

Metropolitan Remand Centre



# Prisoner & Visitor Information Booklet

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DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE





## Foreword

Prison can be a difficult place to be for most individuals. Prisoners need to be assisted to make the transition from community to custody in order to reduce the impacts of anxiety and isolation often associated with imprisonment. Visitors need help to understand their rights and responsibilities when visiting family or friends and what assistance may be available at the prison to assist in maintaining family ties.

This booklet has been developed to provide prisoners and their visitors with useful information about what a prisoner can expect at the MRC and what a visitor needs to know when coming into the prison for a personal visit.

To alleviate some of the trauma for prisoners relatively new to custody, the MRC has developed a 'first night in jail' program, aimed at providing prisoners with the essential information needed to cope with the initial stages after reception and an orientation package that will help prisoners to understand how a range of activities and services can be accessed during their time at the prison.

A principle at the MRC that recognises the well established notion around the presumption of innocence is that unconvicted prisoners will be managed under the least restrictive conditions possible, other than those necessary to maintain the good order, security and management of the prison and the safety of prisoners, staff and visitors. To achieve this, the MRC has developed a security model that maximises the freedom of movement for prisoners within a secure perimeter, while maintaining a level of supervision and control appropriate to the maximum security environment.

For the first time in Victoria, we have the ability to meet United Nations standards for the treatment of unsentenced prisoners and to this end the following will be features of the MRC:

- Sentenced and unsentenced prisoners will be kept separate as far as practicable.
- Provision of appropriate resources and facilities to enable remanded prisoners to prepare for court.
- Policies and procedures that promote positive interaction between staff and prisoners where each is expected to be treated with respect by the other.
- An emphasis on helping prisoners maintains legal, family and community ties.
- A range of daily activity options that provide prisoners with the opportunity for constructive engagement during out of cell hours.

Providing an environment where the above features are available, within an operating philosophy consistent with the 'Healthy Prisons' principles, should create a living and working environment conducive to the needs of all those who live and work here.

I trust you will find this booklet helpful.

**Alan Scaife**

General Manager

Metropolitan Remand Centre

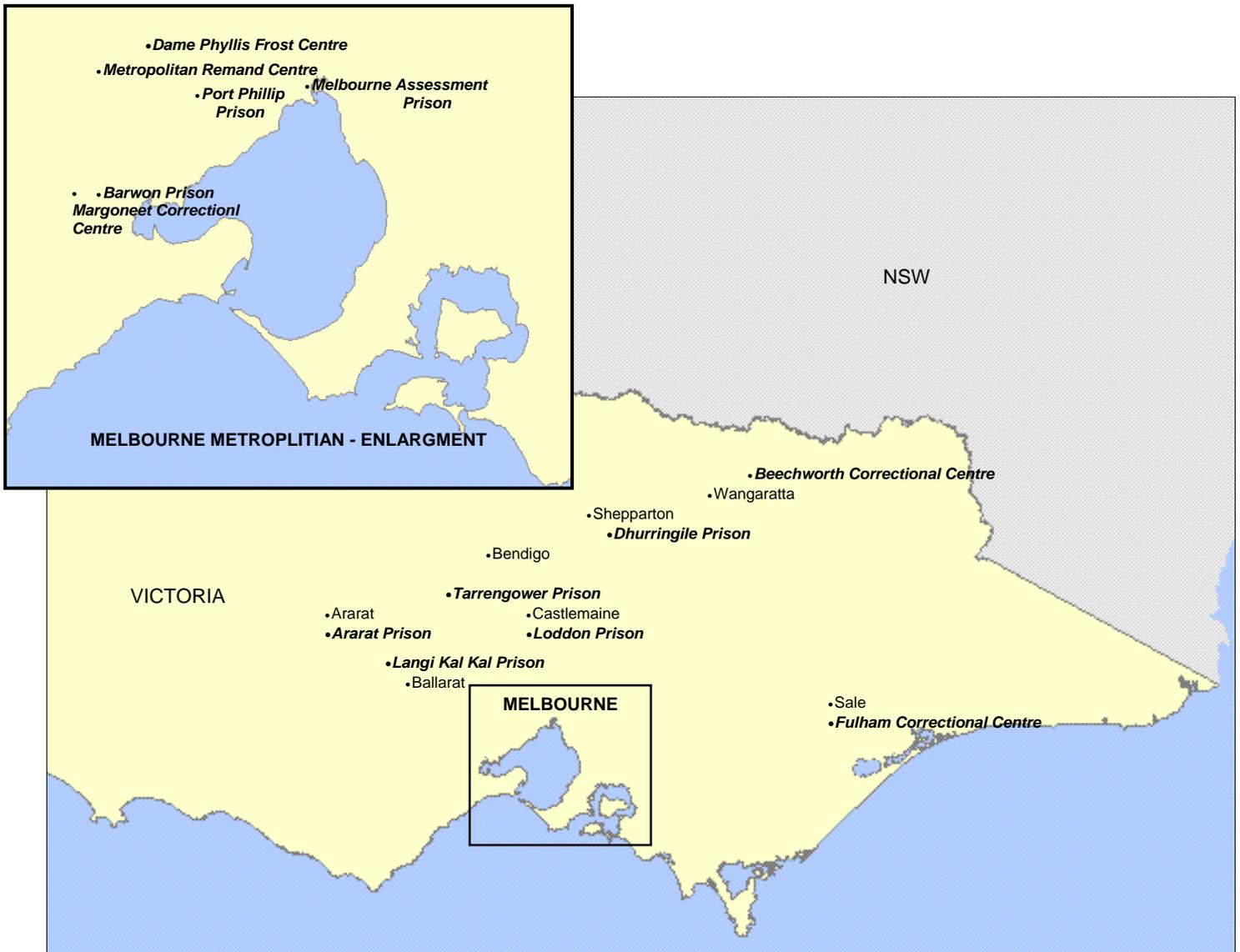
# Metropolitan Remand Centre

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## introduction

This booklet has been prepared for prisoners and their visitors to provide useful information about the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC).

## prison system overview

Corrections Victoria is responsible for the direction, management and operation of Victoria's corrections system, which incorporates prisons and Community Correctional Services.

As a service agency within the Department of Justice, Corrections Victoria develops and implements policies, programs and services that ensure the safe and secure containment of prisoners, and that seek to rehabilitate offenders by addressing the underlying causes of offending behaviour.

Corrections Victoria manages some 50 Community Correctional Services locations across the state and is responsible for managing Victoria's 11 public prisons and overseeing the contracts relating to the management of two privately operated prisons. In so doing, Corrections Victoria delivers a safe and secure corrections system that actively engages offenders and the community to promote positive behaviour change.

The table below provides an outline of each prison within the Victorian Prison System, outlining the prison purpose, capacity and classification. After a prisoner is sentenced, he will be seen by the Sentence Management Unit who will determine the most appropriate location the prisoner is to be transferred to.

Location	Purpose	Operator	DX Courier
<b>Melbourne Assessment Prison</b> 317 Spencer St, Melb	Initial Reception / Assessment / Acute Assessment Unit	CV	210666
<b>Metropolitan Remand Centre</b> Middle Rd, Ravenhall	Remand	CV	211604
<b>Port Phillip Prison</b> Palmers Rd, Laverton	Sentenced / Transit / Special needs / Tertiary Medical/ Psycho-Social Unit	GSL	39334
<b>H M Prison Barwon</b> Bacchus Marsh Rd, Lara	Maximum (General)	CV	217020
<b>Dame Phyllis Frost Centre</b> Riding Boundary Rd, Deer Park	Women – General / Reception	CV	39324
<b>H M Prison Ararat</b> Warrack Rd, Ararat	Low to medium protection / Special Needs / Sex Offenders	CV	214091
<b>Fulham Correctional Centre</b> Hopkins Rd, West Sale	General	GEO	85028
<b>H M Prison Loddon</b> Matheson St, Castlemaine	General	CV	215094
<b>Marngoneet Correctional Centre</b> Bacchus Marsh Rd, Lara	Programs	CV	217021
<b>H M Prison Dhurringile</b> Murchison Rd, Murchison	General	CV	215626
<b>H M Prison Langi Kal Kal</b> Western Hwy, Trawalla	Low to medium protection requirements	CV	214413
<b>H M Prison Tarrengower</b> Cnr Baringhup and Nuggetty Rd, Maldon	Women – General	CV	217297
<b>Beechworth Correctional Centre</b> Flat Rock Rd, Beechworth	General (Short term)	CV	214431

CV: Corrections Victoria

GSL & GEO: Private Operator

## background and purpose

The Metropolitan Remand Centre is a 600 bed, maximum security remand prison.

The construction of a modern, purpose-built remand prison will enable Corrections Victoria to meet international standards for the treatment of unsentenced prisoners, and provides the opportunity to introduce leading-edge technology and operational practices into a new prison facility. The MRC is the State's major remand facility for adult male prisoners, with an operating capacity of 600 prisoners, excluding a number of specialist cells (for example medical, management and observation). As a maximum-security facility the primary role of the MRC is to contain prisoners safely, securely and humanely while recognising the special needs of unconvicted prisoners, and to create a safe environment for everyone who works at, lives in or visits the prison.

### **Separation of Remand from Sentenced Prisoners**

In accordance with United Nations standards, the MRC will enable unconvicted and convicted prisoners to be kept separate, as far as practicable.

### **Legal Services**

There will be a strong focus on providing legal resources to assist unconvicted prisoners to prepare for their court cases.

## prison facilities

The MRC comprises a range of buildings of different size and for specific purposes. A mix of types and sizes of accommodation reflects the particular needs of different prisoner groups (eg; mainstream, protection and prisoners with different needs) and so the prison's design and physical layout provide flexibility and adaptability. The buildings include:

- Main Prison Entry and Administrative Area
- Mainstream Prisoner Accommodation
- Protection Prisoner Accommodation
- Specialist Accommodation (Young Adult, At Risk, Vulnerable, Residential)
- Central Movement Control
- Mainstream and Protection Industry Areas
- Education and Programs Areas
- Visits Centre
- External Visitor Centre
- Prisoner Reception / Records / Property
- Legal Centre
- Program Areas within Units
- Health Centre
- Recreational Facilities
- Multi Faith Chapel
- Security and Emergency Services Facility
- Stores and Maintenance
- Industrial Kitchen and Laundry
- Horticulture Facility
- Prisoner Shop

## prison management and staff

The prison management team comprises:

- Prison General Manager
- Operations Manager (Security & Emergency Management)
- Operations Manager (Accommodation & Compliance)
- Operations Manager (Accommodation & Offender Management)
- Operations Manager (Accommodation & Workforce Environment)
- Industry and Training Manager
- Business Services Manager
- Offender Services Manager
- Clinical Services Manager / Senior Clinician
- Staff Development Manager
- Projects Manager
- Executive Services Manager (Executive Officer)

The MRC has over 300 staff members working in various custodial and non-custodial roles through all areas of the prison. These include:

- Security and Unit Officers
- Clinicians / Psychologists
- Prisoner Support Workers
- Offender Services Officers
- Industry Officers
- Education Staff
- Business Services and Administration Staff
- Medical Professionals
- Reception and Property Staff

## prisoner accommodation

The MRC is divided into four accommodation areas, each with its own area supervisor and staffing structure. Separating prisoners into manageable areas allows for the effective supervision, security and safety of the complex, and also enables the appropriate provision of prisoner services to be provided according to various needs.

There are nine accommodation areas containing a total of 600 cells. Within each accommodation area there are a number of access cells to allow for the needs of disabled prisoners.

The prison also has a number of management and observations cells. There are several medical centre beds for day patient recovery and supervision.

Accommodation is divided into the following areas:

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
<b><i>Area A - Mainstream</i></b>	
Albion	75
Attwood	75
<b><i>Area B - Mainstream</i></b>	
Burnside (Orientation)	75
Bellbridge	75
<b><i>Area C - Specialist area for various needs of different prisoner groups</i></b>	
Calder	48
Cambridge	70
Chartwell	32
Chilwell	50
<b><i>Area D – Protection &amp; Management</i></b>	
Deakin (protection)	100
Exford (management)	15

## reception: the first 24 hours

Upon arrival, each prisoner undertakes a reception process. All clothing / property is searched and recorded, some items will be allocated to the prisoner to take to their cell, and the remaining items will be securely stored within the prison property store.

This is followed by interviews with health and other staff then the prisoner will be photographed and have their identity card issued. Initial information about the prison and its orientation process will be provided as part of the reception process.

All prisoners are placed within the Orientation Unit (Burnside), unless there are factors requiring them to be placed elsewhere in the prison. Once within the unit, access to prisoner Peer Supporters / Educators is provided and orientation will commence. Once orientation is completed, prisoners are relocated to other accommodation units within the prison depending on individual prisoners' needs. (refer accommodation section).

Within the first 24 hours at the prison, private monies will be transferred from the previous location to enable access to the prison shop and telephones the next working day.

Prisoners participate in the MRC First Night Program, which provides them with the essential information and services they need to help them cope with the first night at MRC. This is an opportunity for prisoners to ask staff about what is expected from them in the immediate future and how to access services to deal with pressing concerns. Orientation will continue over the next few days.

## orientation

Following arrival at MRC, most prisoners are initially placed within Burnside Unit where they will participate in the Orientation program. This is delivered in the first few days after arrival and includes:

- Daily Routines
- Security Rules and Regulations
- Assessments
- Program Availability
- Clinical and Drug & Alcohol Services
- Medical Services
- Administration
- Individual Management Plans
- Communication (telephone / mail)
- Visits program
- Education
- Industry and Opportunities to Work

Within a short time of arriving at the MRC, prisoners will have the opportunity to participate in OH&S training if they are selected to work as a billet or in the prison industries.

## normal prison routine

The typical prison routine for a day at the MRC is outlined below. The routine does not include movements to court or court returns.

06.30 am	Early kitchen workers to work
07.00 am	Wake-up announcement
07.45 am	Pre let out count
08.00 am	Prisoners let out of their cell Light breakfast available Prisoners collect prescribed medication from satellite clinics
08.25 am	Proceed to place of employment Late kitchen workers may participate in programs
9.00 am	Visits commence – professional / family / friends Programs and Clinical Services commence Education Centre opens for morning classes
10.45 am	Formal Count
11.30 am	Education prisoners return to units for lunch
12.00 noon	Mid-day meal Industries workers remain in work areas to eat in lunch rooms.
12.30 pm	Resume work Programs and Clinical Services continue
1.00 pm	Education Centre opens for afternoon classes
1.45 pm	Formal Count
2.45 pm	Prisoners cease work and return to units
4.30 pm	Programs and Clinical Services cease
4.45 pm	Formal Count
5.00 pm	Meals served in units
7.00 pm	All prisoners return to unit (& lockup on weekends)
8:00 pm	Lock Up (weekdays)

Note: The normal prison routine is subject to change for operational purposes.

## prisoner's CRN

Each prisoner is ascribed a CRN upon entering the prison system. A CRN is a Corrections Registration Number and is a unique identifier given to each prisoner while in custody. Prisoners need to remember this number and quote it when asked.

Prisoners need their CRN to access medical, canteen, property, money, mail and phone calls. It is also a good idea for prisoners to provide their CRN to their family and friends, to help them when making contact with the prison.

As a matter of privacy, prisoners are advised not to give their CRN to other prisoners.

## prisoner's rights and responsibilities

When in prison, certain rights are removed. An obvious one is the loss of freedom. However, a number of other rights are protected by law. The following information regarding prisoner's rights is contained in the Corrections Act 1986 Section 47.

### **Every prisoner has the following rights:**

- (a) If not ordinarily engaged in outdoor work, the right to be in the open air for at least an hour each day, if weather permits;
- (b) the right to be provided with food that is adequate to maintain the health and well-being of the prisoner;
- (c) The right to be provided with special dietary food where the Governor is satisfied that such food is necessary for medical reasons or on account of the prisoner's religious beliefs or because the prisoner is a vegetarian;
- (d) The right to be provided with clothing that is suitable for the climate and for any work which the prisoner is required to do and adequate to maintain the health of the prisoner;
- (e) If not serving a sentence of imprisonment, the right to wear suitable clothing owned by the prisoner;
- (f) The right to have access to reasonable medical care and treatment necessary for the preservation of health, including with the approval of the principal medical officer but at the prisoner's own expense, a private medical practitioner, physiotherapist or chiropractor chosen by the prisoner;
- (g) If intellectually disabled or mentally ill, the right to have reasonable access within the prison or, with the Governor's approval outside a prison to such special care and treatment as qualified specialist staff consider necessary or desirable in the circumstances;
- (h) The right to have access to reasonable dental treatment necessary for the preservation of dental health;
- (i) The right to practise a religion of the prisoner's choice and, if consistent with prison security and good prison management to join with other prisoners in practising that religion and to possess such articles as are necessary for the practice of that religion;
- (j) The right to make complaints concerning prison management to the Minister, the Secretary, the Commissioner, the Governor, an official visitor, the Ombudsman, the Health Services Commissioner and the Human Rights Commissioner;
- (k) The right to receive at least one visit which is to last at least half an hour in each week under section 37;
- (l) The right to be classified under a classification system established in accordance with the regulations as soon as possible after being sentenced and to have that classification reviewed annually;

- (m) Subject to sections 47A and 47B, the right to send letters to, and receive letters from, the following people without those letters being opened by prison staff –
  - (i) the Minister, the Secretary, the Commissioner or an official visitor;
  - (ii) a member of Parliament;
  - (iii) a legal practitioner representing the prisoner, or from whom the prisoner is seeking legal advice;
  - (iv) the Ombudsman;
  - (v) the Health Services Commissioner;
  - (vi) the Human Rights Commissioner;
  - (vii) any person authorised to act on behalf of a person listed in sub-paragraph (iv), (v) or (vi);
- (n) Subject to 47D, the right to send and receive other letters uncensored by prison staff;
- (o) The right to take part in educational programmes in the prison;

A prisoner's rights under this section are additional to, and do not affect any other rights which a prisoner has under an Act other than this Act or at common law.

Sub-section (1) (m) does not prevent the opening of letters in accordance with section 28(3) of the Ombudsman Act 1973 or section 86L(7) of the Police Regulation Act 1958.

## security awareness and prisoner movement

During the orientation process, an overview of security procedures affecting prisoners is provided. It is important that prisoners understand how they are expected to behave during their time at the MRC, to avoid disciplinary action being brought against them.

Consistent with an operating philosophy that allows for some freedom of movement within a secure perimeter, the MRC has introduced an electronic trip pass system that allows prisoners to move around the prison with the right approval. Approvals are entered by staff onto the prisoner's identity card. It is important that prisoners become familiar with using and carrying their identity card to ensure movement throughout the prison is facilitated as quickly and as less onerously possible. Prisoners will not be able to pass through central movement control to access other areas of the prison unless authorised to do so and the authority for this will be recorded on the identification card system.

If a prisoner loses or damages their identification card, a replacement card will be provided at the prisoner's expense, no different to if a key was lost on the outside.

Prisoners must be properly dressed outside their units and when moving around the prison.

## security classification

Remand prisoners may be classified in the following categories: A – Maximum, B – Medium and C – Minimum. After sentencing, prisoners will be seen by representatives from the Sentence Management Unit who will decide on the prisoners sentenced security rating.

Security rating classifications are based on an individual assessment conducted by Sentence Management Unit (SMU).

## prohibited and restricted items

MRC staff aim to keep the prison a safe place for all people who live and work in the facility.

Under Directors Instruction 1.4 (Contraband), unauthorised articles include, but are not restricted to, weapons, explosive devices, flammable liquids, drugs, alcohol, currency, tools, equipment which may aid an escape effort, materials used for tattooing, restricted publications and audio-visual material, cameras or other photographic devices, and any article not issued to the prisoner.

Prisoners or visitors found to have any of the above items in their possession will be dealt with according to the prison's disciplinary process, or referred to Police where appropriate.

## drugs in prisons

It is a criminal offence to introduce, use or trade illegal drugs within the prison. Prisoners or visitors found to be involved in drug related activity will be dealt with according to the prison's disciplinary process, or referred to Police where appropriate.

The Victorian Prisons Drug Strategy has been introduced into Victorian prisons to assist in preventing drugs from entering prisons, and to minimize the harm caused by drugs to prisoners, staff and the community.

The strategy incorporates initiatives based on current thinking and community attitudes towards drugs, and best practice in prison drug management from around the world.

Where a prisoner has been found guilty of a prison offence related to drugs or alcohol, the prisoner is unable to participate in contact visits for the period of time outlined below:

- First incident: 3 months
- Second incident: 6 months
- Third incident: 12 months
- Each additional incident: a further 12 months concurrent from the date of the last urine test, refusal to supply urine sample or possession of drug taking implement.

The Victorian Prisons Drug Strategy provides limited opportunities for eligible prisoners to take part in the Drug Free Incentive Program (DFIP). This program provides eligible prisoners with opportunity to consent to voluntary provision of a number of 'clean' urines over a period of time in exchange for reduced management measures (i.e., reduced time that contact visits are lost).

## drug and DNA testing

Under Director's Instruction 1.21 and in accordance with section 29 of the Corrections Act 1986, a Prison Officer may take a urine sample from a prisoner for the purpose of drug detection.

DNA testing may be conducted at the MRC by the Victoria Police when authorized by a court order.

## governor's disciplinary hearings

Under the Corrections Regulations 1998, prisoners can be brought before a Governor's Disciplinary Hearing to hear charges brought against them. As with court proceedings in the community, prisoners are entitled to provide witnesses, if they choose, to assist in their defence. If found not-guilty, all charges will be dropped. If found guilty, sanctions may be imposed such as a reprimand, a fine or partial or full loss of privileges (LOP).

If a prisoner commits any of the prison offences (refer next section), this may result in the prisoner being charged and being brought before a Governor for a Disciplinary Hearing, where the prisoner may risk losing a range of privileges such as personal visits, recreational activities, out of cell time, television, etc. Prisoners could also be placed in management / separation cells for a period of time.

## prison offences and discipline

The following are offences under the Corrections Regulations 1998, Section 44:

1. A prisoner must not—
  - (a) assault or maliciously threaten another person;
  - (b) act in a disruptive, abusive or indecent manner, whether by language or conduct;
  - (c) engage in gambling;
  - (d) traffic in unauthorised articles or substances;
  - (e) have in his or her possession an article or substance not issued or authorised by an officer, prescribed by a medical officer, medical practitioner or dentist, or permitted under the Act or these Regulations;
  - (f) take or use alcohol, a drug of addiction or drug of dependence or an unauthorised substance or article that has not been lawfully issued to the prisoner or take or use alcohol or a drug of addiction or drug of dependence lawfully issued in a manner that was not prescribed or authorised;
  - (g) send a letter threatening or harassing in nature or send or receive a letter or parcel containing an article or substance that the prisoner knows to be an unauthorised article or substance;
  - (h) act in a way which is prejudicial to or threatens prison property;
  - (i) without the direction or permission of an officer—
    - (i) be in a place where he or she is not permitted to be; or
    - (ii) leave the place where he or she is required to be;
  - (j) work in a careless or negligent way;
  - (k) breach a condition of a custodial community permit;
  - (l) disobey a lawful order of an officer;
  - (m) fail to comply with a direction under 29A of the Act;
  - (n) in relation to tests conducted under section 29A of the Act—
    - (i) interfere with a test or sample; or
    - (ii) adulterate or substitute a sample;
  - (o) commit an act or omission that is contrary to the good order, management or security of the prison or the security of the prisoners;
  - (p) attempt any of the above.
2. A prisoner contravenes sub-regulation (1)(m) if he or she has not provided a sample of his or her urine within 3 hours of being directed to do so under section 29A of the Act.

## anti-bullying policy

**“Bullying”** is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward another person or group of people with the intention to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

The MRC has an obligation to ensure that the prison is free of harassing, discriminatory or bullying behaviour.

Everyone has a responsibility to report bullying behaviour and to be a role model in relation to appropriate behaviour within the prison. Everyone is responsible for resolving bullying problems through identified communication channels.

Prisoners should be encouraged to discuss instances of bullying with a peer prisoner supporter, their caseworker, prison officer, programs staff, medical staff, clinical services staff, or any other relevant person in the prison. All reports are to be taken seriously and fully investigated. Any investigation will be undertaken with discretion and wherever possible the victim's anonymity will be protected.

Perpetrators will be separated from the prison population during the investigation and steps will be taken to ensure that victims are not subjected to further victimisation or reprisals for having reported bullying. Wherever possible, a prisoner found guilty of bullying behaviour will be punished.

The MRC is committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying and acts of violence. The MRC has an Anti-Bullying Policy that extends to every person in the prison, and is designed to ensure that everyone feels safe and able to report any bullying that may occur without fear of reprisal.

The Anti-bullying Policy is discussed further during the prisoner's orientation program.

## review and assessment committee

The local Review and Assessment Committee will meet with all prisoners within their first week to establish individual requirements and to see how prisoners are settling in.

The Committee comprises of the Operations Manager, clinicians, industry and education representatives, and is an opportunity for an individual meeting with the prisoner to ensure they are aware of what the MRC has to offer as well as share other information that may be relevant to the individual.

This is also an opportunity for prisoners to raise issues or concerns they may have.

The Review and Assessment Committee will meet at least once per week to ensure all prisoners can be seen on a regular basis.

## fire safety

In the event of a fire incident, prisoners may be required to evacuate their cell or unit (depending upon where the fire is located within the prison). If prisoners are required to evacuate, prisoners must:

- Listen closely to staff instructions
- Evacuate all areas in an orderly fashion and proceed to the designated 'evacuation points'
- Once evacuated, remain in the designated area whilst a muster is conducted

All prisoners are required to familiarise themselves with all evacuation points around the prison. Should a prisoner discover a fire he is to raise the alarm by informing staff or using the nearest fire alarm.

## alarms and emergency codes

In the event of an emergency, alarms will be raised and all prisoners will be required to remain within their units and follow the instructions of the unit staff.

The following codes may be heard if called via the radio's or PA system:

CODE	MEANING	Action
Red	Fire	Proceed to the primary evacuation point.
White	Internal Evacuation	Proceed to the primary evacuation point.
Aqua	Lockdown	Proceed to your cell.

When any code is called, all prisoners are required to listen to the instructions provided by the officers.

## cell intercom system

All cells are fitted with an intercom system, located on the wall above the bed, which is linked to the Control Room. **The intercom is only to be used for emergencies.**

If the intercom system is used for inappropriate reasons, prisoners may be charged with a prison offence. **If you are having thoughts of suicide or self-harm please press the intercom button immediately.**

## legal services

The prison is equipped with a multi-purpose Legal Centre where, by appointment, prisoners can consult privately with their legal representatives in preparation for court. Professional visits, family conferences, video-conferencing, offices for Victoria Legal Aid staff and legal information are also available within this specially constructed Legal Centre. The Legal Centre contains a range of legal resources, available in hard copy and electronically.

Legal professionals can also utilise this area to conduct information sessions and legal education workshops to advise prisoners of the legal assistance available to them both in the prison and in the community.

In addition to the services available to prisoners within the Legal Centre, a study space is provided within each accommodation unit. This space includes computers which can access a range of available legal information. Accommodation cells are fitted with data points to enable prisoners to access legal information stored on a central server within the prison (refer computers section).

Attention to confidentiality requirements ensures all prisoners are able to conduct their legal business securely.

## victoria legal aid

Requests to see Legal Aid can be made via a referral process managed by the staff within the units.

## telecourt

Legal representation can either be present in the prison Telecourt room (with permission from the Operations Manager), or at the courtroom at the Magistrate's Court. You will be able to have confidential telephone communication with your legal representative if he or she is in court.

Family and friends will still be able to attend the court. Prisoners will be able to see the Magistrate, the Prosecutor and their legal representative, any documents produced and how they are appearing on monitors in the courtroom. The hearings will not be recorded by the prison however regular Magistrates' Court recording of the proceedings will take place. The Magistrate and others in the court will be able to see the prisoner and others anyone else within the Telecourt room. The routine will not be affected apart from the prisoner not being present in court.

## court and transport

Prisoners will be transported to court as required. Court business can be transacted through teleconferencing facilities provided in the Legal Centre via Legal Aid appointment. Prisoners are advised that there are not any telecourt facilities at Ringwood or Dandenong Courts, and will be required to attend these courts in person.

Prisoners will be advised of departure times for court appearances by the Unit staff. All prisoners are required to be prepared for their transportation half an hour prior to departure to ensure timely processes.

All prisoners returning from court (including telecourt) will be seen by medical centre staff. Access to clinical staff is available for prisoners requiring debriefing or emotional support.

## sentencing from court

In the case of a prisoner going to Court from the MRC, and obtaining a custodial sentence, the prisoner is then transported back to the MRC. An assessment will be conducted by either Sentence Management Unit or Prison Staff, depending upon how long the prisoner has been sentenced for.

There are two different types of assessments, one for prisoners sentenced for less than 6 months, and one for prisoners sentenced more than 6 months. Both assessments gather a range of information to assist in the management of the prisoner classification process.

### **Assessment for less than 6 months:**

This assessment is used for gathering broad information and identifying needs to ensure the Sentence Management Unit are able to appropriately classify and place prisoners within the prison system. Information gathered may include current and previous offence history, behavioural history (and associated risks), sentence requirements and personal needs, including overall health requirements.

### **Assessment for more than 6 months:**

This assessment is used for gathering information and identifying needs to ensure the Sentence Management Unit are able to appropriately classify and place prisoners within the prison system that best suits their needs. This will be based on current and previous offence history and behavioural history as well as associated risks to the community, staff, other prisoners, and themselves. Other information gathered will include health requirements, educational and training needs, sentence requirements, personal needs, program requirements and more. This is a more in depth interview with the prisoner, where recommended outcomes and program needs will be identified to assist with offending behaviour and parole/sentence expectations.

Following these assessments, prisoners will be seen by the Sentence Management Unit and a suitable sentenced location will be determined at that time. Prisoners will then be transferred to their classified location as soon as practicable.

Prisoners are able to discuss this process with their caseworkers should they require more information.

## visits

There are three types of visits: personal contact, personal non-contact and professional visits.

### **VISIT TIMES**

#### Personal Visits:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 9:00am to 6:30pm  
*NB: Last visit is processed at 5:15pm*

Tuesday: Closed, No Visits

Saturday & Sunday: 9:00am to 5:30pm  
*NB: Last visit is processed at 4:15pm*

#### Professional Visits:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 9:00am to 6:30pm

Saturday & Sunday: 9:00am to 5:30pm

Exford Prisoners: 9:00am to 2:45pm  
*NB: Last visit is processed at 1:45pm*

All visits are of a one hour duration and are available 6 days a week, including public holidays, except on Christmas and Good Friday, due to the visit centre being closed.

All prisoners are allowed three (3) personal visits per week (either 1 x non contact and 2 x contact (maximum), 2 x non-contact and 1 x contact or 3 x non-contact). Only one visit of any type may occur on a weekend. Prisoners ineligible for contact visits are entitled to one non-contact visit per week.

**Note:** Prisoners accommodated in **Exford Unit** are only permitted 1x 1hr non contact visit per week (unless otherwise authorised). The last visit is processed at 2:15pm for prisoners accommodated in Exford.

Prisoners may have three (3) adult visitors and a reasonable number of children (subject to space availability) on every visit day.

The first time a visitor comes to visit at the MRC they will need to allow extra time before the visit to be registered.

By request and subject to availability, video conference facilities may be utilised to maintain contact with family members interstate.

All prisoners are able to make appointments with their professional / legal representatives as required. Both the prisoner and the professional visitor are able to arrange appointments as needed, and these are conducted in private office areas within the visits centre.

No prisoner is permitted in the Visit Centre before their visitor. Visitors are checked in through the visitors reception centre where their names are taken, identification checked and any approved property booked in. The prisoner is then called for a visit, and will report to the Officers' Station where staff shall ensure the prisoner is properly dressed (visit overalls) and searched to ensure no contraband is taken to the Visits Centre.

**Smoking is not permitted inside the visits centre.**

Throughout the visit it is the responsibility of visitors to ensure children are well behaved and remain in the Visit Centre. It is expected that contact between prisoners and their visitors be kept at an acceptable level. Failure to do this may result in the visit being terminated.

Each adult visitor will be permitted to take up to \$15.00 in coins per visit in to the Visit Centre for use in the food and drink vending machines.

At the end of the visit, visitors must return their visitors pass and can collect any outgoing property from the visitors reception centre.

All prisoners' property brought into the prison by visitors will be searched and delivered to the accommodation units on weekdays only. Any property brought in over the weekend will be held until the next business day. All property will be delivered to the units as soon as practicable.

Property may be dropped off at the Property Office on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday between 9:05am and 5:15pm, and between 8:05am and 4:15pm on weekends.

Ex-prisoners and any person who has a CRN (ie. past or current orders with Community Correctional Services) are required to obtain written permission from the prison General Manager prior to visiting. **If visitors have a permission letter from another prison location, the prison will honour one (1) visit under that authority.**

The following rules must be followed at all times by all visitors:

- It is an offence to take any item into or out of the prison without the General Manager's permission. Any person found doing so will be apprehended.
- Any visitor found introducing contraband into a prison will be banned from all visits at all prisons for a minimum period of 12 months, with the matter also referred to Police.
- Persons entering the prison may be asked to submit to a search of their person and their property.
- Satisfactory identification must be produced by each visitor. A total of 100 points of identification is required to gain access to the prison. Anyone who cannot produce satisfactory identification will not be permitted to enter the prison. Satisfactory identification must be one of the following:

**100 POINTS**

Current Drivers Licence, Correctional Services Pass, Consulate ID Card, Law Card, Valid Passport, Shooters Licence, Key Pass, Police Member I.D

**50 POINTS**

Sixty Plus Card, Birth Certificate, Australian Citizenship Certificate, Marriage Certificate, Defence Department I.D, Government Authorised U16.

**25 POINTS** (only one of each of these items will be accepted)

Medicare Card, Social Security Card, Student Card, Credit Card, Bank Book, Proof of Age Card.

## **BOOKING VISITS**

**Prisoners are required to book in their visits via the unit staff.** Visitors are not able to contact the prison to make the booking on the prisoner's behalf. Visitors who wish to visit but do not have a booking, or arrive after their booking, **may** be offered a non-contact visit only, however this cannot be guaranteed as it is subject to availability.

## **DRESS CODE**

Visitors must adhere to the MRC dress standards. Visitors are NOT permitted to wear hats, beanies, scarves, hooded tops, high visibility work wear, sunglasses (unless prescription) or revealing clothing. Prison Staff within the Gatehouse have the authority to refuse entry if dress standards are inappropriate.

## visitor identification process

When visitors arrive at the MRC for the first time they will be required to be verified (as per above).

Once identity is established, a photograph will be taken of the person's face as well as their iris (coloured part of the eye). This procedure is non-invasive and 100% safe as the image is taken photographically. Infra-red technology is not used to record the image.

All information is stored and maintained on the prisons internal identification system and will make subsequent visits a faster process.

## prison issued property

Upon reception, prisoners personal property will be listed and securely stored. Some items of personal property can be kept by the prisoner, with all property being returned to the prisoner once they leave the establishment.

Each prisoner will be issued with the following items:

- 1 prisoner & visitor information booklet
- 1 cup (in cell)
- 1 cereal bowl (in cell)
- 1 set of cutlery (in cell)
- 1 identification card
- 1 washing bag
- 1 cell key
- underwear as required

The following items will be supplied within the cell:

- 3 blankets
- pillow
- sheets
- towels
- one jug or kettle
- a TV, maximum screen size 34cm

If a prisoner loses any of the above items during their stay they will be required to pay for the replacement item.

If a prisoner should intentionally damage any of the above items during his stay he will be required to pay the replacement cost.

Specific clothing / footwear required for work will be provided at the work location and will remain in this area at all times.

The prison does not issue general clothing except in emergency situations, as all remand prisoners are allowed to wear their own clothing.

## personal prisoner property

### **Personal Cell Property Allowance**

As this is a remand prison, prisoners are able to wear their own clothing. At all sentenced prisons, prison clothing will be issued.

The *authorised cell property allowance* includes the following:

- allocated cell furniture and fittings (as listed above)
- clothing up to the maximum of clothing issue per prisoner
- up to authorised limit of canteen items per prisoner
- up to authorised amount of toiletries per prisoner
- up to an authorised amount of stationery/writing materials per prisoner (including legal papers)
- miscellaneous items as approved

The following items may be left for prisoners without Governors approval and retained by prisoners in their cell:

- 4x T-shirts or polo tops
- 3x collared shirts (dress or casual)
- 3x Singlets
- 2x Jumper, windcheater, tracksuit top or Jacket (no hood)
- 3x Track pants or trousers
- 2pr Shorts
- 6 pr Jocks or boxers shorts (single gusset, new pairs only)
- 2x Thermal Underwear (Long Johns)
- 2x Thermal Underwear (tops)
- 3 pr Socks (new pairs only)
- Magazines, books (no hard covers) or newspapers (no R rated or above)
- 6x standard size photographs (no polaroids)

Clothes for court:

- Tie
- Suit

Shoes:

- 1pr Shoes (closed in dress type for court)

**Please note:** No runners, skate shoes, thongs or similar will be accepted. These must be purchased by the prisoner through the MRC Special Spend process.

**Acceptance of all property is at the discretion of MRC staff.**

All property dropped off by visitors will be delivered to the prisoners as soon as practicable. Refer to page 18 for property office hours.

Property that exceeds the cell allowance will be held in the prison property store.

Prisoners wishing to purchase items such as a stereo, CDs or runners require approval via Special Spends Request with the purchase being made through the prison store. If unsure of what items can be sent in, prisoners may check with the Prison Supervisor.

**It is important to be aware that the prison has the capacity to store one (1) personal property box per prisoner. Property exceeding this allocation will be required to be sent out.**

**All personal property stored in cells is the responsibility of the prisoner. The MRC is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal property (or items that are damaged through general wear and tear) stored within prisoners' cells. Prisoners are reminded to lock their cell doors when they are not in their cell.**

## private money

Money can be sent in for a prisoner by family or friends via the mail as either a money order or bank cheque made payable to the prisoner, or in cash at the visitor reception area. Prisoner monies will only be accepted before the visit, not after the visit has occurred. A prisoner may receive a maximum of \$140 per calendar month, and subject to approval via Governor's Request & Complaints, a further allowance of up to \$50 for ISD/STD telephone calls.

The prison will only accept money from visitors registered on the prisoner's valid visitor's list, approved organisations and approved solicitor trust account cheques.

A money order or bank cheque must be accompanied by the sender's name and address, plus the 'do not detach' stub (money orders only), otherwise it will not be credited into the prisoner's account.

Private monies to be sent out (upon approval), as well as all other deductions such as fines incurred, newspaper orders, Governor's Request purchases, etc., will be processed on Wednesday of each week by administration staff.

Prisoners can also earn money through work opportunities within MRC and obtain funds from the outside accounts via VACRO Money Transfer. These forms are available from within the Unit.

## telephone calls

Prisoners can provide a list of up to ten (10) telephone numbers for personal calls. All numbers must be verified for appropriateness and acceptability by staff. Once telephone numbers have been verified, they are added to individual phone lists and prisoners may contact those people. Phone lists are processed as soon as practicable.

The telephone may be used during out of cell hours providing it does not interfere with counts/musters. Prisoners must arrange for monies to be put into their Phone Account through the prison shop only. All phone credits will be made available by the following day.

Prisoner telephone accounts are protected by a 4 digit PIN code provided to the prisoner upon arrival. In the event that a prisoner wishes to change this code, prisoners are able to contact their unit staff and request to change their PIN.

Phone calls are limited to 12 minutes to ensure equitable access for all prisoners is maintained.

Prisoners are not permitted to take incoming calls, however urgent messages can be left at the prison switchboard. Prisoners are not permitted to contact the media.

### **How to use the Arunta telephone system:**

- 1 Pick up the phone; you will not hear a dial tone.
2. Enter your CRN and then the last four digits of your CRN again
3. Press the button marked \* to view your numbers, press 1, 2, up to 10 whichever number corresponds with the phone number you want to contact.
4. Your number will automatically be dialed as long as you have phone credit.
5. The person you are ringing will first hear a recorded message stating that someone is calling them from Metropolitan Remand Centre.

**Cost of telephone calls:**

Local call cost 27 cents and there is a time limit of 12 minutes. The phone automatically cuts out after the time limit. Normal rates apply for STD or ISD calls. Just before the end of the first 3 minutes of any STD or ISD phone call, prisoners will hear a 'beep' to let them know that they have been on the phone for 3 minutes.

**All private calls from prisoners may be monitored or recorded, and exempt calls (including legal and Ombudsman Victoria) will NOT be monitored or recorded.**

## food

All prisoners will be provided with three meals per day. The evening meal will be delivered to the units from the prison's main kitchen, with breakfast items for the following morning also delivered at this time, including milk.

Lunch will be provided either within the unit or in the industries or education areas, depending upon where individual is situated during the day.

Special dietary requirements will be taken into account upon request.

## prisoner mail

Prisoners may write and receive as many letters as they wish. Pre-paid envelopes and stamps can be purchased from the prison shop at normal postage rates. All mail (other than exempt mail) will be scrutinised for contraband and letters may be censored to maintain the good order and security of the prison.

Prisoners have the right to send letters to, or receive letters from, designated persons without that mail being opened by prison staff. Mail to or from the following is exempt and will be forwarded unopened:

- Minister for Corrections
- Secretary Department of Justice
- Correctional Services Commissioner
- A member of Parliament
- The Ombudsman's Office
- Official Visitors
- Health Services Commissioner or person acting on the Commissioner's behalf
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commissioner or person acting on the Commissioner's behalf
- Victorian Privacy Commissioner
- Office of Police Integrity
- A legal practitioner representing the prisoner, or from whom the prisoner is seeking legal advice

All mail envelopes entering the prison must be free of attachments (stickers, glitter, etc). Should there be attachments on any envelope, this mail will be placed within the prisoner's property until the prisoner is released.

Mail leaving the prison also needs to be free from attachments / artwork on the exterior of the envelopes. If letters have attachments / artwork on the envelopes, these will be returned to the prisoner to be placed in a 'clean' envelope before they can be posted.

## canteen times

The prison canteen is open Monday to Thursday each week (except Christmas Day and Good Friday). Identification must be presented before any items can be purchased from the canteen. Each prisoner will have one opportunity to visit the shop each week, as per their allocated Unit Canteen Day.

Friday's are available to purchase telephone credits only

Bag buys will occur in exceptional circumstances and prisoners will be notified when this process will apply.

## case management and individual management plans

In the first week at MRC, all prisoners will be advised of clinical and non-clinical programs available and educational courses provided. Prisoners will meet with staff from each area to be assessed for suitable courses in which they wish to/should participate (refer Orientation process).

Prisoners will also participate in a Case Management Intake Meeting, where program / education / work choices will be discussed and a Local Plan will be developed, outlining those choices and associated expectations.

The Local Plan requires the prisoner's agreement and signature, and a copy is placed on the Individual Management Plan (IMP) file. Prisoners and their case worker will regularly discuss progress against the Local Plan.

## programs and services

There is a range of programs and services offered to all prisoners at the MRC. Program services are geared towards the specific needs of remanded prisoners. The Offender Services team works collaboratively with other functions within the prison, including custodial case managers, industry, education and health staff, to deliver the most appropriate services based on thorough assessment at the time of reception.

The location also has an Offender Management Supervisor who works closely with Offender Services staff to identify opportunities for improving the systems and processes that guide the case management of individual prisoners.

Programs offered by Offender Services include:

- Other Prison Profile Information
- Court Preparation
- Pre-Release Services
- Gambling Counselling
- Quit Smoking Program
- Orientation Support
- Welfare Services (refer to page 25)
- Legal & Library Services (refer to page 17)
- Chaplaincy (refer to page 25)

Services are regularly reviewed to ensure appropriateness, demand and service provision opportunities.

## clinical services

The Clinical Services Team comprises clinical staff (clinicians) such as psychologists and other clinicians.

The team is located within the Health Centre and works collaboratively with other location staff to provide all therapeutic and drug and alcohol services to prisoners at MRC. Most services are provided in a group format, although limited access to short-term individual therapy is available in some circumstances. Crisis intervention and distress management contact is provided on an individual basis.

Program offered by Clinical Services are short term to allow for the rapid turn over of prisoners at MRC.

The Clinical Services team provides the following services:

- Orientation to Clinical Services
- Drug and Alcohol Services
  - Staying Safe in the Community (Release-Related Harm Reduction) Program
  - Breaking the Cycle Drug & Alcohol Program
  - Cannabis and me: All the facts
  - Alcohol and me: All the facts
  - Opiates and me: All the facts
  - Prescription medication and me: All the facts
  - Stimulants and me: All the facts
  - Identified Drug User Reviews (as part of the Victorian Drug Strategy)
  - Drug and Alcohol Individual Therapy (limited availability)
- Therapeutic Services
  - Distress Intervention
  - Coping with Change
  - Communications Skills Program
  - Conflict Management Program
  - Problem Solving Program
  - Mood Management Program
  - Anger Management Program
  - Individual Therapy (limited availability)
- Other Services
  - Suicide and Self Harm Training for staff
  - Critical Incident Support for prisoners
  - Risk Review Team contributions

## welfare services

Dedicated Offender Services Officers are available at the MRC to provide assistance with housing needs of prisoners, family needs and general enquiries to assist with all welfare concerns.

If prisoners wish to see an Offender Services Officer, appointments can be made via referral from the Units.

Visitors also have access to welfare services provided by St Vincent De Paul's who are located within the Visitor Reception area. Visitors are able to speak with St Vincent De Paul's volunteers anytime for private visitor related issues. Any other queries can be raised with prison staff.

## health services

Health and primary health care services are provided for prisoners to a community standard, which also takes into account the special health care needs of prisoners.

The MRC has a range of health services provided including:

- 24-hour general and psych nursing
- Doctor – 5 days per week
- Day recovery hospital wards
- Dental care
- On site X-ray facilities
- Specialist services such as optometry, physiotherapy, etc.

Where a need is identified, other services are available by appointment through external providers. Prisoners are required to discuss these issues with their Unit Manager.

The MRC also contains specialist accommodation units to manage prisoners withdrawing from drugs and well as those requiring closer supervision or enhanced clinical services for various reasons.

## peer educator and supporter service

The Peer Educator and Supporter Program at the MRC are designed to allow 'inmates to help inmates to work through the challenges and experiences of prison life.'

The goals of the program are to:

- make the transition into custody easier for new escorts
- assist in the reduction of violence (physical and otherwise)
- assist in the reduction of prisoner stress levels
- contribute to the reduction of blood-borne viruses contracted in the prison
- add another option/source of support for prisoners
- assist in the dissemination of essential information for new and current prisoner population

Peer Educators deliver information sessions to assist prisoners to cope with incarceration. Peer Supporters provide individual support and referral service for other prisoners.

## chaplaincy

The delivery of multi faith services at the MRC is provided by representatives from a range of denominations. Chaplains attend MRC on a regular basis to ensure effective and efficient chaplaincy services are provided to all prisoners.

Faith services will be conducted at differing times in the prison chapel. There are also meeting rooms available to talk to individual Chaplains as required. Specific times and services are publicised throughout the prison on notice boards.

In times of crisis, Chaplains will be available at the request of the prisoner to provide religious support.

Referrals to chaplaincy services are via the Unit staff, who will make an appointment for the prisoner.

## release preparation and bail

The MRC will see all prisoners who are attending court matters with the possibility of release. Areas of consideration will be housing, Centrelink and outstanding legal issues.

Prisoners will be provided with the VACRO Getting Out booklet and a pre-release pack containing useful information.

The MRC is able to process bail payments.

## concerns

The MRC has a 'concerns' system whereby prisoners and visitors can raise concerns they may have about another prisoner's well-being.

Should there be any concerns, prisoners can raise these with any custodial officer, welfare worker, clinical services staff member, counsellor, health professional or family support worker. Should a visitor have any concerns relating to a prisoner's well-being, individuals can advise prison staff directly or telephone the prison and provide details to the Prison Supervisor.

## cultural & linguistically diverse prisoners

The MRC offers a range of services that cater of the individual needs of varied cultures.

There is an Aboriginal Wellbeing Officer, as well as Indigenous Services Officers, to specifically work with indigenous prisoners as well as a range of interpreting services for other ethnic groups.

## education

Educational services are provided by a Registered Training Organisation.

The prison education campus is managed by a full time coordinator who engages the services of both full time and sessional staff.

Vocational training opportunities are available allowing prisoners to obtain skill-based qualifications to assist them in obtaining future employment. The education service works collaboratively with industry staff to ensure that the range of courses available is complimentary to both industry operations and changing labour market demands.

## work opportunities

The prison has five (5) industry factories which house a variety of industry related work opportunities, including wooden products and metal fabrication.

There is also a horticulture industry that maintains some of the prison's internal grounds as well as plant propagation activities. Other work opportunities include the prison's kitchen, laundry and general cleaning hands.

A normal work day is from 8:30am to 3:00pm, these times may vary depending upon the industry the prisoner will be working in. The following rates of pay will apply:

<i>Type</i>	Description	Pay Rate
Employed Prisoners	Prisoners may be paid at one of 3 levels depending upon the degree of responsibility, the complexity and demands of the task, the skills required and / or the hours of duty	Level 1: \$8.50 per day Level 2: \$7.40 per day Level 3: \$6.25 per day
Unemployed / Unavailable Prisoners	Remand Prisoners	\$3.15 per day

Prisoner earnings are credited to their spend accounts every Tuesday evening. 20% of all money earned is withheld in a separate account to accumulate, and is given to the prisoner upon release from custody.

Remand prisoners are not required to work however there are employment opportunities for those who choose to work.

## hygiene standards

To provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for prisoners and staff to both live and work in, prisoners are expected to maintain the following standards on a daily basis.

- Hair to be combed and neat
- Beds are to be made by 8.00am (including weekends)
- Individual cells to be clean, neat and tidy, including benches
- All clothing neatly folded and placed away
- Dirty clothing to be placed in washing bags
- All appliances turned off when not in a room

Changes of appearance (ie. shave off / grow beard) will require new identification cards to be produced at the prisoners own expense.

Failure to comply with these basic standards will result in a verbal warning. Continued breach of basic hygiene standards will result in cell occupant/s being placed on the minor offence register.

## laundry services

There is a prison laundry where prisoners are able to have their clothing washed and dried twice per week.

Prisoners are issued with two wash bags upon reception, one for coloured clothes and one for whites. To avoid colours running, prisoners should not put whites which have even a small amount of colour into the wash bag for whites.

These bags are transported, washed and dried. No clothing is washed or dried individually. The industrial machinery is not manufactured with any sharp or protruding pieces to cause damage to clothing.

Ozone Laundry Technology has been installed to ensure any bacteria that may be present within the clothing is destroyed during the washing cycle and not transferable, which meets Australian Standards for hygiene purposes.

Prisoners should be aware that the use of industrial dryers may cause:

- Shrinkage
- Damage to plastic motifs

Prisoners should:

- encourage those who are dropping off or sending in clothing to provide items which are least likely to be affected by the extreme heat of drying.
- read the labels on their clothing for information on washing and drying before sending them to the laundry.
- not overfill wash bags as this will prevent clothing from drying properly and can cause excessive creasing.
- be aware that they have an opportunity to obtain the standard clothing provided by Corrections Victoria upon request

## dress code

All prisoners accommodated at the MRC are permitted to wear their own private clothing.

Should prisoners choose to work within the prison industries, appropriate footwear / clothing will be provided at that work area. Change room facilities are available within each industry. All work clothing provided is to remain at the industry location.

Should a prisoner not have sufficient private clothing to sustain their stay at the MRC, additional clothes can be provided through the donations clothing store. Prisoners are to advise staff upon reception should they have any additional clothing requirements.

## haircuts

If a prisoner requires a haircut an appointment can be made with the barber through the unit staff.

## smoking

All prisoners are reminded that smoking inside any government building is not permitted, and that there are designated external areas where smoking is permitted. Any prisoner found smoking inside or in a non-smoking area will be reported and charged and presented before a governor's disciplinary hearing.

Prisoners found guilty of a smoking charge will be fined \$10 per offence and will lose contact visits for a period of 14 days.

## computers

The MRC has an internal prisoner computer network system called LEARN (Learning, Education and Resource Network). A number of computers are available to hire from the prison for a small fee (to assist with maintenance costs).

A wide range of data is available on LEARN including legal information and reference material, some operating procedures, State Government Acts and Regulations, and information about clinical and non-clinical programs and services. The system also has the ability to produce documentation via a word processing capability. Printing options is also available within the Legal Centre. There is also a limited number of games that can be played on the system.

LEARN is not connected to the internet or the Department's own system in any way and mainly operates as an information system.

Prisoners will need to make an application to the General Manager to access LEARN from their cell, and all requests will be assessed based on merit and availability.

Whilst prisoner owned personal computers are permitted within Victorian prisons, all prisoners at MRC are encouraged to utilise the LEARN system to ensure their personal property is protected. Applications to have a personal computer in their cells must be made in writing to the General Manager, via the Unit Supervisor.

## prisoner representative committee

The MRC provides a forum for prisoners to raise issues or concerns they may have with the operation of the prison. This group meets regularly and if a prisoner has any appropriate issues, they can be raised with a prisoner representative for discussion at the next meeting.

## transport – visitors and discharge

A bus service is available en route from Sunshine to Laverton Railway Stations, stopping at various locations along the way including the MRC, the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Port Phillip Prison.

The bus timetable is displayed within the Unit and also within visitor reception area.

*Note: Corrections Victoria is not the transport operator and therefore variations to bus times may be enacted by the bus operator.*

## voting

The MRC encourages all eligible prisoners to vote in federal, state and local elections. Prisoners will be informed if there are any forthcoming elections, and will be assisted with vote registration.

Note that eligible voters may be fined by the Electoral Commission for failing to vote in an election.

## marriage

Prisoners are eligible to be married while in custody. An application can be made to the General Manager after first discussing the issue with their caseworker.

## official prison visitors

The Official Prison Visitor Program provides an independent overview of the prison system. The Official Prison Visitor may:

- discuss issues that may be raised by prisoners and/or staff;
- inspect and observe prison facilities and programs;
- liaise and interact with other Official Prison Visitors;
- attend Sentence Management panel meetings and internal prisoner disciplinary hearings.

Official Prison Visitors attend the MRC weekly and are available to discuss issues when they attend.

## vacro

The Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) can provide practical and financial services assistance to prisoners and their families. VACRO can be contacted at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 116 Hardware Street, Melbourne, telephone (03) 9602 1366.

## centrelink

A Centrelink representative attends the prison on a weekly basis. Prisoners are able to liaise with the representative through the referral process. Discussions around Centrelink payments can be conducted then.

Upon reception at the Melbourne Assessment Prison, Centrelink were notified of your incarceration. Any outstanding monies owed by Centrelink will be deposited into the prisoners' outside account within two weeks. Prisoners can contact VACRO to obtain assistance in transferring these funds from their outside account to their prison account.

Prisoners will be seen prior to court to assess Centrelink concerns prior to possible release.

## governor's request & complaints

Governor's Requests and Complaints will be heard twice a week by the Operations Manager. This is where prisoners are able to raise any concerns they may have whilst at the MRC and to discuss any requests or complaints they may have.

Prisoners are also be able to request items to be brought in for them or purchased via the Special Spend process, through Governor's Requests and Complaints.

### Specific Complaints

All complaints should try to be resolved at a local level in the first instance.

Prisoners can make a complaint via:

- Unit Supervisor
- A written letter addressed to the General Manager
- By filling out a Governors Request Form, which will enable you to address your concerns with the Operations Manager.
- Raising concerns/issues at a Unit meeting

Should prisoners not receive a satisfactory outcome, the following external agencies can be contacted:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ▪ <b>The Official Prison Visitors</b><br>Direct on their visits          | ▪ <b>Director of Prisons</b><br>Level 22/121 Exhibition Street<br>Melbourne Vic. 3000                |
| ▪ <b>The Ombudsman</b><br>22 / 459 Collins Street<br>Melbourne Vic. 3000 | ▪ <b>Commissioner, Corrections Victoria</b><br>Level 22/121 Exhibition Street<br>Melbourne Vic. 3000 |

Other agencies where complaints can be made include:

- The Minister
- Health Services Commissioner
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commissioner
- Privacy Commissioner

## television channels

Televisions are provided within the cells. All 'free to air' stations are available. Two movies are shown daily starting from 8:30pm. An 'in-house' channel will also be available for prisoners and visitors to provide a range of MRC information in the near future.

## newspapers

Prisoners are able to purchase newspapers and magazines daily by completing the newspaper deduction authority form available from the units. The cost of the newspapers and magazines will be deducted from the prisoners available spend.

## recreation

There are several designated recreational areas throughout the prison. Each accommodation unit has its own facilities including external basketball courts, walking / jogging areas, and internal passive recreational areas within the common space.

The prison also has a recreation complex at the rear of the facility which contains one full size and one half size indoor stadium, art and craft room and gym, as well as external basketball courts and a soccer sized oval.

There are team sport competitions arranged on a regular basis, and all prisoners are encouraged to participate in maintaining a healthy lifestyle whilst at the MRC.

Use of the gym and recreation centre will be timetabled to allow all prisoners the opportunity to utilise the facility.

## most frequently asked questions

The following questions and answers have been provided to assist prisoners when they first arrive at MRC.

### **When can I make a phone call?**

As soon as you obtain phone credits from the canteen, you can make a phone call the following day. If you need to make an emergency call and your proposed numbers have been approved by staff, speak to one of the officers who will be able to assist you.

### **When can I go to canteen?**

Once you have been processed through reception and allocated a cell, emergency supplies will be made available. Canteen will be available to you on that Units' designated canteen day. A list of all canteen items will be available from the staff in your accommodation unit.

### **How do I send out a letter?**

You will need to purchase pre-paid envelopes through the prison's canteen before you can post a letter. All accommodation units have outward mail boxes that will be cleared out each night to be prepared for posting the next morning. Please ensure that the envelopes are 'clean' and free from artwork, stickers, etc. The envelopes should only have the receiving address on the front and your name on the back.

**I arrived at the prison today and I need to tell my family but I don't have any phone credit. What can I do?**

All new prisoners are allowed one welfare call when they first arrive at their accommodation unit. This call is only a brief call to let your family or friends know that you are OK and that you have moved to another location. If you need to make this call, speak to the staff in your unit.

**Can I see my kids?**

Yes. Children are welcomed and well catered for at MRC. The visit areas have safe play equipment to entertain children whilst visiting the prison. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

**How and when can I access sporting and recreational equipment?**

The recreational centre will be available to you on a Unit roster. Prisoners will need to check with their Unit staff for availability. There is a supply of recreation equipment within your Unit for you to use within your accommodation area.

**How do I get my medication (new and existing)?**

You need to advise staff immediately if you require medication. Upon reception you will have a medical assessment, this is where you can let the medical staff know of your requirements. Alternatively, let an officer know as soon as you become aware of the situation.

**Where can I smoke and how do I get a light?**

MRC is a smoke free environment and therefore you must not smoke inside any building. There are designated smoking areas that also have fixed lighters.

**Can I get a job?**

Yes. During your first week at MRC you will be able to participate in the Occupational Health and Safety course. This will enable you to work within any of the prison factories. If you want to obtain work within a specialised area such as the kitchen or horticulture, you will be required to have a qualification applicable to those areas. This is further explained during orientation or you can see the education or industry staff for more information.

**Can I share a cell with my friend?**

No. All the accommodation at MRC are single cells, however there are some cells with access between cells and prisoners will need to request these cells via the Unit Supervisor.

**How do I get a visit and when?**

There is a visit booking system to ensure a more streamlined visit process. You are required to book your visits via the unit staff. Visitors are not able to contact the prison to make the booking on the prisoner's behalf.

All visitors should ensure they are on time for the visit, however should they miss their time slot every effort will be made to re-arrange the visit, or a non-contact visit may be offered. Visitors who wish to visit but do not have a booking cannot be guaranteed a visit. All visits will be subject to availability in the Visits Centre.

#### **How can I contact my legal adviser?**

When you arrive you can obtain telephone credits which will be made available as soon as possible after they are purchased. You can then contact your legal professional directly. Should you wish to make an appointment with Legal Aid you will need to register your request at the Officer's Post (located in every unit).

#### **What happens to my personal property and can I access it at anytime?**

Upon reception your personal property is sorted into storage items and items taken to the cell. Items sent for storage are placed in the prison's property store. There is a maximum capacity of one storage box per prisoner and these items will remain at MRC until the prisoner is transferred to another location or released. If released at court, you can make arrangements to collect your personal items the following day from the prison. If you are sentenced at court and then transferred to another location, your personal property will be packed (in your presence) and transferred with you. You can make a Governor's Request to access approved items after they have been stored. This can be done by speaking to the staff in your Unit.

#### **My family lives far away and are unable to visit, how can I see them?**

The MRC has video conference facilities available mainly for legal purposes, however in some cases you may be able to arrange a video conference with your family. This is subject to availability and your individual circumstances. You will need to obtain approval by writing to General Manager.

#### **How do I get money?**

Visitors can drop off money for you, alternatively approved and validated visitors, VACRO and solicitors may send you money via a money order in the mail. The money order must be made out to your name, not the MRC. They must provide their name and address with the money – personal cheques will not be accepted.

#### **Can my family and friends drop off personal property?**

The MRC will only accept property from visitors registered on the valid visitors list. You will need to refer to the 'personal prisoner property' information on page of this book to find out what you can have sent in.

#### **Can I change my name while in prison?**

Yes. You must first obtain the permission of the Secretary, Department of Justice. You can fill out an application form and submit it to the General Manager who will forward your application for approval to the Secretary, Department of Justice.

### **What happens if I get sentenced at Court?**

In the case of a prisoner going to Court from the MRC, and obtaining a sentence, the prisoner is then transported back to the MRC. An assessment will be conducted by either Sentence Management Unit or Prison Staff, depending upon how long the prisoner has been sentenced for. Following these assessments, prisoners will be seen by Sentence Management Unit and a suitable sentenced location will be determined at that time. Prisoners will then be transferred to that determined location as soon as practicable.

### **Do you need further information?**

Please contact your Case Worker, the Unit Supervisor,  
one of the Peer Educators or Prison Supervisors  
if you have any questions.

Visitors can ring or write to the prison for further information.



To share information on a crime you can  
call Crime Stoppers on  
**1800 333 000**