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Western Australian Strategies to Reduce Aboriginal Imprisonment

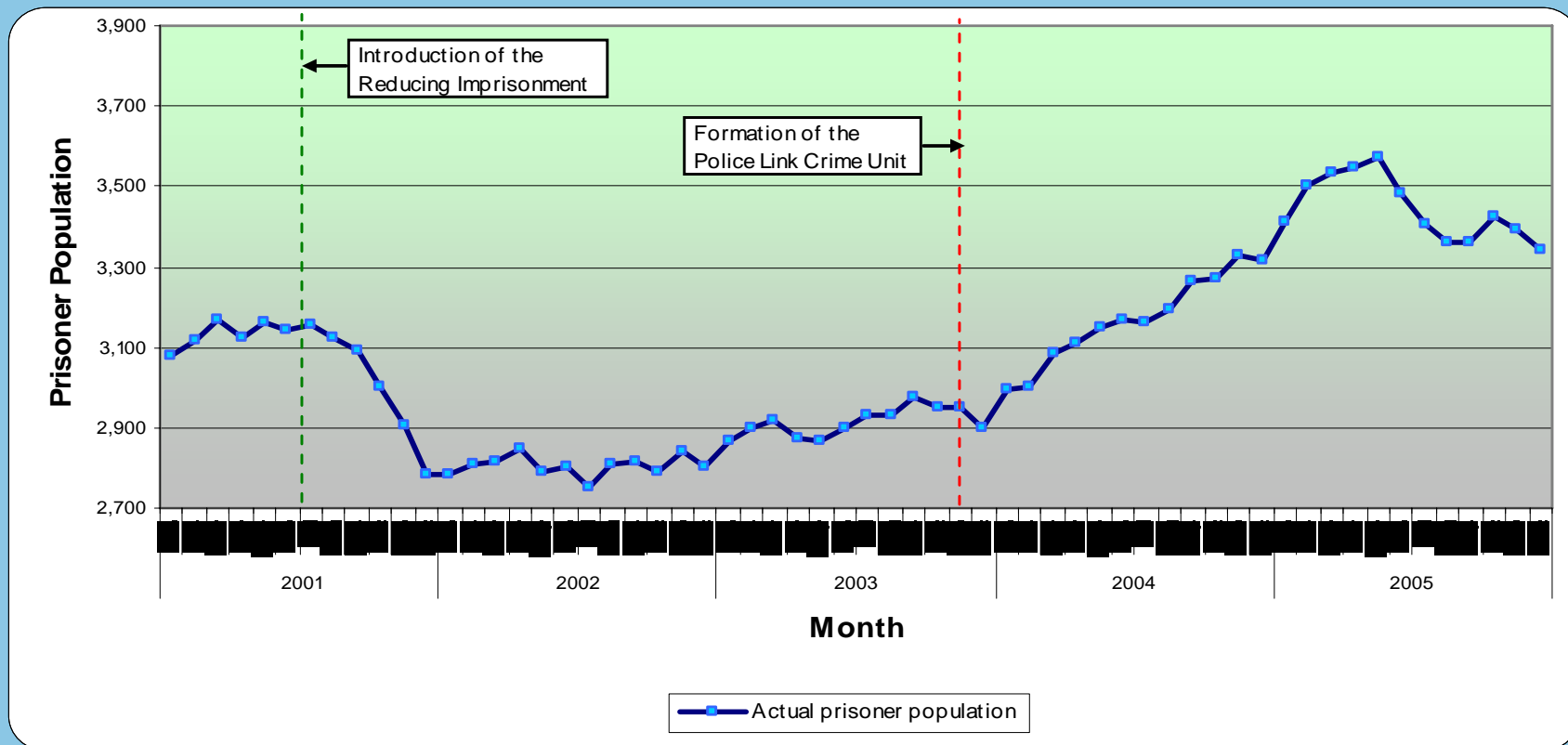
**State/Commonwealth Attorneys
General meeting - April, 2006**



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Background

Actual Prisoner Population to December 2005



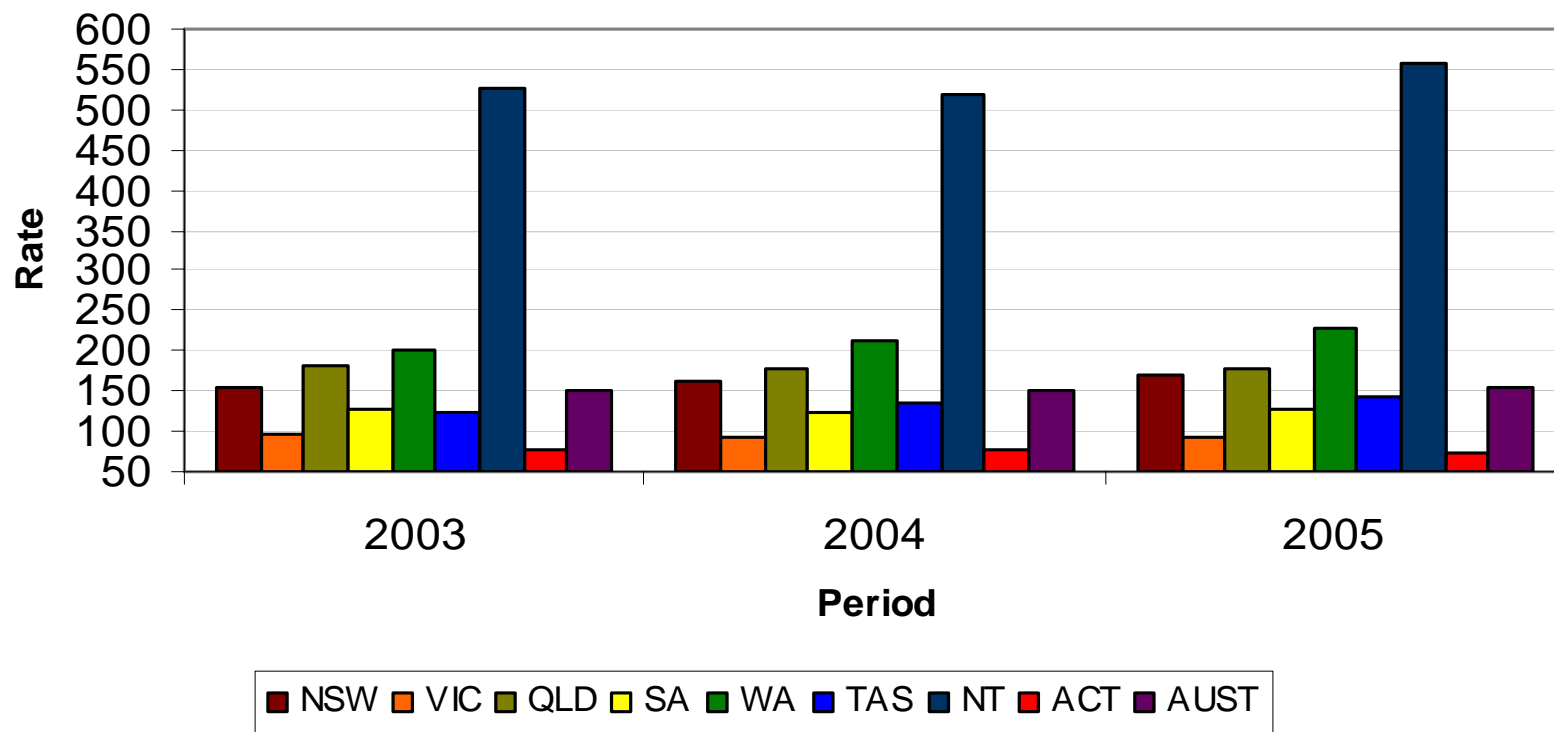
Source: Total Offender Management Solution



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Rates of Imprisonment

Imprisonment Rate per 100,000 Population

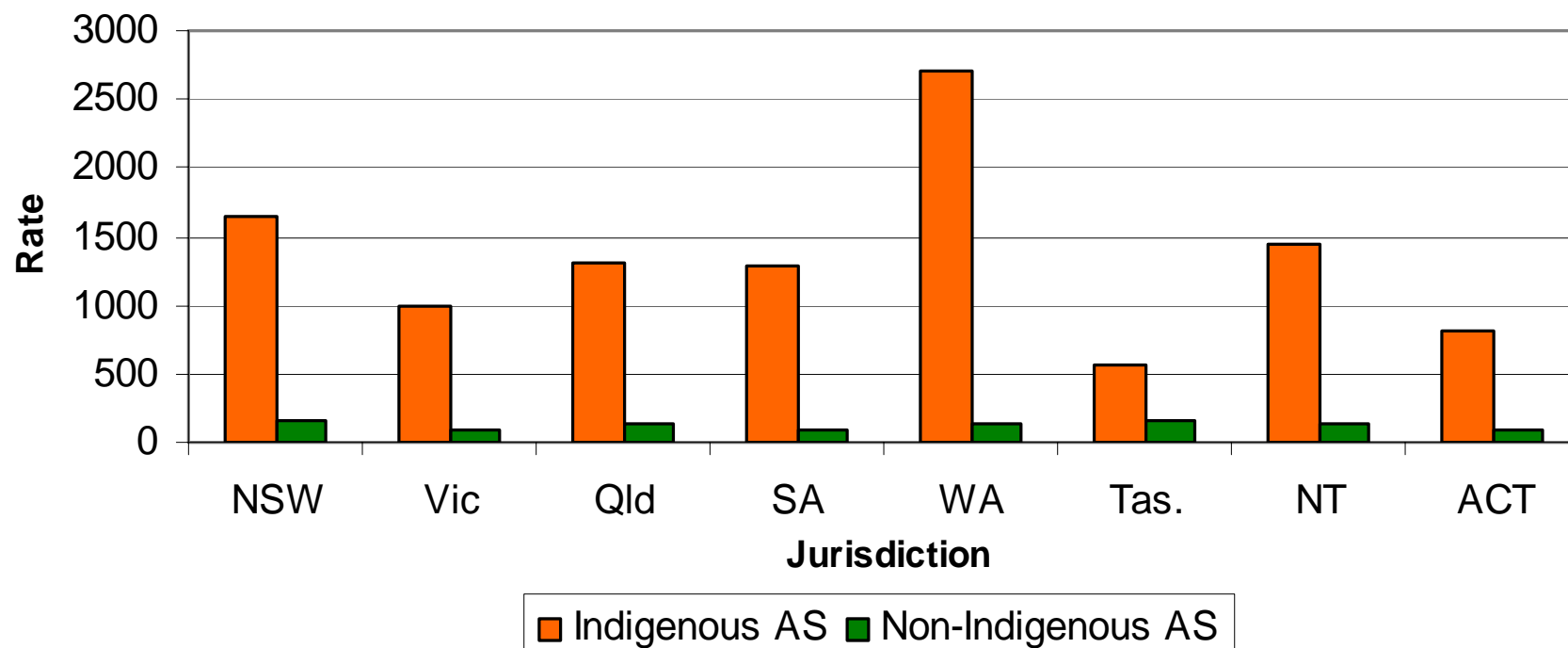




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Rates of Imprisonment

**Imprisonment Rate per 100,000 Population 2005
(Age Standardised)**





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Background

2001 Government committed to strategies that would

- Reduce the rate of re-offending
- Make community corrections a publicly acceptable alternative to imprisonment
- Reduce the use of imprisonment
- Reduce the over-representation of indigenous peoples within the criminal justice system
- Improve services to women



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Reducing Imprisonment

Administrative Actions.

- Structured approach to breaching of community based orders;
- Facilitation of release to bail;
- Reduction of delays in prisoner releases to home detention, work release and parole;
- Increased use of community work
- Increased emphasis on programs / treatment
- Bail and fines reform.



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Reducing Imprisonment

- **Legislative Actions.**
 - Extension of CEO's power to grant early discharge;
 - Full range of sentencing options for traffic offences;
 - Proscription of sentences of 6 months or less;
 - Deferral of sentencing
 - Attachment of conditions to orders of suspended imprisonment;
 - Prisoners serving sentences of less than 12 months to be parole eligible at 50%



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Comparisons

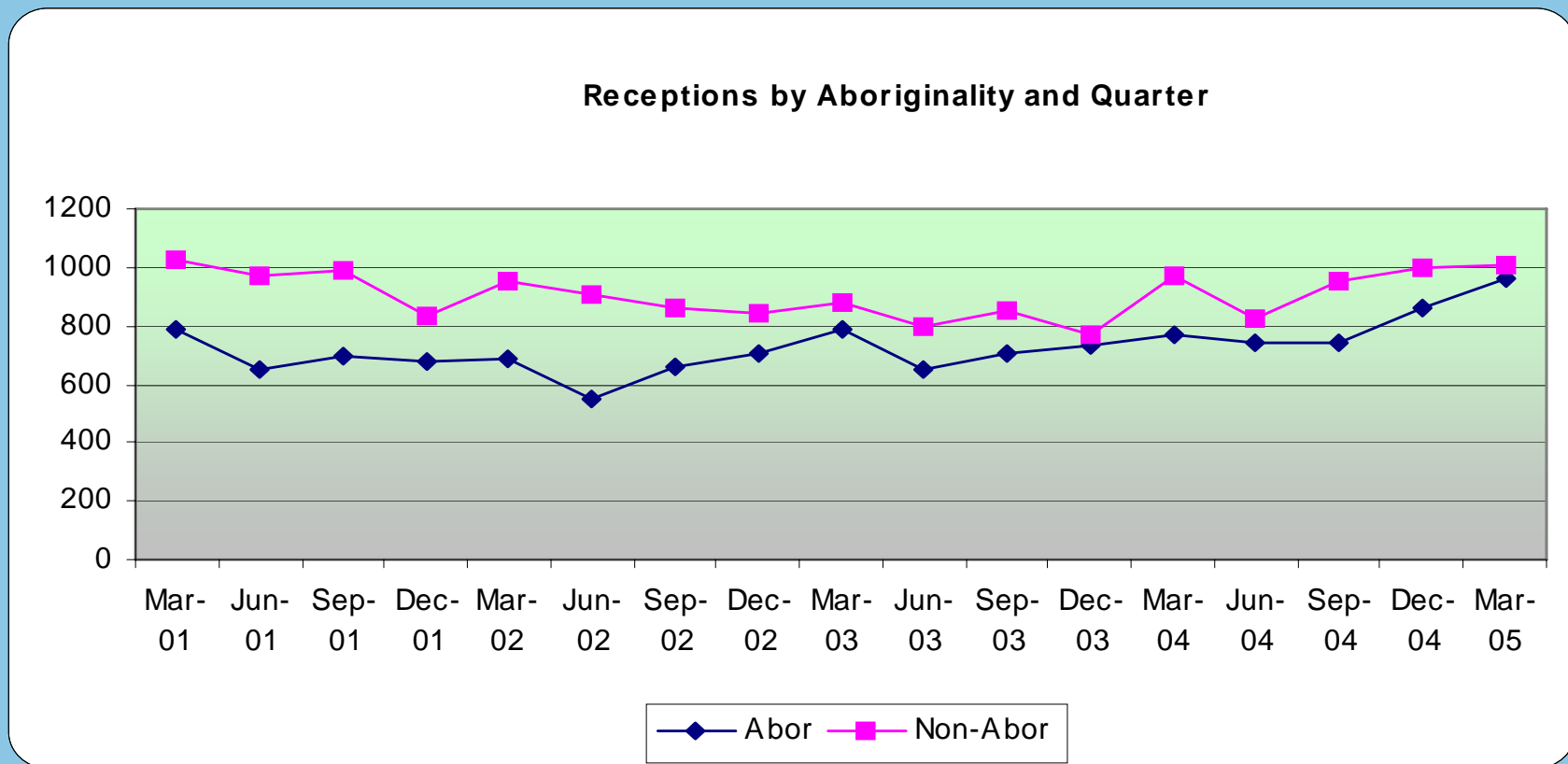
- Nationally
 - June 2005 25,400 people in prison increase of 5%, (20,220 sentenced)
 - 3% increase in rate to 163/ 100,000 Australia.
 - 22% Aboriginal prisoners (up 12%)
- In WA
 - daily population increased 10%
 - rate increased 8% to 229 per 100,000
 - 40.5% of prisoners are Aboriginal, age standardised rate of 2697 per 100,000 as at in June 2005



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Increased Aboriginal Reception to Prison

Receptions by Aboriginality and Quarter; March 2001 to March 2005



Source: Total Offender Management Solution

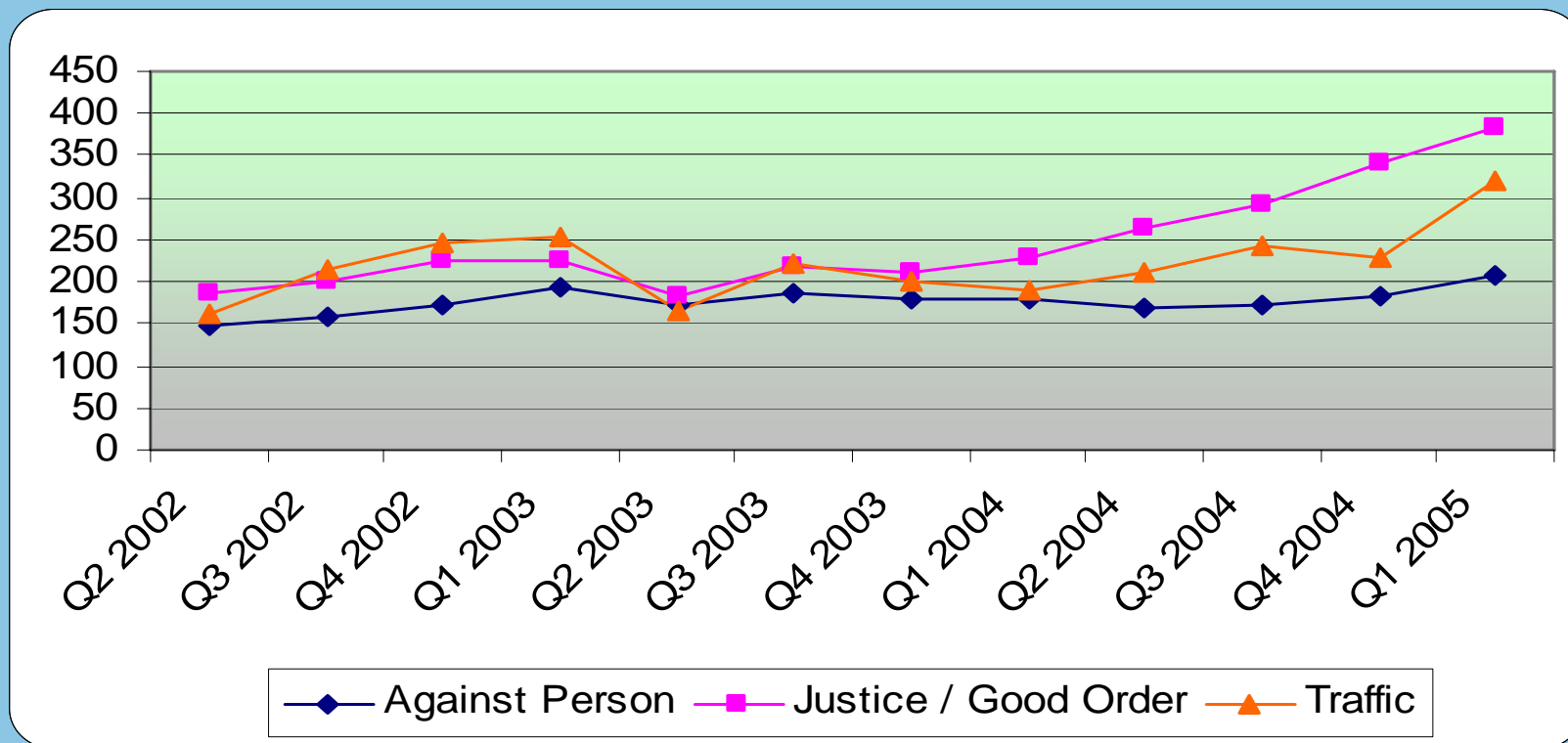
Receptions have increased most significantly for Aboriginal persons.



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Crime Trends and Sentencing Practices

**Sentences Commenced: Against the Person, Traffic and Justice/Good Order
Offences by Quarter; June 2002 to March 2005**



Source: Total Offender Management Solution

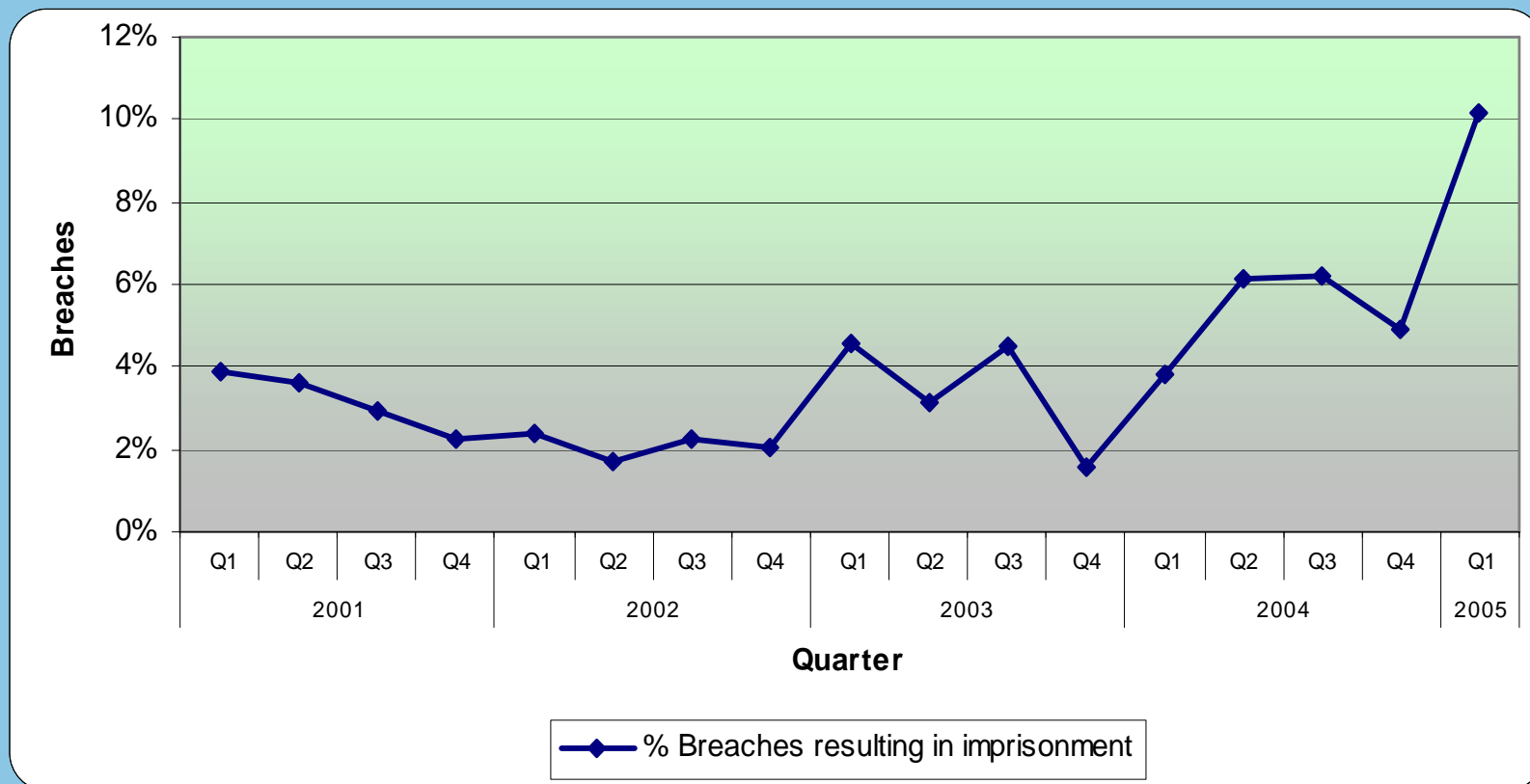
Since the December quarter of 2003 there has been a sharp increase in the number of sentences commenced for Justice / Good Order offences. This includes sentences commenced for Fine Default and Breaches.



Breaching Practices

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Percentage of all Court Order breaches resulting in imprisonment; January 2001 to March 2005



Source: Total Offender Management Solution

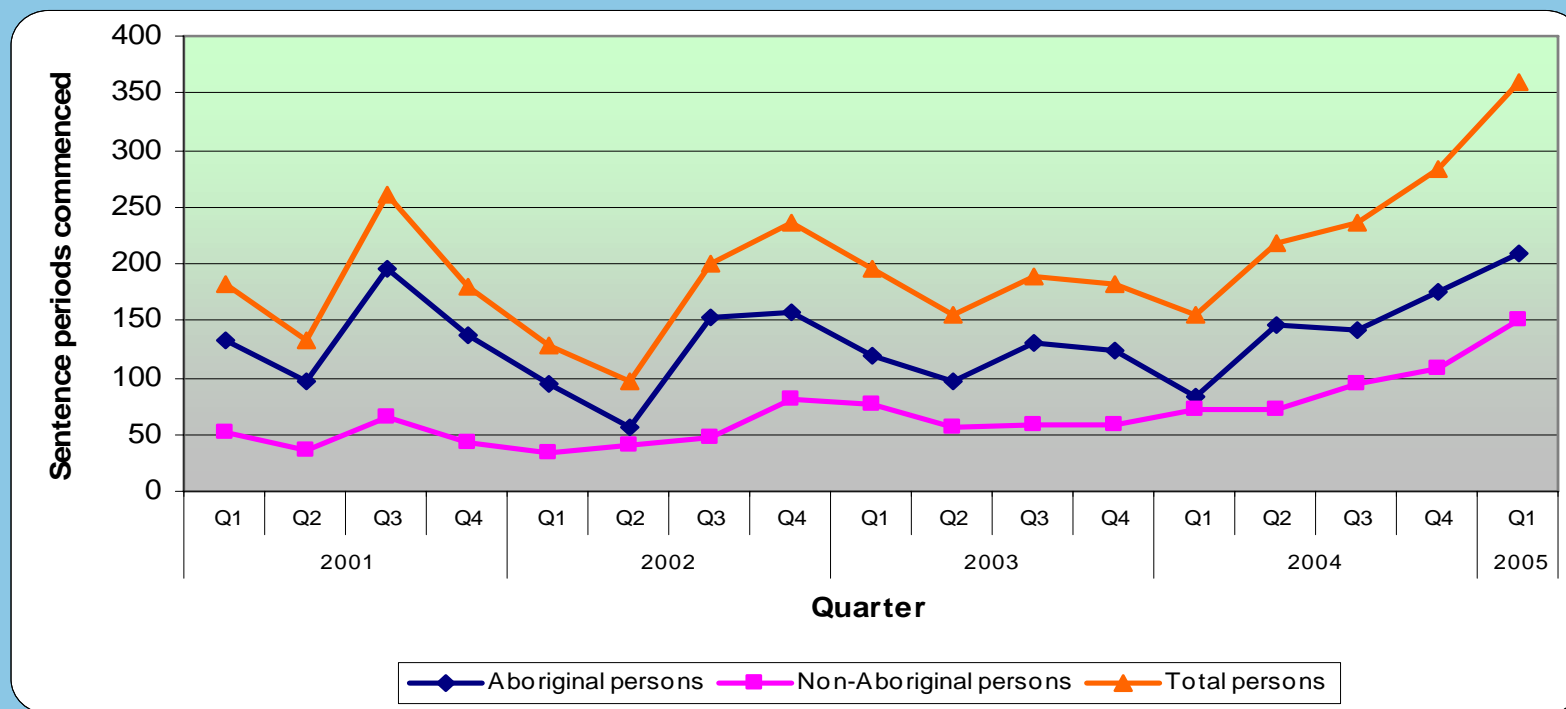
During the March quarter 2005 there was a very sharp increase in the proportion of court order breaches resulting in imprisonment.



Fine Default

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Aggregate sentence periods commenced for default of fine showing Aboriginal persons and non-Aboriginal persons by quarter; March 2001 to March 2005



During the March quarter 2005, sentences commenced for default of fine increased by 26.4%. This reflects a shift away from a previous cyclical trend. 58% of persons who had a sentence commence for fine default in the March quarter were Aboriginal.



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Strategies to Reduce Aboriginal Imprisonment

- Reduction in fine default
- Prisoner Transport
- Aboriginal Liaison Officers
- Sheriff/CDO
- Bail Coordinators
- Judicial Case Management FDV
- Regional FDV Geraldton
- Access to Early Release
- Employment Options
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan



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Fines Initiatives and Strategies

Major Legislative Initiatives

- Reduction of minimum hours (40 to 10) for community work to allow courts community based rather than a fine;
- Concurrent fine default for sentenced prisoners;
- Increase fine default imprisonment from \$150 to \$250 per day;
- Increase scope and flexibility for offenders to obtain a Time to Pay (focusing on Aboriginals in remote communities).
- Increase work development order (WDO) rate from \$150 to \$300 for 6 hours work. (already implemented Sept 05)

Policy Initiatives

- Examination of civil and criminal enforcement regime across the state – review to manage potential risk, improve access to justice and produce efficiencies.



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Fines Initiatives and Strategies

Operational

- Introduction of Centrepay (February 2005);
- Introduction of a new computer system (ICMS in late 2006);
- Appointment of joint Sheriff's/CCO officers for remote Aboriginal Communities (for diversion from imprisonment to WDO, payment of fines and community education);
- Proposed accelerated write-off for Aboriginal offenders in remote regions;
- Establishment of a team within the Sheriff's Office for the case-management of hard-core offenders to divert from imprisonment (Warrant Management Project);
- "Time to Pay Up" campaign (advertisements to publicise the need to deal with fines and the publishing of drivers license numbers).



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Outcome of Initiatives

Compared to the same time last year, key outcomes of the FER initiatives are:

- The imprisonment for fine default dropped by 91%;
- Of 84 offenders imprisoned so far, 30 are Aboriginal. In 2004/05, 1051 of 1807 were Aboriginal;
- There were 1,319 Warrants of Commitment issued this quarter. This represents an 84% reduction, compared to the same time last year.
- WDO registrations have reduced by 36%, compared with the same period of 2004/05.
- The Warrant Recall initiative will increase revenue collected by up to \$3.0m.
- Overall savings for Default Days Served is potentially 27,279, with a marginal cost to Prisons of \$3.6m Collections increased by 7%;

...continued



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Outcome of Initiatives

- The number of Time to Pay arrangements in place have increased by 35%.
- Centrepay collections continue to increase since its introduction in February 2005. Currently it comprises 6% of total collections, with 5000 offenders having undertaken this method of payment since its inception at FER;
 - Average Centrepay payment amount is \$29, with currently over \$1.0m collected so far this financial year;
 - On average, 68 new customers registered each week;

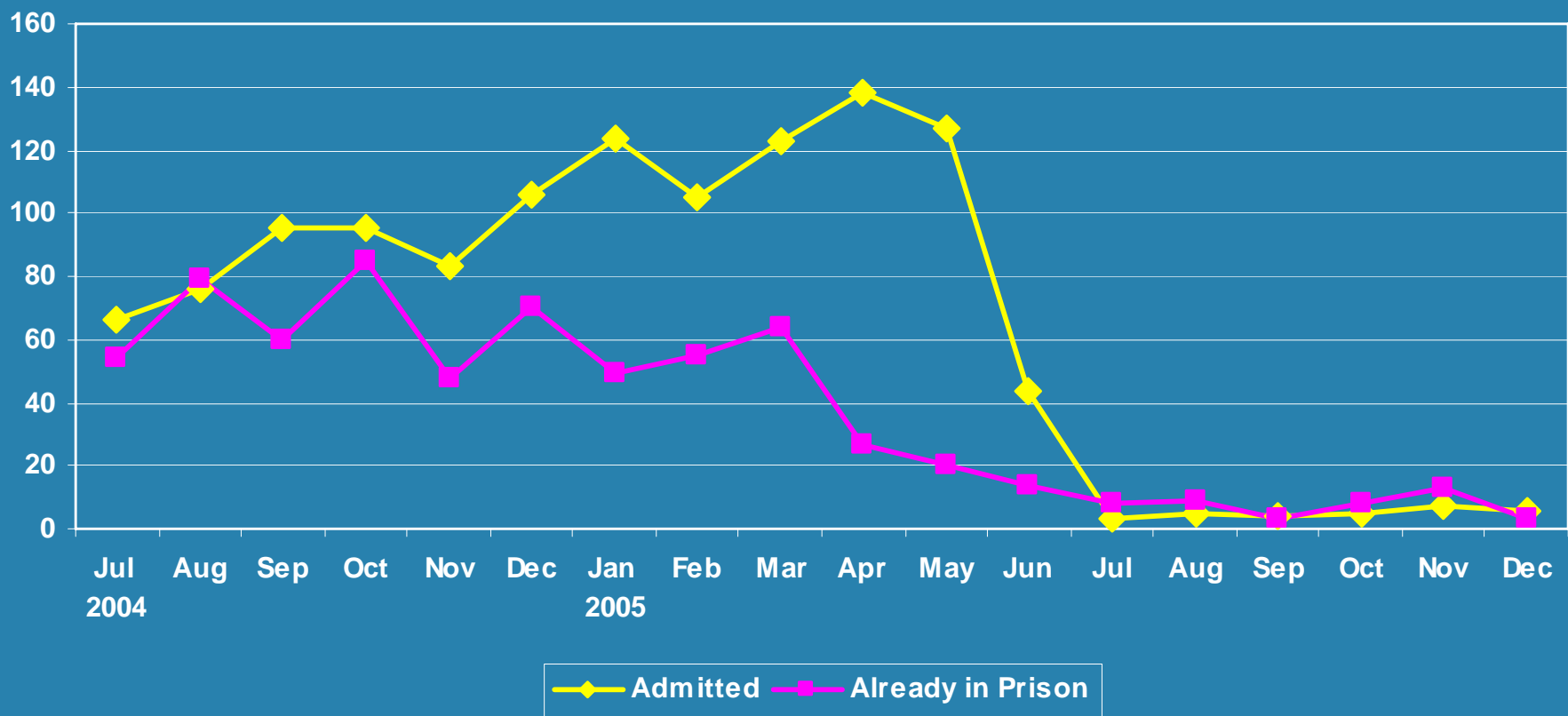


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Outcome of Initiatives

(as at September Quarter 2005/06)

Offenders Imprisoned for Default of Fine During Jul 04 – Dec 05





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Imprisonment Admissions

Offenders Imprisoned for Default of Fine

Financial Year	Number of Offenders		Total	Average Sentence Length (Days)
	Admitted	Already in Prison		
2000/01	585	261	846	32
2001/02	663	346	1 009	31
2002/03	786	835	1 621	34
2003/04	741	708	1 449	39
2004/05	1 183	62	1 807	43
2005/06 (to 31/12/05)	25	59	84	38



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