**BACKGROUND**

Queensland Correctional Services is a criminal justice agency in Queensland, Australia that provides a role in community safety and crime prevention through the humane containment, supervision and rehabilitation of offenders. There are current systems of operation in QCS that are in need of updating and improvement. Inspectoral reviews conducted by the QCS Office of the Chief Inspector confirm this position. The problem that this research project addresses is the need for a greater insight into the formation and development of minimum benchmarks and entitlements of prison inmates. This project provides an in-depth assessment into what extent best practices and minimum benchmarks inform the construction, implementation, and enforcement of prison entitlements in Queensland Prisons. It will also investigate what the accepted minimum standards of prisoner rights are in prison in an international context. Furthermore it will address what impediments there are to the effective implementation, or application of these developed standards in Queensland Prisons.

**METHODS**

Our research project is based around a desktop review of academic literature and data, considering this a purposive sampling method is used. This method most effectively fits our research design, as it will allow us to address our research problem logically and explicitly by allowing us to selectively choose our data. The team identified specific themes that best framed our research; therefore a thematic search was the most fitting. This allowed us to preprint, analyse and examine patterns in data and relevant research. This also allowed for the team to easily categorise our specific areas of interest that fell under each theme allowing for an in-depth and extensive look into all our found literature. Our themes included: Best Practices, Entitlements, International Human Rights, Australian Human Rights and Privileges (see graph below). The team reviewed over 250 sources, and as can be seen in the two graphs above we more succinctly referenced the majority of the information found under the corresponding theme was found and recommendations by quantity as based off our literature matrix.

**FINDINGS**

Our findings were comprehensive and well distributed amongst our themes. We observed that there are many areas within QCS that require attention regarding policy, especially concerning health services, environment, relationships and the process of resettlement for prisoners. For example, health services are one of the most complex and multidimensional areas of the criminal justice system, prisoners have diverse needs and require specialised attention and programs to assist them in recovery and rehabilitation. This area specifically will require ongoing work and monitoring of progress with new and reformed practices. Most prisons are found to be performing well against the current policies and benchmarks when inspected. Some facilities have the opportunity to learn from the prisons that are performing best, on how to effectively apply current and future rules for positive progress.

**FURTHER RESEARCH**

Using this research as a spring board, there are many areas of research that could be expanded on. Further research will need to be conducted on the status of prisoners’ rights, the creation of a chart for prisoners rights, the experiences and special circumstances of indigenous peoples and other minorities or the life building experiences offered in prisons to help them return the outside world post-release. In the future each of us hopes to further investigate the impact of the research we have conducted here and attempt to quantify its impact.

**LIMITATIONS**

The research we have completed has been thorough, although there are limitations to what has been presented. In many of our themes the gaps in the literature were quite wide, studies had not been conducted on very specific areas of prison life. For example, very little research performed on the procedures and impacts of ‘buy up’ on prisoners. We have yet to fully understand how the purchasing of items whilst in prison can affect prisoners experiences or capacity for rehabilitation. Therefore, in areas where we could make more solid recommendations we are limited to what we can suggest due to the lack of information at hand as to what the best practices are.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Thank you to Samay Zhou and of the Office of the Chief Inspector, and Lynda Cheshire, Sarah Bennett, Susanne Fay-Ramirez and Robin Fitzgerald of the University of Queensland.