

EXPERT RESOURCE PROFILE – COMMISSIONER PETER SEVERIN

“It’s not about being tough or weak. It’s about being smart...”



At just 17, Peter Severin was a member of a local youth group that visited inmates in his homeland of Hamelin, Germany. In the following years, Peter studied social work at the local university, but with the express intention of becoming a prison officer.

In his early years as prison officer, Peter learnt just how harsh prison administration can be. He was king-hit by an inmate in his first two years but persevered in the prison's tough remand section for another eight years.

Now the Commissioner of Corrective Services New South Wales, Peter has held executive positions in some of Australia’s most progressive correctional services facilities.

Peter was Chief Executive of the Department for Correctional Services in South Australia from July 2003, and in his nine years as chief executive, oversaw the significant decline in the rate of inmates re-offending.

Prior to this, Peter worked with the Department of Corrective Services in Queensland, with his last position as Deputy Director-General.

Peter has an extensive background in corrections operation, in particular offender management and intervention. He has in depth experience in prison management and policy formulation where he has lead significant prison infrastructure design, construction and commissioning and has particular expertise in the development of service standards for the delivery of correctional services by the private sector and contract management.

Why 2020 Exchange

As the Commissioner of the largest network of state prisons, Peter Severin is a leader with a deep sense of personal responsibility and intellect.

Administration of corrective services is a complicated charter, with the dynamics of a prison system involving more than just community safety. It is a role that requires a strong sense of vision and strategy, planning and risk mitigation. To many, being responsible for over 11 000 prisoners is frightening, let alone the involvement with government, unions and convicted criminals.

It is this extraordinary leadership that aligns the Commissioner with 2020 Exchange.

Positons held

1993 - 1996	General Manager - Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre
1999 - 2001	Executive Director - Operational Support Services, Department of Corrective Services QLD
2001 - 2003	Deputy Director-General - Department of Corrective Services QLD
2003 - 2012	Chief Executive - Department of Correctional Services SA
2012 - present	Commissioner - Corrective Services NSW



Memberships

2010 - present Member of the International Corrections and Prisons Association Board (ICPA)

Qualifications

Master of Public Administration, Griffith University

Bachelor of Social Work, University of Applied Science, Braunschweig