*Work Integrated Learning Scenario:* The Executive Director of a Victorian charity has contacted you. The charity has been making significant process in policy areas and is looking to expand their scope.

In this assignment, you will provide a concise summary of a particular issue, the current policies and/or policy issues, and areas for reform.

After you have read this information, head over to the [Policy Brief Q&A](https://swinburne.instructure.com/courses/45144/discussion_topics/910654) discussion board to ask any questions and see what your peers are saying about this assignment.

Please note, time will be set aside in the tutorial in week 8 to discuss this assessment.

## Essential Information

**Due:** Sunday 23 October, 11:59pm

Please note that assessment questions will be answered up until 5pm Friday, 21 October.

**Word Length:**  2000 words (+/- 10%)

**Weighting:**  45 %

**Feedback Provided:**  Online—marks and feedback will be released on result release date.

### Assignment Details and Structure

A policy brief is a form of report designed to facilitate policy-making. In this case you are identifying areas for correctional policy reform that a Victorian charity could advocate for.

For this assessment, you are required to continue with the topic you chose to analyse in the News Journal and Case Study:

* Adult reintegration and desistance
* Adult prisoner health and wellbeing
* Indigenous prisoners
* Women prisoners.

*Note, these are broad topic areas and it is likely that the area that you choose to discuss will be much more specific.*

The main purpose is to identify the current context and evaluate current policies or policy issues regarding a specific issue. You are required to discuss three specific areas for policy reform.

| **Title**  | * The title should be short, catchy and concise. It should grab the reader's attention.
* It should be no more than 12 words. Consider breaking into a title and subtitle.
* Try to include relevant key words or phrases that will stick in peoples mind.
* Most importantly, it should be relevant to the topic.
* Approx. 12 words. Note, the title is not included in the word count.
 |
| --- | --- |
| **Executive Summary** | * The executive summary should include a brief summary or policy message, and recommendations.
* As yourself, "what are the key messages that I want the Executive Director of the charity to know?"
* The executive summary should include:
1. Three or four bullet points giving the main points in the brief.
2. Three recommendations:
	* The recommendations should be clear and easy to understand. Start each with a action verb.
	* The recommendations should be realistic. They should be able to be implemented, for instance, consider if they are politically, economically, socially, and technically feasible.
* Approx. 200 words.
 |
| **Introduction** | * Think of the introduction as a statement of the issue or problem.
* The introduction should introduce the topic in a way that grabs the reader's attention, identifies why it is important and tells the reader why they should do something about it.
* The introduction should include:
	1. The problem: what is the problem, why is it important?
	2. Background and context: what happens, where and who is involved?
	3. Causes of the current situation: give examples or evidence as to why.
	4. Effects of the current situation: What effects does it have?
* Approx. 400 words.
 |
| **Areas for Policy Reform** | * Identify key policies and/or policy issues:
	+ Remember you need identify three areas for reform. Each area should be dealt with separately.
* Suggest revisions to the policy / policy area.
* Propose the revisions to the policy.
	+ What changes are you suggesting, how would the change improve the current state of affairs?
* Identify the advantages and disadvantages of the change you are suggesting.
	+ What are the potential benefits, what are the costs (politically, economically, socially, and technically), what are possible side-effects?
* Identify criminological research and theories that support the proposed revisions.
* Approx. 1,200 words.
 |
| **Conclusions** | * Keep the conclusion short. One paragraph is enough.
* Do not merely repeat what you have already stated, rather draw the policy brief to a close by explaining the importance of the issue you have chosen and areas of policy that the charity could contribute to.
* Approx. 200 words.
 |
| **Reference List** | * This section should include all of the references that were used throughout the policy brief.
* This should be in Swinburne Harvard format.
* Aim for a minimum of 12 academic sources.
* The reference list is not included in the word count.
 |

**Please note, it is not required that you submit your policy brief in a table. Rather, the above table serves to identify the required sections and an explanation of what should be included in them.**

### Additional Advice

**Having a clear and specific purpose or focus**

It is important to keep the audience of the policy brief in mind when evaluating what information needs to be included in the brief.

* What would they know about the issue already?
* What new information would provide insight to the issue?

**Be practical and support your areas for policy reform**

A policy brief aims to be persuasive and a big part of convincing the target audience of your key message is supporting your ideas with evidence. Evidence should be used to indicate that there is an issue with existing policy and to make recommendations. A policy brief is a practical tool that has real-world implications.

**Be accessible and succinct**

A policy brief uses language that is familiar to the target audience in a clear and simple manner (but not conversational). It should also be logical and be easy to follow. The assumption should be made that the target audience does not have time to read a lot of text, so the brief should be formatted clearly with descriptive headings.

**References and acknowledgements**

A policy brief needs to include references and acknowledgements so that information or statistics used and/or referred to as part of the brief, can be found and followed up on, if necessary.