

# Government Response to KPMG Sentence and Remand Order Processing Audit

## RECOMMENDATION 1

***We recommend the Department identify a suitable alternative to the IT systems currently implemented at the Courts and TPS. The identified system should be configured to support compliance with the Corrections and Sentencing Acts, be sophisticated and flexible to allow for the entering of complex sentences and accurately calculate prisoner release dates.***

***While it is considered preferable to have one system across this process, i.e. Courts and TPS, this may not be feasible. We encourage Management to therefore ensure systems seamlessly interface to ensure data is shared between all parties enhancing visibility and reducing risk of error. Consideration should be given to the interfacing opportunities with Tasmania Police.***

This recommendation is supported in principle and the Department of Justice will progress work to develop options for addressing this recommendation, including timing impacts of Tasmania Police System upgrades, so that these can be considered by Government in future Budget Development Processes.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

***We recommend that the Department:***

- Review the legislated guidance in the Sentencing Act for the provision of orders in simple language and consistent approach to the terms of the warrant (eg. days, months, weeks, total imprisonment term) OR consult with the Tasmanian Magistrate group to work through the issues, risks and develop consist protocols; and***

The Government will introduce a Bill to amend the Sentencing Act to standardise orders of imprisonment in consultation with the courts and other stakeholders.

- Consider the appropriateness of the physical location of the Sentencing Administration Unit with respect to their ability to remedy warrant interpretation in a timely manner.***

The Department of Justice does not support this recommendation.

It is noted that Courts sit in various locations around the State in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie. If recommendation 1 is implemented and an integrated IT system is put in place, the location of the staff should not be relevant. Staff may be based, for example, in the Supreme Court in Hobart, but only persons appearing in the Hobart Supreme Court transition through that facility. Issues relating to warrant interpretation from other Courts around the State would still have to be dealt with remotely.

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It is also noted that the Sentence Administration Unit not only has oversight of sentence/remission calculations, but has other responsibilities for prisoner management that are more conveniently administered from Risdon Prison.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

**We recommend that the Department:**

- ***Coordinate training opportunities for all staff members involved in the critical processes previously identified. Training programs should be conducted in a timely manner following the appointment of the respective employees. Furthermore, formalised training records should be retained documenting respective dates and outcomes achieved.***
- ***Develop a training schedule to ensure that following initial training for personnel is performed, opportunities for re-fresher training are identified as necessary.***

This recommendation is supported and will be implemented as a priority.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

**We recommend that the Department:**

- ***Consider the appropriateness of the location of the SAU in light of access to Courts personnel to promptly remedy any interpretation issues with sentences.***

See response to recommendation 2 relating to the Sentence Administration Unit.

- ***Formalise draft procedures and distribute to personnel as soon as practical, accompanied by training as deemed necessary.***

This recommendation is supported and will be implemented as a priority.

- ***Investigate an appropriate replacement IT system which is fit for purpose and removes the requirement for manual calculations of sentences and overrides.***

See response to recommendation 1.

- ***Following the implementation of an appropriate IT system, seek to leverage its capabilities in order to provide system notifications of release dates, i.e. removing the need for manual diaries.***

This recommendation is supported.

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## RECOMMENDATION 5

*We recommend that the Department:*

- *Ensure critical processes, across all divisions, are supported by formalised policies and procedures to ensure clarity and consistency within the process. These policies and procedures, once formalised, should be subject to annual/periodic review.*
- *Where policies and procedures currently exist ensure personnel are appropriately trained in their application and are updated for any changes, as required.*
- *We encourage the TPS to formalise current 'how to' documents pertaining to the SAU into DSO's as soon as practical.*

This recommendation is supported and will be implemented as a priority.