# Methodology

Re-entry Link program service agreements, service reviews and Departmental evaluations were requested from the Department. In addition, transitional manager referral data and Re-entry Link program statistics from 2014 were also requested from the Department.

A series of interviews were conducted with Departmental staff and other key stakeholders. Phone and/or face-to-face interviews were conducted with a total of 15 transitional managers and representatives from eight organisations delivering the Re-entry Link program. Multiple meetings also occurred with Head Office staff responsible for the Re-entry Link program and transitional services.

### Re-entry Link program data analysis

The Department provided a dataset of all sentenced prisoners released in 2012 who were not on fine-default-only sentences. The dataset included the details of each prisoner released, including their prisoner ID, Aboriginal status, gender, exit facility, discharge type and whether they returned to prison or corrections within two years. The dataset provided the date the prisoner was discharged from prison and the date they were received back into prison after release (if applicable), which enabled the calculation of the number of days in freedom in the community.

The Department also provided data on the level Re-entry Link program support provided to each prisoner. The dataset listed the number of pre and post-release formal and casual contacts that occurred between each prisoner and the Re-entry Link provider.

Additional prisoner information such as their level of risk, number of prior prison admissions, educational attainment, employment status and prisoner security rating were added to the dataset through data extractions from the Department’s TOMS database.

A Cox regression survival analysis was attempted to assess the effectiveness of the Re-entry Link program (post-release support) in improving post-release days at freedom for prisoners released in 2012, after adjusting for the effects of age, gender, prior prison admissions, Aboriginal status, security rating, educational attainment, substance use risk rating, violent offending risk rating, sex offending risk rating and employment status on arrest. The prisoner had to have been classed as a formal client of the program and receive at least one post-release contact by the Re-entry Link provider to be considered as receiving post-release support. There was insufficient confidence to report the results of this analysis given the lack of reliability of the underlying data.

In order to categorise the frequency of post-release support, the number of formal post-release contacts were divided by the number of days the person was in the community (up to a maximum of 365 days). Support was considered to cease if a prisoner re-entered prison. The average number of contacts per prisoner was calculated and prisoners who were below this average were categorised as low contact frequency and those above this average were categorised as high contact frequency. This process examined total support received over one year but did not take into account early disengagement from the program. While the Department provided data on the length of program engagement, this data was not used as the Office lacked confidence in the reliability of the data.