mind that prisons intrinsically bear with them a series of pains of imprisonment (see White & Perrone 1997) from which many women and men have difficulty recovering. The trauma associated with incarceration is linked to social and economic cost that can be avoided in many cases — by re-directing people into the community corrections sector (especially for less serious offences, fine defaulters, short-term sentences and so on).

For community corrections, while a less expensive option compared to imprisonment, the issue likewise revolves around how much money is available for specialist training, development of professional expertise, number of staff, and types of programmes available. This ought not to be seen as the 'poor cousin' of prisons. Rather, to be socially useful and to 'work' in a positive way, community corrections needs greater expansion of an already small funding base, in order to ensure suitable case loads and integrated offender management. As with prisons, the key issues are those of resources and staffing.

If resources are not forthcoming to ensure an effective community corrections sector, and if intensive supervision and support are not provided in the prisons to those who most need them, then re-offending is guaranteed to stay the same or increase. The net result of this is pressure to build more facilities — to expend capital on physical infrastructure, in order to house those who otherwise could be making a contribution to society, rather than being a drain on the public purse.

There are several issues that require further, albeit brief, comment. From the point of view of costs, it is relevant to consider that increasing recidivism among the adult prisoner population is one of the reasons for the increase in the prisoner population (Productivity Commission 2002). Part of the impetus for pre-release and parole programmes both in Australia and overseas is the sheer number of people entering, and leaving the prison systems. With major increases in prison populations in places such as Australia, the United

States and the United Kingdom, increasing concern and attention has been directed at what happens to inmates once they have been released (see Petersilia 2001a, 2001b). It has been observed that 'If even a modest proportion of those returning to the community become involved in new crime, the human costs in terms of victimization and community destabilization — as well as the fiscal costs in terms of incarceration — will be staggering' (Burke 2001:12). A key issue therefore is how best to achieve successful and safe re-entry for offenders, or to prevent them from entering into prison in the first place.

Community corrections has a major role to play in diminishing recidivism tendencies. This is demonstrated in recent work that shows that the use of supervised release in the UK has a positive effect on the reduction of recidivism (Ellis & Marshall 2000:304). It is also illustrated in a Canadian study that found a significant relationship between the use of day release programmes and the successful completion of full parole (Grant & Gillis 1999). The conclusion to be drawn from such reviews and studies is that having offenders complete at least part of their sentence in a community setting is useful and allows them to participate more fully in rehabilitative and restorative types of programmes. From the point of view of programming, therefore, it is increasingly recognised that there be better provision of an integrated transition from one part of the corrective system to another. For community corrections in particular, recent developments also raise questions about how best to respond to issues of recidivism, and which strategic focus ought to be favoured at a practitioner level.

More Time to Save Time

Certainly a restorative justice approach would appear to have great potential to effect change in an offender's behaviour and attitudes in a positive direction. This is because it does not exclude people from the community (or, conversely, expose them to a school of crime, as in the case of prisons and detention centres); nor does it pathologise the offender (by placing most attention on their faults and weaknesses). The restorative perspective is driven by the idea that offenders deserve respect and dignity (they are persons), and that they already have basic competencies and capacities which need to be developed further (if they are not to re-offend). In this framework, the emphasis is on what the person *could* do, rather than what they *should* do. What is important is that offenders achieve things at a concrete level, for themselves, including making reparation to their victim. In the end, the point of dealing with offenders in particular ways is to reinforce the notion that they have done something wrong, to repair the damage done as far as possible, and to open the door for the reintegration of the offender back into the mainstream of society.

For this kind of justice to occur, it is necessary that we take more time now (to re-make community networks and to nest offenders in supportive community contexts) so that we don't repeat the time we spend on the offender later (due to offender recidivism). To put it differently, to stop re-offending requires a major commitment to changing the life circumstances of offenders. Simultaneously, this also generally means that we need to address the communal relationships and social problems that serve as the launching pad for criminal and anti-social activity.

The social profile and social location of offenders is largely indicative of gross disparities in life chances and community circumstance among these people. Social research now provides compelling evidence that local community context is an integral part of why some people have a greater propensity than others to commit crime. This context not only includes the extent and type of social resources available, but the presence or absence of social cohesion, and more generally, social capital (see Sampson et al. 1997;

Hirschfield & Bowers 1997; Weatherburn & Lind 2001). The prevalence of long-term unemployment within some communities has a particularly damaging impact and is directly and indirectly criminogenic (Chapman, Weatherburn, Kapuscinski, Chilvers & Rousset 2001; Wilson 1996). The marginalisation, and criminalisation, of the most vulnerable sections of the population is a complex social process that ultimately speaks volumes about the unequal nature of society in general.

There is a sense in which the basic principles and practices of restorative justice can be thought of as prefiguring the changes required for creating a just and equal society (see Walgrave & Bazemore 1999). What unites the diverse restorative justice models has been an emphasis on reparation of harm to victims, as well as a concern to send offenders a message of disapproval about the impact of the crime (Bazemore 1997). However, the practices of restorative justice tend in fact to be confined to very specific incidents and particular individuals. Thus, 'community empowerment', which connotes a concern to intervene in and perhaps to transform community relations, does not feature strongly in some of the more popular restorative justice models, such as juvenile conferencing (see Bazemore 1997). A key challenge is how to engage in restorative justice in ways that incorporate concerns with social justice (White 2000, 2003).

Realistically, for a restorative approach to work within the community corrections sphere there must be a philosophical commitment at an organisational, as well as an individual worker, level. It is from the philosophy that potential practice avenues emerge. For instance, the mapping out of existing, and needed, resources available to workers, including the training and professional development needs of staff and community partners (professionals and volunteers), becomes essential. Issues such as the pooling of resources and expertise, combined with strategic thinking regarding how best to maximise and increase community assets, become central concerns. And a crucial aspect of restorative social justice must be the emphasis placed upon active offender participation in justice processes and community activities. This requires a shift in thinking away from old models of practice that emphasise control and treatment, toward innovative methods of activating offenders to become participants in community building.

Testing the model

So where do we go from here? While there are strong philosophical and practical reasons why restorative justice ought to be adopted as the guiding force behind community corrections, much more needs to be done to develop actual examples of good practice in community corrections that link directly to restorative objectives. Much more thought, and testing out at a practical level, is required across three domain or focus areas.

Focus on Policy and Professional Context

Key questions here include the funding base and resources required to adequately engage in community-oriented and community-based practices; the training and ongoing in-service education of correctional services staff; and development of 'best practice' principles and methods, so that a repertoire of practical examples can be drawn upon to guide practitioners in diverse situations.

And linking this to:

Focus on Individual Offenders

Key questions here include development of service delivery on the basis of through-care principles that inform an integrated offender management approach. Each individual offender requires consistent and systematic assessment and sentence planning, but this, in turn, needs to be integrated into a general community development model.

Thus linking this to:

Focus on Communities

Key questions here include audits of existing community resources, capacities and amenities, and acknowledgement and promotion of the idea that rebuilding can begin with strengths already apparent within communities. Identification of communal objectives and community concerns is essential, as is participation among a diverse and wide variety of local community members.

The intention of community-based interventions, especially within a restorative justice framework, is to change the material situation and infrastructure of specific sites and neighbourhoods (for example, by building a skateboard ramp), and to change perceptions and attitudes among residents and non-residents about these areas (for example, by fostering participatory activities such as sports or card-player clubs). Low neighbourhood attachment, economic deprivation and adversity, and low community organisation are implicated in the constitution of crime-prone areas, so any solution will have to address these kinds of issues (see for example Wilson 1996). Offenders can play a significant role in addressing these problems.

Indeed, the development of pride in one's place can be important in changing negative attitudes and anti-social behaviours into more positive, pro-social directions. For instance, the Bridgewater and Gagebrook area (in Tasmania) had a very negative image, was linked to extensive crime and anti-social behaviour, and was rated as one of the unhealthiest communities in Australia. The Bridgewater Urban Renewal Program (BURP) was designed to change this situation, by changing the circumstances of the community. Four main avenues for change have been identified (Whalen 2001):

Marketing and promotion — through creation of a local newspaper that explicitly attempts to provide positive stories and coverage of the area, and through employment of a public relations firm.

Community leadership and community involvement — through conscious efforts on the part of community and state agencies to work together rather than independently, and use of strategic initiatives that involve citizens [such as creation of local sports teams].

The building of pride and aspirations — through continual assertion that local residents deserve and ought to expect the best in the way of living standards, and by an emphasis on people taking responsibility to make the neighbourhood something to be proud of.

Physical renewal and design — through projects such as tree planting, mural painting, landscaping of parks and shopping complexes, and painting of homes by tenants, and by initiatives such as establishment of a local garden club.

Community reputation, especially if accompanied by stigma associated with gangs, crime and anti-social activities, has a dramatic impact on life within particular locales. Young people who live in stigmatised areas are more likely than others who do not to suffer the consequences in the form of reduced job opportunities and difficulties in moving out-of-neighbourhood. A 'bad' community reputation may occasionally translate into a group mentality based upon defensiveness and negativity in the face of a hostile 'outside' world. Changing the community's reputation through communal development is one way in which to address these issues.

An essential principle underpinning community corrections intervention based upon restorative justice is that investment in people is the best way to reap social rewards. A community strategy (focussing on human beings) ought not to be confused with a

neighbourhood approach (focussing on geographically defined physical environments), although the two are obviously interrelated. As noted elsewhere, 'Regeneration priorities need to emphasise the personal development of residents of disadvantaged communities, as physical regeneration alone has been demonstrated to have little impact on the conditions nurturing social exclusion' (Wolverhampton Crime & Disorder Co-ordinating Group 2001:33). Changing local social environments is ultimately what counts, and this means engaging and involving offenders and their communities in finding solutions to their own problems, with the support of community corrections professionals and others in the local area.

Practical examples of how community corrections can be imbued with a restorative ethic at a concrete level are still relatively few and far between, although this is changing in some jurisdictions. The usual emphasis in community corrections work is what can be done to better supervise the offender, or what can be done to assist them to make the transition towards being a law-abiding citizen (see for example, Nelson & Trone 2000). Restorative justice inverts this relationship by making the offender an active contributor and participant. Thus, in the UK, 'Offenders in some programmes carry out work for their own communities, which can help give the offenders a sense of social responsibility and an experience of social acceptance and recognition' (Marshall 1999:14). Seymour (2001) cites examples in the USA where the concept of 'restorative community service' has taken hold. Relevant community work has included such things as youthful offenders escorting Alzheimer's patients from a local retirement centre and their families for a day at the State Fair, through to a licensed pharmacist who was convicted of forging drug documents performing 500 hours of community service at the free clinic in the neighbourhood in which he had sold drugs.

Importantly, community service, as such, should not to be equated with restorative justice. Walgrave (1999) discusses how in some judicial settings, authorities use community service as a punishment (i.e., intended to inflict pain), while in other settings it is informed by a rehabilitative objective (as manifest in various forms of re-education and treatment). In contrast to these approaches, he argues that 'community service can also be used in a restorative sense, if it is meant to compensate for harm, restore peace in the community and contribute to safety feelings in society ... Attention will now be turned to the harm and the restoration of it, including the reintegration of the offender, as this is an important item in restoring peace in the community' (Walgrave 1999:140). This type of community service demands a clear appreciation of the philosophical foundations of restorative justice, and how community corrections workers can achieve the potentials such a philosophy appears to offer.

Conclusion

The discussion of restorative justice sketched out above may make sense from the point of view of potential benefits to offenders and their communities. It may make dollars and cents with regard to cost savings now and into the future. But, ultimately, the model hinges upon one key ingredient — the professional community corrections worker. And it is the work environment that will most shape the ability and capacity of the system as a whole to apply and integrate restorative principles into daily practice

The present work situation of community corrections staff varies greatly around Australia. As a rather gross, perhaps over-generalisation, it could nevertheless be said that, like many other human services, community corrections tends to suffer from a chronic shortage of funding, from rising expectations, from ballooning workloads and from very

little praise and public appreciation. The tasks of community corrections in Tasmania, for example, include provision of reports to courts and parole boards, supervision of offenders in relation to compliance with court orders including community service, and assistance and surveillance of offenders in the post-prison transition period of parole. In undertaking these activities, community corrections officers have to spend considerable amounts of time and energy in dealing with individual offenders, non-government agencies, direct service providers, and others in the community — all under the mandate, direction and scrutiny of statutory bodies to whom they are accountable (courts, parole boards, prison officials, line managers). The stresses and strains of the job are great, as they can involve considerable emotional, physical, psychological and mental demands.

Analysis of what community corrections staff do now on the job, however, also indicates that the infrastructure already exists for further development of community corrections work along the lines suggested by the restorative justice model. That is, many of the contacts and interconnections among community members and agencies already constitute the lifeblood of how community corrections is carried out in present practice. Acknowledging this makes it easier to defend politically, to a range of gate-keepers and participants, the value and feasibility of new models of work. Accompanying this will be the need to induce workplace change that substantially allows for this type of work to take place, through suitable organisational forums (including union and professional bodies). In the end, the goal is to recast community corrections as work that does not simply 'hold the line', but that 'makes a difference'. Clarifying and concretising what restorative justice can mean for community corrections is a vital part of this process.

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