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• Australia's National Prison Newspaper

ISSUE NO. 4 OCTOBER 2024 ABOUTTIME.ORG.AU

About Time

The Cost of Connecting With Loved Ones From Prison

Keeping in contact with loved ones on the outside reduces recidivism, but for many, the costs associated with it means they must sacrifice other basics.

By Kelly

I am a prisoner at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and have been since February 2022. I have no family in Melbourne that can visit me in person. Nor do they drop off property or top up my account with money. I solely rely on my wages from working a full-time job inside the prison. My job title is a Sewing Machinist. This job requires me to sew prison-issue women's blue tracksuit pants, and jumpers together from pieces to a completed product in the prison industry's portable building inside DPFC prison. My position consists of working 6 hours per day, Monday to Friday, 30 hours per week at $1.56 per hour worked.

From the calculations below, you can have some idea of the money I make weekly from my full-time job here at DPFC.

Weekly money:

$1.56 per hour worked x 6 hours of work per day = $9.36

$9.36 per day wages x 5 days worked in a week = $46.80

Continued on page 10.

Painkillers Available in QLD Buy-Ups

Queensland takes a leap forward for healthcare and human rights

By Denham Sadler

Denham Sadler is a freelance writer based in Naarm/Melbourne, focusing on criminal justice reform.

Queensland has become the first state to allow people in prison to purchase basic painkillers through the canteen buy-up process, marking a significant step forward in the provision of healthcare in the prison system.

From the start of August, prisons across Queensland began putting in place a new directive that allows for the sale of paracetamol and ibuprofen through buy-up rather than requiring a medical prescription.

Continued on page 6.



Ike Curtis

• We Need Your Feedback!

Are you and your friends receiving the newspaper every month?
We are distributing the newspaper to every prison, and we have asked your staff to provide the copies to you directly. We want to hear from you:

- Are you being told that the paper is available?
- Are there enough papers going round?
- Have you experienced any issues or difficulties getting your hands on a copy?
- If you only have access to a digital copy, would you also like a physical paper?
- What do you like about the paper? What do you want to see differently?

Please send us a letter to let us know if there are any issues, and we can help fix them. Please ask your friends for their feedback as well, and put that into your letter.



About Time

Australia's National Prison Newspaper

We are the new national newspaper for people in prison across Australia. We want this to be a paper for people who are incarcerated, by people who are incarcerated. Our aim is to distribute the paper to every person in every prison and detention facility across Australia. This is our fourth edition, distributed to all prisons in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. We hope that Western Australia and the Northern Territory will join us soon.

Our team is made of a group of passionate individuals from around Australia, some of whom have been incarcerated, and others who have worked and volunteered in criminal justice, law and journalism for many years. We are always looking for others to join us.

Write to Us

If you would like to contribute to any of the sections of our paper, or if you would like to correspond with us or provide comments, please write to us at:

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au

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A Birthday on the Inside

By Chris

Chris writes from Port Phillip Prison in Victoria.

Hi there, my name is Chris and I sit here, again, in P.P.P. with another sentence, with old feelings of loss or sadness. I just had my 39 year old birthday, again thinking about how many I've done being locked up. I've done jail everywhere from WA, SA, VIC, just about every place that you can in those states too, from a very young age, for everything from murder to fighting, speed chasing, bad assaults, theft, fraud... everything. I've been in fights with me getting stabbed a lot, to me stabbing other inmates, and the normal hustle with drugs, inside and out. I still have the fear of getting out with nothing, no family help or anything to show from life. Scared at times or even happy as well. Reading this paper, I felt an urge to write to say, 'hi'. Not sure what to say; my spelling is a setback. with the feeling of not to send this but I've sat in my cell as a young child, thinking to myself that I won't be a 40-year-old man in jail, but here I am again. I struggle everyday and hope that I'll get rich or have some sort of good life with money or just a feeling of accomplishment in life where people will say they're proud of me, or a crew that would follow me,thinking I am a good man that you can rely on. So, I guess, I hope someone will read this and understand or know that they can ask or have faith in a brother that is here, always.

But yeah, just thought I'd say what I was feeling to break the barrier of the 'macho' feelings and know that life is good, but you don't have to spend it locked up. Do something with yourself, please, because there are men that have enough time for all of us.

Respect, love, earn feelings of safety, and just have a good life, inside or not. Respect always yourself, family, and others.

Chris.



Send Us a Letter

Your contributions are the centerpiece of the paper. If you would like to contribute to our Letters section, please send your letters to the below postal address:

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au



Welcome Queensland!

To our new Queensland readers: welcome to About Time!

This is the first time Australia's new national prison newspaper is being distributed in your state. We hope you enjoy it. Please contribute and share your thoughts with us about what you'd like to see in the paper.

Write to us via the below postal address:

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Melbourne VIC 3000

Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au

About Time There Was a Way to Stay Connected

By Shea

Shea writes from Ravenhall Correctional Centre in Victoria.

Dear About Time,

My name is Shea and I am currently just over 5 years into a 22 year sentence for murder. This is my first (and hopefully last) time coming to prison, and even after half a decade behind bars, I'm still coming to terms with all of the various consequences of the fact.

I was never really one for goal setting or following a plan like most of us I guess... but my main priority now is trying to get parole before I hit 50, and while I still have a chance to spend some quality time with my mum. Sometimes I think she's had a harder time dealing with me being locked up than I have, which is quite sad really.

I've learnt a lot about myself throughout this experience as well as a great deal about other people, and society in general. My personality has ironically softened (to a degree), as I've grown to respect humility over arrogance, and opened my mind to better accept the flaws and failings of others, as I have felt from others in return.

Over a decade until I'm coming up on my top/bottom end dates and yet I still have to field questions like "what are you going to do for work?" at CMRC reviews. As drones and AI enter the mainstream daily news cycle, I have to ask myself the very same question... what good is a traffic management certification when we're firmly in the era of autonomously piloted quadcopter taxi services, ordered off a wristwatch?

As Free-To-Air television starts to resemble a death rattle, with streaming services strangling the already glacial pace of new/decent entertainment and information available without an internet connection,

I can feel myself becoming even more disconnected culturally from the world that I will one day be expected to reintegrate into successfully. Alone and isolated.

I am thankful for any and all social and creative outlets, such as About Time, involved in the creation and distribution of your newspaper. They provide a link or window to another place, an opening for personal expression and a greater sense of community for those who choose to make use of the opportunities.

Writing a book review for a peer newsletter that might only be read by a hundred or so inmates at one prison may not change the world, but having someone stop you in the yard to tell you that they were impressed with your writing is valuable and reinvigorating.

None of us can change the past, or discount the events that brought us to prison; I will forever struggle with the reality of what I have done, and the knock-on effects for all those connected to either party thereafter. However, each and every day we are all presented with choices, great and small, that can have either a positive or beneficial outcome for ourselves and others. You just have to be open and mindful of that reality so you can make something worthwhile of your future.

Don't beat yourself up when you fail, simply seek to recommit yourself to a fresh start.

The only failure is resigning yourself to defeat, and allowing set-backs to become an excuse to stop trying.

I hope that anyone reading this allows themselves the gift of self forgiveness, and its role as a catalyst for positive progression in times of hardship.

With genuine compassion and solidarity,
Shea

They Can Capture Me But Not Cripple Me

By Sasha

Sasha writes from the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre at the Silverwater Correctional Complex in NSW.

Hey there. My name is Sash. Today marks my 9th day in custody since my arrest. I'm here this time for driving whilst disqualified. I've just been sentenced yesterday to 10 months with a 5-month non-parole period.

I'm sure you're wondering why I got 10 months for driving whilst disqualified. Well I guess I should've mentioned that this is my 9th time being charged with similar offenses, as well as breaching community corrections orders for previous times.

This is my second time incarcerated; the last time being when I was remanded earlier this year. As much as I'm ashamed to admit it, I came in here this time much "wiser" in the sense that I knew how to navigate the system better, what to expect, and what to not expect from Corrective Services.

The first time I was brought here, I self harmed, so I got put on the Risk Intervention Team (RIT) where you basically lose every single right – not even to plastic cutlery (food was poured on paper plates). I was not even allowed clothes, underwear, or even a hair tie. The staff could not find them after and I did not get them back when cleared to a normal pod.

To be honest, I was not physically or mentally prepared for jail as I did not think I would actually be locked up one day.

I think one of the most beneficial advice that I received was from a Services and Programs Officer (SAPO) at reception. He taught me about the Buddhist teaching of the concept of Attachment. Whilst I'm an Atheist, I found that the principle was very enlightening (pun intended). I realised that my attachment to everything I had in the community was making it very hard to adapt to prison life. I was constantly stressed about what was going to happen to my car, my pet chickens, my plants and trees, my university enrollment, my belongings, my work, my bills and debts, my ongoing subscriptions and direct debits, and so many other things that were beyond my control from prison. It was only when I was able to slowly let go of everything I was attached to, it was surprisingly easy to adapt and adjust to my new life in prison.

For anyone struggling to come to terms with the fact that you're suddenly in custody, I'd say to think about the positives. I know that sounds absolutely crazy – "what's positive about jail??" That's what I said when I was first given that advice. But let's face it – for most of us, our life in the community wasn't exactly perfect. I daresay that there were some issues you were struggling with that led you to commit offenses to land yourself in here. For me, that was the lack of a license, an addiction to methamphetamine (and an array of other drugs), and being stressed and overwhelmed with everything going on in my life. In fact, it is going to be my 22nd birthday this Tuesday, and I'm lowkey glad I no longer have to worry about planning a birthday party.
I'm going to use this as a break from the hectic life I was living and to improve myself through programs, education, and employment. I hope that I will be released as a new and better person and to not be confined to the walls of a prison cell thereafter for hopefully years or even decades.

If you're reading this from prison too, I hope you will be able to make the most of your time. I know that it's hard but know you're not alone.

Stay safe and take care friends xx
Sasha



Lauren Tye Legal exclusively practices in criminal law and intervention order matters. LTL is one of the leading criminal law firms in Melbourne.

If you have found yourself remanded or sentenced to a term of imprisonment get in contact with our office ASAP for advice and representation including urgent bail applications and appeals.

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Call (03) 7020 6519
11/456 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000

The Challenges Accessing Legal Representation

By Les

Les writes from Hopkins Correctional Centre.

Congratulations on your new magazine. I have the second edition, and reading through it I discovered what I had not seen. That was the lack of information supplied by Legal Aid for those with very little money who need legal assistance.

After the criminal process, the next hurdle is getting representation for issues while in prison, such as defending against continuing legal claims. For example, I was trying to defend a compensation claim that meant I may lose my house.

In cases like this, lawyers are not interested. Especially as I am in prison.

Legal Aid wasn't at all interested in defending me, even though they have a covenant on my property. When appearing in court (self-represented), a judge stated they'd try to apply to the Law Institute for a pro-bono barrister to represent me. But no one from the Law Institute was interested.

After writing to, and trying to get phone numbers of, solicitors, when contacting them most of them would say “you’ve already been convicted and sentenced” or “we don’t practice in that area of law”. However, next time you go to court self-represented, you’re virtually told you haven’t tried to get representation. It causes a lot of delays.

Some solicitors and judges seem to think that you can just get a phone book, or computer, look up a phone number and ring it, without having to apply to the jail phone system to get that name and number listed. The jail phone system will not list 1300 or 1800 phone numbers.

I was once happily retired, with a house, a car, and money to pay my bills. Now I have no home, all my household furnishings, clothing, everything... gone.

If I come out of here alive, I will leave here with just the clothes I wear (which probably won't fit anyway).

I am just hoping that Legal Aid solicitors, barristers etc. have at least got the thought that people
who know nothing about the law,
especially in their older years, with next to nothing financially,
can have legal proceedings explained to them, so they have some chance in a court of law,
defending themselves.

I hope you can make something of this letter, then maybe someone has a chance to defend themselves in the future.

Yours in anticipation,
Les

Response from About Time:
Dear Les,

Thank you for your letter. We can only imagine how frustrating it is to get proper legal support while inside, and how especially difficult it can be to get representation for civil matters. Your letter shines a light on this issue, and we thank you for sending it.

I'm sure you already know this, and it might not help, but Victorian Legal Aid has a Prisoner Legal Help line that provides legal information to people in Victorian prisons. You can make a free 12-minute call to the service between 9 am and 3 pm, Monday to Friday.

It is currently available at:
- Metropolitan Remand Centre
- Port Phillip Prison
- Dame Phyllis Frost Centre
- Loddon and Middleton Prisons
- Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

While it is not available at Hopkins Correctional, your caseworker can facilitate a call between you and Prisoner Legal Help (+1300 792 387).

Mark's Musings

By Mark

Mark writes from Port Phillip Prison in Victoria.

Congratulations on the launch of About Time. I can only imagine how many obstacles you have navigated to successfully sail the product into Australia’s prisons, and from where I sit it was very warmly received by the inmates, security and medical staff that I share time with. Well done, and thank you for delivering us something we didn’t know we needed until we received it!

I’ve written a lot of content over the past year, but I think most of it would be unsuitable to print, and so I’ve written a bit about my story that might be useful to you. I write poetic portraits of my fellow inmates in a Henry Lawson style of short stories that are littered with profanities (and toilet humour). I can forward an example if you like, but my current project might be more useful as it is an investigative journalism piece that focuses in on the hot topic of gender-based violence and the astounding amount of men that are imprisoned for breaching intervention orders (and what little is being done inside to rehabilitate men that have crossed that line).

One question I would like answered is: what happens to the items you receive? Are they scanned and put into a folder, or are they thrown out after use (or not used)? I have no way of making a copy of anything I send out, and if you have no process for keeping any of the content you are given, I will look into sending a letter to a friend to photocopy and send via email.

Thanks so much for your time, and I look forward to your response.

Much love,
Mark

Response from About Time:
Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter, and for allowing us the opportunity to explain our process to you and other readers. We store the originals and create digital copies of everything that is sent to us. As a volunteer organisation we unfortunately do not have the resources right now to send letters back to people in prison. It's up to you if you'd like a friend to send them by photocopy or email.

We would love to hear more from you, including the investigative journalism piece!

Clay Changing Futures

By George

George writes from a prison in Victoria.

After being transferred to a minimum security prison with a fully equipped ceramic studio, I was very excited to have the opportunity, and the time, to challenge my skills and creativity.

Having been a ceramic artist in the past, I knew the transformational quality clay can have on people. As I went about sharing my skills, knowledge and creativity with my fellow inmates, I quickly observed a therapeutic response to the clay from my peers. Some of the more immediate skills clay conveyed included time management, perseverance, concentration, emotional control, and the acceptance that if something fails, you have not failed. Just learn from it and move on.

The more subtle therapeutic qualities I observe everyday are how we come together as a community for the common good, and create a welcoming and creative safe space to share.

Sometimes, inmates will sit and play with clay to get away from the crowd, or to get through some hard times- such as the loss of a loved one.

I can see individual attributes being recorded in clay, with the strongest emotion being that of love, as we create gifts for our mums, dads, children, siblings, and friends; letting them know that we are missing them. This style of reflection can be subtle or life changing. The quality and creativity I have witnessed being produced by this studio is world class, and could stand proudly next to any Australian ceramic artistry.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the very supportive recreation team at this location for their ongoing commitment in providing creative spaces for us to express ourselves. Thank you for reading my story.

Kindest regards,

George









Time Out

By Steve

Steve spent 10 years in prison and was released in 2003. He now runs community outreach BBQs and is an advocate for the drug-using community.

My name is Steve. I have done 10 years prison time in Long Bay, Grafton, Parramatta, Goulburn, Maitland, Cessnock, Rockhampton, Arthur Gorrie, Borallan, Glen Innes and Silver Water. I got out in 2003 and have remained out ever since.

The first time I was in trouble, I would've been about seven years old, stealing a box of musk sticks. A bit of childhood petty theft and I went to Mt Penang for 18 months. Got out and lived on the streets of Sydney where I had my first taste of heroin. From there, with no life skills, my insatiable appetite for drugs grew. Anything to take me away from my emotional pain!!

Come 1986, I was given five years for car theft and seven years later I was given a further six and a half years for armed robbery.

Prison was....desensitising. Being 18 years old in Long Bay jail back in 1986 – the trauma continues to follow me to this day. It is a hostile environment where you are always on guard, constantly surveying your surroundings. It wears on you. 10 years is a long time. The biggest frustration was not being able to do an apprenticeship in those ten years. Both sentences were over five years – enough time for two apprenticeships.

I also found it hard to remain clean inside as there was always an abundance of drugs. Coming up to the end of my sentence I decided to do six months of rehab before re-entering society. My motivation to turn my life around came on a visit mid-way through my last sentence. The mother of my daughter said to me,"you think you're the world's best dad – did you think of her while jumping that counter?". From that day, I finally put someone before myself!

I eventually got out of prison, had a job lined up, saw a counsellor, did the Triple P parenting course and within a year of getting out, had full custody of my daughter who was now 11 years old!

What has sustained me since then is a different me – no longer obsessed with myself, I now work in a place where I do outreach BBQs and advocate for the drug using community. I give instead of take, and my daughter is finally proud of me and how far I have come. I have remained free since 2003 and am never looking back!



Thank You for Your Letters

As of a few weeks prior to publication, we received letters from George, David, Christopher, Mullo, Kosta, Brendan, Michelle, Zachary, Dylan, Merari, Gareth, Kelly, Hoang, Mark, Lee, Heath, Ashleigh, Rossco, James, Simon, Jenny, Aaron, Les, KCDC, Chambers and many more.

While we cannot respond directly to all letters we receive, we will aim to publish as many as possible.

Unfortunately, we are unable to return your letters or provide legal advice. If you need legal assistance please contact your local community legal service, legal aid, or your legal practitioner.

We encourage you to keep writing to us, and to encourage your friends to do the same.

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Melbourne VIC 3000

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contribute@abouttime.org.au



News and Investigations

Painkillers Available in QLD Buy-Ups

By Denham Sadler

Denham Sadler is a freelance writer based in Naarm/Melbourne, focusing on criminal justice reform.

Continued from page 1.

A spokesperson for Queensland Corrective Services confirmed the new way of distributing painkillers, and said a trial of this new system found it "positively impacted prisoner autonomy, health management and efficiency within the facility".

"Prisoners in Queensland are now able to purchase paracetamol and ibuprofen in safe quantities through the prison buy-up process," the Queensland Corrective Services spokesperson told About Time.

"The program is currently being rolled out across the state, with each centre putting in processes to manage the safe distribution of medication in accordance with centre requirements."

A new Queensland custodial operations practice directive outlines that, from the start of September, painkillers in the form of paracetamol and ibuprofen would be available for purchase in buy-up, rather than the current process of requiring a prescription through a doctor.

Under the plan, a person in prison in Queensland will be able to buy one box of 10 tablets of paracetamol and one box of 12 tablets of ibuprofen in one buy-up. They will be able to store twice these amounts in their cell at any one time.

Queensland is the first state or territory in Australia to make these basic painkillers – which are available over-the-counter in the general community – more readily available in prison, allowing individuals to better manage their own health and wellbeing.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, painkillers are the second most commonly prescribed medication in prisons, comprising nearly 13 percent of all medicines dispensed.

The provision of healthcare is one of the most commonly raised issues when it comes to conditions in Australian prisons. The Nelson Mandela Rules require the same healthcare to be offered in prisons as it is in the general community, but access to pain management is often far more restricted for those who are incarcerated.

This equivalent healthcare is meant to be the foundation of all state and territory prisons, but accessing basic painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen is currently far harder for those in prison than in the general community.

Prisoners are generally required to put in a medical request form and wait for an appointment with a nurse and doctor to receive a script, before lining up in the medication line to receive the pills, which they must take in front of a nurse.

Not having control over your own pain management can be "agonising", said KC, who has been incarcerated in Victoria.

"It's frustrating when you just need something that's over the counter in the community," KC said. "It's extremely frustrating when you're locked in a cell in severe pain to a point where you can't sleep. We are experts in our own health – we're just asking for a little bit of pain relief."

A trial providing better access to painkillers was conducted at the Townsville Correctional Complex in 2022. Across the year, more than 9,000 painkiller packets were brought through buy-up.

Despite concerns that making painkillers more readily available can increase the risk of overdose and misuse of the medicines, Professor Evonne Miller told About Time the year-long trial resulted in no negative consequences.

"There were absolutely zero adverse consequences reported – nothing bad happened," said Miller, an academic involved in assessing the trial.

"They were really delighted to have it – to be trusted to self-manage their own pain. And they felt it reduced the tensions and the aggravation.

"If you're in pain with a toothache or a headache, a couple of panadols do make a significant difference. They thought it was wonderful and really valued it."

Miller welcomed the move from the Queensland government to expand this trial to all prisons in the state.

"I'm proud to be associated with a positive change that empowers people and supports their health literacy," she continued.

"Change takes time, and at least it's happening. This is super exciting and positive, and I'm delighted for the prisoners. This is something they asked for, they requested it and they know the value of it."

A similar trial was conducted at Victoria's Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in early 2017, with women given weekly medicine packs that included basic painkillers. But the trial was stopped shortly after it began due to a range of "incidents", as described by the Victorian Ombudsman. The female prisoners are now required to attend the medical centre to receive prescribed medications, including painkillers, either in the morning and afternoon, which are then dispensed by nurses.

Steph, who was incarcerated in Victoria, said the current system meant many prisoners were taking panadol in case they experienced pain later in the day.

"They may or may not experience pain but they take it regardless," she said. "That can be quite dangerous for their health."

The federal government's National Strategic Action Plan for Pain Management identified best practice pain management in prisons as being "critical", and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has continually raised the importance of pain management in prisons due to the "high prevalence of significant physical trauma in this population".

Despite this, the Victorian government's Healthcare Services Quality Framework for Victorian Prisons 2023, which oversees the delivery of healthcare in prisons, doesn't mention "pain" or "pain management" a single time.

Providing prisoners with more control over their own health is empowering and helps to improve rehabilitation prospects, Steph argues.

"To be able to have autonomy over your own pain, to have that security, it would make a big difference," Steph said.

"It's quite revolting the amount of women I'd see walking around in stomach pain or tooth pain and they just couldn't get basic medication that people in the community can go to the supermarket and get. It's quite barbaric and cruel."



Young People and the Law: Latest Updates

From significant policy shifts to delayed facility closures, there have been several important youth justice developments across Australia over the past month.

By Meg Tait

Meg is a lawyer and policy officer who has worked and volunteered at several legal organisations across Australia. She currently lives and works in beautiful Nipaluna/Hobart.

The past month has seen several important developments in youth justice legislation and policy across the country.

A new Youth Justice Bill was passed in the Victorian Legislative Council on Friday 16 August 2024. The Bill will make significant changes to laws relating to children in Victoria, including several changes to bail laws.

This includes the introduction of a new bail-related offence; provisions relating to electronic monitoring of young people on bail; and more intensive bail supervision.

Age of criminal responsibility

Despite an earlier commitment to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years, the Allan Labor government in Victoria confirmed there has been a significant policy shift and the Bill was amended to raise the age to 12.

Following the success of the Country Liberal party at the latest Northern Territory state elections on 24 August 2024, the new government has indicated an intention to lower the age of criminal responsibility back to 10 years.

The relevant legislation was changed in August last year, when the NT became one of the first Australian jurisdictions –alongside the Australian Capital Territory – to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12. However, following the recent election, the Country Liberal Party has promised to lower the age back to 10, as well as committing to other legislative and policy changes relating to youth offending. Incoming Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro has justified the decision by stating that the criminal justice system provides greater opportunities for accountability for problem behaviour, and in a recent article explained, 'we're lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 10 so that young people can be held accountable and that appropriate consequences for their age can be delivered, such as boot camps'.

Children in custody

The Tasmanian Minister for Children and Youth Roger Jaensch recently advised there may be further delay in closing Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

Former Premier Peter Gutwein first announced the government's pledge to close the facility in September 2021, following evidence of abuse and harm experienced by children detained at the centre throughout the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

While the facility was due to be closed by 2024, the government later announced the closure would be delayed until 2026 – a deadline which now may not be met.

On 30 August 2024, it was reported that an Aboriginal child detained at Banksia Hill Detention Centre in Western Australia had died by suicide. The 17-year-old boy was found unresponsive in his cell, and his death is currently under investigation.

This is the second death of a child in custody in WA in the last 12 months, following the death of Cleveland Dodd, an Aboriginal child who died after self-harming in 2016. Cleveland , a 16-year-old Yamatji boy, had been transferred to a cell at Unit 18 at Casuarina Prison, an adult facility, approximately eight days before his death. Speaking prior to his inquest (held earlier this year), Cleveland's mother, Nadene, expressed hope the court would find out the truth about what happened, stating, "I want to know what happened to my son. You'd think that a kid would be safe in a place that is watched 24/7 and you'd think that they will come home to you safe. My son didn't come home to me."

A recent inquest investigated conditions within the detention centre which may have contributed to Dodd's death, including ongoing lockdowns, staffing shortages and a lack of access to health and mental health support.

The Australian Human Rights Commission is calling for urgent actions and reforms to better protect children involved in the criminal legal and detention systems.

Investing in early intervention

A new report from the National Children's Commissioner highlighted the importance of embedding children's rights into policy and practice, and called for a significant increase in investment in early intervention and prevention initiatives for young people involved in the justice system.

The report, entitled 'Help way earlier!' How Australia can transform child justice to improve safety and wellbeing', includes the voices of children with lived experience of the legal system, as well as experiences from communities and organisations working in the areas of youth justice and child health and wellbeing.

In her forward to the report, Anne Hollonds, the National Children's Commissioner, makes the following observation:

"It is clear that, to date, we have approached offending by children the wrong way. We cannot 'police' our way out of this problem, and the evidence shows that locking up children does not make the community safer. We need to turn our attention and our resources to the underlying causes, and to the barriers that stop us taking national action on evidence-based systems reform."

The report outlines how most children within the criminal legal system have complex unmet needs, and makes a case for the positive impact of early intervention to address problems such as homelessness, financial insecurity and health issues which can lead to criminal behaviour.



Write to Us

We are a new paper; a new idea. We welcome all of your thoughts about how we can make this as successful as possible. Is there something you want removed from the paper? Something you want added? Let us know.

And also, please let us know if the paper is being circulated properly in your prison. Is everyone receiving a copy, or are there issues with distribution?

We want to hear from you. Write to us via the below postal address:

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au

Investigation Into Serco's Actions Following Incident at Clarence Correctional Centre

By About Time and The National Justice Project

Following a number of complaints from inmates, the NSW Ombudsman investigated Serco's response to an assault at Clarence Correctional Centre. On September 21, 2023, a single inmate assaulted a correctional officer in a violent act which was heavily condemned by the Ombudsman. However, the report's focus was on a series of retaliatory actions by Serco (a security multi-national company that operates at Clarence) on inmates who were not involved in the assault. These included locking down an entire wing housing 175 individuals for five days and placing three bystander inmates into solitary confinement.

The report stated that these actions were "not warranted for the purposes of maintaining the good order and security of the centre," and were "unreasonable and oppressive."

The northern NSW prison also charged 34 inmates who witnessed the assault and 33 inmates were placed on "Behavioural Management Contracts" which allows for people to be held in their cells for up to 22 hours a day, for a maximum period of eight weeks.

The Ombudsman report found that charges were laid and sanctions imposed "despite a lack of reasonable evidence."

The National Justice Project, a not-for-profit human rights legal service, are in discussions with senior barristers as to whether the inmates subjected to the retaliatory measures have a claim for false imprisonment. They are considering a class action to seek compensation for those affected.

If you were affected by this incident, or if you'd like more information about the potential class action, please contact:

National Justice Project
PO Box 123
Broadway NSW 2007

• News and Investigations



WA

Another hot summer to come for WA's Roebourne Regional Prison

Western Australia's Roebourne Regional Prison, in the state's north-west, will go yet another summer with no air conditioning.

It's been almost two years since the WA government promised to install air conditioning in every cell, addressing the non-existent heat control across the facility. With the rising temperatures leaving winter, it's expected to get as hot as 50°C this summer, a life-threatening temperature.

The promise was made by the government in late 2022, stating that $10 million would be invested in installing aircon in every cell.

A WA Department of Justice spokesperson said aircon will now be installed in every cell "during the 2024-25 financial year," which ends in June 2025.

"The Department has a number of measures in place at the prison to manage heat risks," the spokesperson said.

"This includes fans in every cell, air-conditioning in the recreation hall, prisoner visits area and female activities area, access to ice machines and cold water bubblers and shade structures in the main areas of the prison. There are also a number of air-conditioned cells available for prisoners with medical conditions.

"The prison maintains a flexible routine to adjust to the conditions and ensures all planned recreational activities are closely supervised. Cell temperatures are monitored through the day in the accommodation units and medical staff are on duty to ensure prisoners' health and safety."

The maximum security prison has been enduring these conditions for decades, worried that death on-site may occur. Researchers found that on average, the summer nighttime temperature in a cell was regularly at 35°C before midnight.

While the WA government has failed to mitigate the heat, activists, lawyers, prisoners and visitors alike have been campaigning for more humane and cooler conditions.

In 2020 and 2022, the Western Australian Inspector of Custodial Services voiced concerns over the lack of heat control.

"It is an identified health and welfare risk that arises once the prisoners are locked down," the Inspector's report read.

"We have made this recommendation in various reports over many years and while we recognise that there are infrastructure constraints, a solution is needed. We have expressed grave concern at the lack of climate control in mainstream prisoner accommodation at Roebourne and in other aspects of prison life over many years."



TAS

Tasmanian Government abandons plans for new adult prison

The Tasmanian government has abandoned its plan to develop another adult prison in the north of the state, following years of sustained advocacy and pushback from the local community and key justice organisations.

The proposal for the original 270-bed adult correctional facility near Deloraine attracted criticism from the local community in the Meander Valley region, which mounted community campaigns against the proposal.

Concerns were raised through community consultation on the impact of the development on the local environment of the original proposed site, which is home to an endangered species and had been earmarked for conservation purposes. Concerns were also raised about the impact on the local community.

Instead of developing a new correctional centre, the government now intends to invest in improving additional facilities, as well as expanding existing non-custodial sentencing options such as home detention and electronic monitoring.

Advocacy organisations including the Justice Reform Initiative have welcomed the decision, noting that the proposed development would have cost the government approximately $270 million to build, and expressing hope that these funds could now be redirected to initiatives which promote rehabilitation and reintegration.



SA

SA moves to change legislation that allows self-induced intoxication as a partial defence

The South Australian government has released draft legislation to close a "gap" that allows self-induced intoxication and excessive self-defence to be used as a partial defence in court, reducing the charge of murder to manslaughter.

The move comes after Cody Edwards was sentenced to at least 11 years in prison on 6 September 2024, having pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of Synamin Bell.

Edwards "brutally" attacked and killed Bell at their home in March 2022. He was originally charged with murder, but was re-arraigned on the lesser charge of manslaughter part-way through the trial, after his defence claimed that he was in a drug-induced "full-blown paranoia psychosis" when he killed Bell. The defence claimed that in this state of psychosis, Edwards believed that Bell was trying to kill him, and attacked her in self-defence.

Bell's friends and family criticised the Court for accepting Edwards' plea, and have called for legal reforms to prevent the use of self-induced intoxication and excessive self-defence as a partial defence in cases of family violence and other violent crimes.

SA Attorney General Kyam Maher acknowledged that while cases that use this "loophole" are "exceedingly rare", the government recognises that "change is needed to make sure these laws are in line with community expectations".

The state government has begun consultation on such legislative changes, inviting the community to read the draft bill and submit written feedback or complete a survey via the government's online consultation hub YourSAy.



NSW

Domestic violence law reforms in NSW

The New South Wales government is introducing significant reforms to domestic violence offending.

Key changes include:

1. Tougher Penalties and New Aggravated Offences for ADVO Breaches: The NSW government plans to introduce a new offence of 'knowingly contravening an ADVO', which will capture serious or harmful breaches that contain an intent to cause fear or harm to the protected person. These offences will increase the maximum penalty from 2 to 3 years in prison and/or an $11,000 fine. Persistent breaches, defined as three or more violations within 28 days, will incur up to 5 years in prison and/or a $16,500 fine.
2. Serious Domestic Abuse Prevention Orders (SDAPO): SDAPOs will allow a Court to impose conditions on serious offenders aimed at preventing further abuse. The conditions can include positive obligations, such as informing police of any dating profiles they create. They can be requested by police or the Director of Public Prosecutions and will last up to 5 years. Breaches can result in up to 5 years imprisonment and/or a $33,000 fine.
3. Amended Stalking Definition: The definition of stalking will explicitly include technology-facilitated tracking and monitoring, such as GPS tracking and online surveillance, expanding the previous definition which only required the person to be 'contacted or approached' through technology.
4. Easier Name Changes for Children: The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act will be amended to allow sole parents with court orders to change their child's name without needing the other parent's consent, improving safety for domestic violence survivors.



National

Formerly incarcerated women call for the end of strip searches in prisons

Message from FIGJAM: We acknowledge the pain and suffering of people in prisons who are subjected to this practice and put a trigger warning on the following content. This is not an attempt to speak on behalf of anyone, but an update on work being done on the outside to end this practice.

Earlier this year, FIGJAM – a collective of formerly incarcerated women based in Melbourne – alongside Flat Out and the Human Rights Law Centre made a joint submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into legal responses to sexual violence, calling for the end of strip searching in prison.

Drawing on decades of advocacy by people with lived experience, the submission argued that the forced removal of clothing constitutes dehumanising and degrading conduct that would be considered sexual assault if imposed in the wider community, and is especially retraumatising for people who have experienced sexual and physical abuse.

Strip searching, the authors say, is permitted in Australian prisons through overly broad laws with little oversight and accountability. For example, the vast majority of strip searches are performed 'routinely' – when a person first enters prison, attends court, is transferred or has visits with family – in the absence of reasonable suspicion or individual risk assessments.

The submission also includes data on the ineffectiveness of strip searching, with no evidence of a relationship between strip searching and rates of contraband detection.

The ineffectiveness of the practice was also confirmed by reports by the Western Australian Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, the Victorian Ombudsman and Queensland Human Rights Commission.

The submission also argued that other technology is available, such as scanners used at airports, so strip searching is unnecessary. More on this story to come.



QLD

Queensland Police Officers face charges after watchhouse incident

Two police officers have been charged after being accused of assaulting a prisoner in far north Queensland earlier this year.

The Queensland Police Service released a statement on September 5 saying it had charged two members of the Service with offences including deprivation of liberty and assault occasioning bodily harm.

The charges relate to an alleged incident involving a 23-year-old male prisoner at the Mareeba watch house in January 2024.

The prisoner was being held in the watchhouse for property and assault offences.

Both members have been suspended from the QPS and are expected to appear in the Mareeba Magistrates Court on October 2 2024.

A QPS spokesman stressed that the organisation does not tolerate unlawful conduct by any members and takes these allegations very seriously adding that the matter is now before the courts and accordingly they were unable to comment further.

In other news, an external audit commenced this week investigating how the QLD Police Service was able to secure a 15-year $240 million lease of commercial property for an apparent "mega" station at Stones Corner, on the outskirts of Brisbane.

QLD Police Minister Mark Ryan has consistently refused to answer questions about the deal, including how it would be paid for and how long negotiations had been in the works.

Opposition spokespeople continue to call for transparency around the deal, with none of the fit-out and lease details included in the state's budget papers.

This week a QPS spokesperson confirmed an external audit is underway. The Courier Mail reported sources close to the QPS had confirmed the $240 million lease was the "worst deal" they had ever seen.



NT

CLP win in landslide election victory on crime

The Country Liberal Party has achieved a resounding victory in the Northern Territory election on a crime-battling platform, with incoming Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro promising to work to "do whatever it takes to restore community safety."

Amongst the proposed reforms include lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 10 years old; reversing the ban on the use of spit hoods on children in youth detention; introducing mandatory youth 'boot camps' in Darwin and Alice Springs; and overhauling bail laws for serious violent assaults and repeat offenders.

Advocates have raised concerns that these changes will disproportionately impact vulnerable children with significant neurodevelopmental and cognitive impairments.



VIC

Worksafe not laying charges for Veronica Nelson inquest

In January 2020, Veronica Nelson died in her prison cell in Melbourne after being refused bail for shoplifting-related offences. A coronial inquest into her death followed, and in January 2023, Coronor Simon McGregor found that Nelson would still be alive had prison staff responded to her cries for help, labelling her treatment as "cruel and inhumane".

The Coroner referred the matter to WorkSafe Victoria to investigate whether the prison operator or prison staff members had committed any offences in their treatment of Nelson. Following a "thorough investigation", WorkSafe stated in August this year that there was "insufficient evidence" to prosecute the matter.

Separately, the Coroner also recommended an urgent review into the Victorian bail legislation, which he referred to as a "complete and unmitigated disaster". Nelson's death prompted positive reform, with the Victorian government making some legislative changes to allow individuals charged with minor, non-violent offences to be granted bail more easily.

The Victorian government also stopped outsourcing healthcare for female prisoners to a for-profit company, instead using the public health system to ensure that women in custody receive an appropriate standard of healthcare.



ACT

Two deaths in ACT custody

On 29 August, a 34-year-old Aboriginal man tragically passed away at Alexander Maconochie Centre. The man was found unresponsive in his cell and passed shortly after. The death is subject to police investigation. This is the second death at the Canberra jail in less than a month. On 31 July, a 35-year-old man was also found unresponsive and pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics. The deaths, together with the recent inquest into the death of Justin Corby, has sparked calls for an inquiry into the ACT criminal justice and prison system. Both deaths will be subject to Coronial Inquests, required for any deaths in custody. About Time will report on the progress of these Inquests. We urge people in custody to reach out for support if they are struggling, especially at this time.

● Experiences

The Cost of Connecting With Loved Ones From Prison

By Kelly

Kelly writes from Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria.

Continued from page 1.

$46.80 per week wages – 20% that goes into a compulsory savings account for release date = $37.44

$37.44 per week available to spend on toiletries, phone credit, stationary. stamps, printing and special spend items such as shoes, radios, card games and paint by numbers.

I rely on phone calls and Zooms to contact my family. I come from a low socioeconomic background and my Mother cannot read or write. My Father is very limited in both areas as well. I cannot Zoom my Mum when my Dad is away working as she cannot navigate a mobile phone. My daughter is 19 years old now. She was 17 when I was arrested and sent to prison.

So let's start with Zoom. In DPFC we only get two Zooms per week. They are not unlimited. There is a one-hour time limit on all personal Zooms. Personal Zooms must be booked 72 hours in advance by the prisoner. However, if you have two Zoom calls in one week, you are not permitted to have a visit in person. If you have one Zoom, then you are permitted to have one visit in person for up to two hours. Legal visits are unlimited in person and on Videolink but must be booked 72 hours in advance via the prison's Telecourt team.

Now let's move on to the mail system. DPFC has now put a policy in place that sends back pen pal mail, as mail from strangers is not accepted. Mail from other jails across Australia is being refused and sent back if DPFC believes the sender appears to not know the addressee personally. This has caused confusion for all. There has been frustration from women and a decline in mental health, as some women have had their family or partner's mail returned to them stating, "mail from strangers will not be accepted." DPFC is the only jail in the country to implement this policy to date.

The prisoner telephone system (PTS) and phone call costs inside prisons in Australia have been a topic of conversation for many years. Today it is still an ongoing issue. I have been doing some research on the call costs in each state and territory in Australia and have come across some very interesting facts. All states and territories charge prisoners different rates to call home numbers and mobile phones, even if the service provider is the same. All calls are done via a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) service, which means that there is no actual phone line required. The internet hosts the call and records the file for later use, if and when the recording is needed.



'Frame with a Frame' by Jenny, $500, 5501, 75cm x 60cm, acrylic on canvas, available to purchase from Boom Gate Gallery

Comsec TR (Telio) is a European prison media and communications provider. Comsec TR is charging these kinds of rates to provide a secure phone system and we all understand the importance of security in a prison setting. Comsec TR says they charge these rates due to the highest levels of security measures it takes to monitor and record these calls. However, if it provides the same service to each state (which by the way, it is), why such differences in the prices?

We also talk about reducing recidivism. To do that people need to heal and that includes healing broken relationships in prison. Most women that I talk with make those hard reconnection calls to people they have hurt while in prison. Prisons and the government should encourage nurturing and maintaining those connections. Phone calls are vital to stay together and continue building and repairing relationships to reduce recidivism. Humans want to be accepted, loved, and feel needed and appreciated. It has been proven time and time again that it is possible to stop women from reoffending. This can be done by prisoners repairing those connections with family and children. It gives a fighting chance and a purpose to change. You want to really help us? Then start listening to us.

I am a female prisoner. I want to call my beautiful daughter every day and tell her I miss her face and I love her to the moon and back. I want to laugh with her, cry with her, and just listen to her thoughts, complaints, and boyfriend problems. I can only make one call per week.

I also have to call my elderly mother once a week and check up on her and tell her that I miss her and can't wait to cuddle her. My daughter and my mum both only have mobile numbers. I only make $9.36 a day. If I make two calls a week, I don't have enough money left over to buy toiletries and stamps. I have lost everything coming to prison. I don't want to lose my daughter and mum too. I deserve love, acceptance, family support, and the right to communicate with my family who are fighting to help me succeed in moving forward away from drugs and crime. I shouldn't be stopped from seeking their love and help because I don't have money to pay exuberant call costs.

I'm hoping that the people who read this feel the pain and my desperate call for help. I am pleading with the local, state, and federal governments. Stop penalising and punishing us for being poor. Stop allowing companies to make millions from the most disadvantaged population in our society. Help us heal and rebuild our broken connections to family. They are already in pain from losing us. Don't let them suffer more.

Let's make a change. You be the person to help change it. It just takes a compassionate, understanding, and brave person to help fight with us and for us. We are not monsters. Some of us are here for finally standing up to our abuser. Some of us are here for traffic accidents gone wrong. Some women are here cause they couldn't afford groceries for their kids and stole. Some women are here as they have been taken advantage of. Sexually abused, drugged, and made to work as sex workers under horrible people who use women as a commodity to be sold and traded, nothing more. Some women are here for simply being in love with the wrong man and now are considered to be their co-offender. There are lots of reasons why we are here.

We are still women, mothers, daughters, aunties, and sisters.

We all deserve to be loved, and respected and have unlimited contact with our family and children. Phone calls should not be used as a means to make money from us. Our families are suffering. Our children are missing us and need us more than ever. Especially if we cannot be there in person to help guide them.



Amada MA

Rings of Respect

Watching the Olympics can teach us many lessons about unity and mutual respect

By Joey

Joey writes from Metropolitan Remand Centre at Silverwater Prison in New South Wales.

Hi guys! How long has it been now, a few days? A couple of weeks, maybe? Possibly more by the time you read this.

To me, it feels like just a few short sleeps ago since The City of Light (Paris) wrapped up the 33rd Olympiad.

And truth be told, I miss it. I miss it all!

So now, as that famous Olympic Torch commences its four-year pilgrimage across hilly lands, dotty isles & vast blue oceans toward sunny California, I'm strangely inspired. Interestingly, there exists a duality to this inspiration. The first (and therefore quite obvious) is the astonishing feats I was entreated to. Breathtaking!

The second, less perceptible focus of inspiration came from the radius of respect each athlete emanated for his/her fellow competitors. It was like a halo!

How pleasing it was to witness 206 nations unite in peace & comradeship as their respective athletes showcased miraculous achievements on the world stage. Humanity's greatest, inspiring us to be more.

Transfixed in awe, I gazed on as many thousands of super elite athletes from five continents & all corners of the globe converged on one city. With fire in their souls, they came ready to battle.

Yes, to battle! But not as foes, or as enemies. And not even as political adversaries of differing race, colour or creed. Heck no!

Instead, I laid eyes on majesty, totally enthralled by the giant enclave of humanity's finest as they challenged (and often smashed!!) world records.

Again & again. Those mental & physical limits that billions upon billions of worldwide spectators believed to be impossible. Unreachable. Unachievable.

This they did. And more! And all while under the patronage of those remarkable five coloured rings. Rings that to this very day chime for: Respect, Excellence, Achievement, Love, and Unity.

REAL-U

Not such an ill-fitting acronym for an event that celebrates not only respectfulness via achievement but also banishes prejudice and intolerance.

Not surprisingly, I began to wonder about 'us'. The collective us. The us in jail. The us that society has chosen to forget about, at least at some level. So with more than a heaped teaspoon of hope, I began to ponder on those proverbial, 'what if's'.

What if we decided to also choose respectfulness over prejudice & intolerance?

Seems doable right? I mean, in this jail-house cauldron of edgy & misunderstood souls, wouldn't our days run more smoothly if we practised tolerance & respect of others?

Doing so would mean we could concentrate on what really matters; and that is: doing our OWN time, and not somebody else's. By respecting each other & steering well clear of bullshit prison politics, we might be in the favourable position to focus on building a better version of ourselves. You know, a version of 'me' that family and friends can be proud of. Not dissimilar to how we were proud of our returned Olympians!

It is important to impart upon others that in turn we wish to receive: respect.

Under the caring eyes of our Creator, I feel that being respectful is a great way to start a new life.

Peace to you all, my brothers.
Joey

There's Always Someone Else Worse Off Than You

When things are difficult, talk to the people around you. You will learn from their stories

By Mark

Mark is a paraplegic man, writing from an acute care unit in a Victorian prison.

Imagine being a prisoner of your own body. Unable to sit, stand or walk, looking down at your useless abs, legs and feet as you lie motionless for months. Because the experts can't find a cause, they tell you 'it's all in your head' as paralysis takes over your arms, bladder, bowel and breathing. All the while, no one can visit you (COVID), and your partner of 20 years takes or sells everything you shared, leaving you paralysed, hospitalised, homeless, single and stranded.

Seven months after walking into hospital, you wheel yourself out to end up back there again a year later, with not only your body holding you prisoner, but also the state. Waking up in the ICU handcuffed to a bed surrounded by machines, you are still wondering why your body is covered in stitches and staples when a police officer strides in to lay down a charge for a crime you don't know you've committed. Still in delirium, you think it must be a dream... but no, it's not. Welcome to my nightmare.

Hi, I'm Mark. A paraplegic 52 year old father of four that finds himself incarcerated for the first time as I await to hear my fate, remanded (12 months and counting) at an acute care unit in a Victorian prison. Experienced inmates reckon I'm in the worst part of the worst prison in the system, and wonder how I haven't gone crazy with boredom, but thanks to chronic nerve pain I never have a dull moment. I suppose the small concrete yard, limited run out time and no access to the gym, chapel or library makes this place suck harder than most, but I wouldn't know any different, and my physicality makes activity a difficulty anyway. That being said, I can't really complain about how I've been treated... or the food. The salads are consistently top notch and the soup's sublime. Well done lads, your work brings a smile to my dial every time. Whilst I'm at it, the care and professionalism of the nursing staff definitely rates a mention. There are far worse places for a crook to get crook.

After the initial shock and post traumatic stress of my situation subsided, I opened myself up to make the most of what this experience has to offer. Prison has freed me from the slavery of money, or the expectations of friends and family. My only obligation now is to serve time itself, and although I don't know yet how long I'm required to do that for, I choose not to waste time feeling depressed, lonely or in the past... dwelling on what might have been. Much easier said than done, but the passing of time and culling of some contacts has helped make the FOMO fade away.

Fortunately, I had contacts outside that cared for me. The first inmate I met was doing it hard as he had no one. He was an Iranian national that broke both his legs from flying off an apartment building to avoid being mauled by a police dog. The horror stories he told me about Iranian prisons, boat people and detention centres helped to remind me of the fact that no matter how bad you think you've got it, there is always someone worse off than you. To him, deportation to Iran is a fate far worse than prison in Australia. My fascination with his tales led me to write his story, the first of dozens that I have collected so far from the many colourful characters that I share space with.

In the ward here I've spent much time with men battling ailments, injuries and cancer. When I add in their health story to their life story, peppered with 'doing time' and crime tales, I get a cache of content to process that inspires me to write it down. It is an honour and a privilege to receive these heartfelt gifts from the gab because when you look at it, all that we really own is the one thing that can never be taken away from us... our story. I've got to admit, writing this one has been more difficult to knock out than other stories about my inmates, but I deeply appreciate and celebrate About Time for giving me an excuse to do so.

Big shout out to my interviewees and of course to you, dear reader, for letting my words into your mind. Don't forget the moral of the story... whenever you catch yourself thinking 'fuck my life', just remember there is always, ALWAYS someone worse off than you, and simply sparing a thought for them can pull your head out of any funk you're in (oh, and if you can't find anyone... simply watch the 6 o'clock news for a daily dose of dilemmas to dive into!)

Cheers!
Mark

Self-Belief and Second Chances: An Interview With Jacob Hill From Offploy

Offploy is a social enterprise dedicated to helping people with a conviction history find meaningful employment.

By Felicia Zsha' Mirzze

Felicia is a woman with a conviction history and walks side-by-side with the people she serves. She has lived experience of trauma, violence and the justice system. She uses this lived experience every day in her work to connect with, mentor and advocate for people who find themselves at the intersection of crime, violence and incarceration.

Jacob Hill, a young entrepreneur who found himself behind bars, discovered an unexpected truth during his time in prison: many of the people he encountered were talented and entrepreneurial but lacked the self-belief to translate their ideas and skills into reality. Jacob shares how his own journey of self-belief evolved and how he's now committed to fostering that same mindset in others through his work at Offploy, a social enterprise he founded dedicated to helping people with a conviction history find meaningful employment.

Entering prison, Jacob's initial shock wasn't just emotional; it was sensory. The huge difference between his former life and prison were overwhelming. "The environment – the noises, the smells, the other people, the life... I was now one of them." This was made worse by the fact that both his parents were police officers – one of whom was a retired drug investigator. Jacob describes the separation from society, not just physically but in every aspect of identity. Prison strips you of your former status, and in Jacob's case, this separation felt even more pronounced given his family background and prior success.

Before prison, Jacob was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year, earned awards from royalty, and even gained investment from Sir Richard Branson. Yet, despite this, he would find himself constantly comparing himself to others and feeling as though he hadn't truly achieved anything of worth.

The importance of self-belief

Jacob began to see prison as time he could use to grow, to prepare for life outside, and to work on his ideas of self-worth and for self-improvement.

"We might be prisoners of our minds, geography, finances, or actual prisoners but there's so much within our control."

"The biggest thing I realised in prison was just how much privilege I had. I had a university degree, a strong support system, and a mindset that allowed me to believe that even in the worst-case scenario, I would be okay," Jacob says.

Whilst in prison Jacob noticed that many of the people around him didn't have the basic support systems he had, whether it was family, education, or the belief that they could do better.

"There were guys who didn't think they deserved a second chance or just assumed they wouldn't get one. They didn't have the confidence or assurance that things could be different when they got out."

This experience became the driving force behind the creation of Offploy. "Self-belief is the cornerstone of what we do at Offploy. We help people set goals, and we celebrate with them when they achieve those goals."

Jacob sees setting and achieving goals – whether it's securing housing, managing mental health, or maintaining a steady job – as key steps toward rebuilding confidence. "Once people see that they can achieve things on their own, they become empowered to keep pushing forward."

Jacob believes that having self-belief is one of the most critical aspects of reducing reoffending. "When someone believes in themselves, they're more likely to take that first step towards change," he says.

Finding work after prison

Jacob knew that re-entering the business world with a criminal record was going to be hard. However, rather than hide his past, he leaned into it, using self-employment as a way to bypass the barriers many people with conviction histories face in traditional employment. Self-employment allowed him to regain his sense of freedom and work toward building something meaningful. "I'd always been entrepreneurial, and I knew I'd never be happy working for someone else"

He admits that finding traditional employment after prison can be extremely difficult, especially when offenses are public or notorious.

One of the most important pieces of advice Jacob shares with me is simple: don't over-disclose. He recounts his own experience, where he unnecessarily shared details about his conviction in his CV, which ultimately hurt his chances of getting hired. "Do not over-disclose,



like I did. If you're not asked about your conviction, you don't need to disclose it. You're not being dishonest, if the employer doesn't ask, you're under no obligation to share." It's not only unnecessary but can also hinder their chances of being judged on their merits rather than their past.

"Stop shooting yourself in the foot. Get the job based on your character and skills, not just your conviction."

Jacob also suggests for those with conviction histories to carefully consider the type of job you want to get. Some jobs, particularly in regulated sectors like finance, education, or childcare, may require you to disclose your conviction. Other jobs may not. Understanding which sectors require background checks and which ones don't can help narrow down your search and make the process smoother. Prioritising jobs where conviction disclosure isn't mandatory and looking for employers who don't ask about convictions at the application stage. "Employers could do better when it comes to being upfront about their disclosure policies, but if a company doesn't ask about convictions on their application form, that's a good sign."

Jacob also suggests being realistic about the employment journey post-release. While everyone hopes to land their dream job, he suggests that sometimes starting with "any job" is a good first step to getting to where you want to be. "It might not be your dream job, but you need to start somewhere. Getting a job – any job – can be the first step toward securing a better job or even eventually working toward your dream career," he says.

Jacob breaks it down into stages:
A stands for "Any job,"
B for "Better job,"
C for "Career," and
D for "Dream job."
Take the first opportunity that comes your way and build from there.

Post-release fears: will I find a job?

One of the most common fears for many people upon release is the fear of the unknown including will I be able to find a job? These questions lingered in my mind, causing anxiety about how I would reintegrate into society. Even mundane tasks like going to the job centre or attending a parole appointment became anxiety-inducing events. The pressure to prove that I was making progress, while also managing the fear of being sent back to prison, was overwhelming at times. But these experiences taught me that anxiety is a natural part of the process, and the key is learning to manage it, rather than let it control you.

For many, the transition from prison to the outside world is daunting. Prison can become a place of routine, where survival becomes second nature, and release feels like stepping into the unknown. But life is infinitely better outside the walls. There is an entire world of possibilities waiting for those who are ready to embrace it. Whether it's starting a business, finding a job, or rebuilding relationships, the potential is there for everyone.

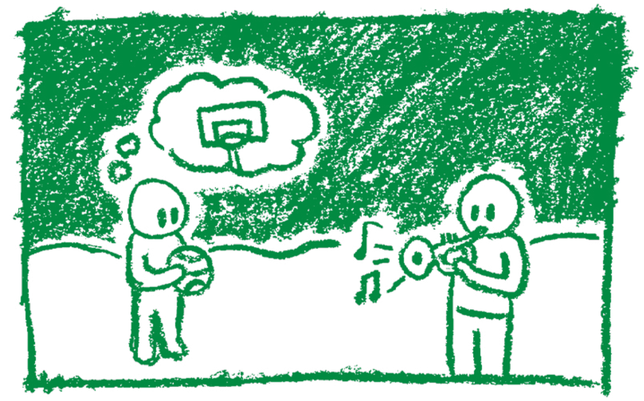
Key takeaways from Jacob Hill's advice for ex-offenders:

- Understand the job market: Know the difference between regulated and unregulated jobs and prioritise roles where disclosure isn't mandatory.
- Don't over-disclose: If you're not asked about your conviction, you don't need to share it. Focus on getting hired based on your skills and character.
- Start small: It's okay to start with "any job" as a stepping stone toward bigger goals.
- Stay resilient: Celebrate your wins, no matter how small, and build your confidence along the way.

Culture

Culture is wide ranging. Sport, film, literature and the arts are all part of our culture, and much more.

This section is dedicated to exploring and writing about the culture that people are engaging in, in Australia and around the world. If you've read a good book, seen an interesting movie or TV show recently, send us your reviews!



Batman: Year One

Every hero needs an origin story

By Grace J.

Book Review

In Batman's case, he's had a few. We've had *Batman* (1989), directed by Tim Burton and starring Michael Keaton. We've had *Batman Begins* (2005), directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Christian Bale and we've had *The Batman* (2022), directed by Matt Reeves and starring Robert Pattinson. But even those origin stories have an origin story.

Enter *Batman: Year One*.

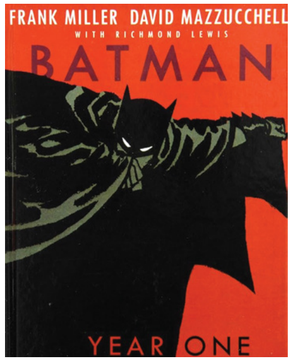
First published in 1987, *Batman: Year One* follows Bruce Wayne returning to Gotham after 12 years away. It's later revealed that Bruce has been relentlessly training to fight crime in Gotham City to avenge the murder of his parents, Thomas and Martha Wayne. It's a rocky start for Bruce, as he's nearly killed on multiple occasions and staggers back to Wayne Manor after each fight, his trusty butler and friend, Alfred Pennyworth, waiting to clean him up. When Bruce becomes Batman, however, everything changes.

Batman: Year One also introduces James "Jim" Gordon. Gordon has moved to Gotham and, like Bruce, struggles to adjust to the city. The Police Department is ravaged with corruption, going all the way to the Police Commissioner, Gillian Loeb. The first instance Gordon witnesses police corruption, he tries to speak out, but Commissioner Loeb orders several officers to beat him severely. Like Bruce, it's clear Gordon must take matters into his own hands. And so, the alliance between Batman and Gordon is born.

Batman: Year One is the blueprint for the character of Batman and the world of Gotham. Batman is driven by a combination of personal vengeance and seeking to right the wrongs of his past but is hopeful that his actions will bring a better day for Gotham. His symbol in the night sky starts as a warning but evolves into one of hope and protection, telling the people of Gotham to hope for a better future.

Now, are there better ways to inspire hope and change in people than beating people to a pulp every night? Most definitely. Batman has billions of dollars at his disposal, so investing in healthcare, education or community outreach programs would probably be more helpful than what he's doing. But he has spent the last twelve years away completely focused on revenge and living in that hurt, so he's probably not thinking with his full noggin.

If you're looking for a compelling, mysterious origin story about one of the most famous superheroes, *Batman: Year One* is definitely worth the read.



Year One written by Frank Miller, David Mazzucchelli, published in 2007 by DC Comics

Daughters

A documentary about four young girls and their incarcerated fathers

By Abha Haval

Movie Review

There is a new US documentary out on Netflix in the community. It's called 'Daughters' and takes viewers inside a Washington DC prison where a special program to give daughters a prom experience with their incarcerated fathers takes them on a rollercoaster of emotions. For only a day, the dads get a chance to change out of their jumpsuits. We watch as they sit restlessly in their chairs waiting in anticipation for their girls to walk down the hallway, and you cannot help but shed a tear as some of them see their daughters for the first time in years.

"Some of them hadn't hugged their fathers in years." The documentary is about the bravery of daughters navigating life with fathers in prison.

Directed by Natalie Rae and Angela Patton, Daughters is a poignant and impactful documentary that centres on the lives of four young women who are part of the mentoring initiative aimed at fostering their personal growth and academic development. Patton is a community activist from Richmond who has organised 13 such dances since 2008. This documentary was made over an eight-year period, but it wasn't until 2019 that they found their champions. Patton says in an interview with the Guardian, "It gets you when they walk down the hallway. I have to excuse myself and go to the ladies' room and get myself together."

The documentary carries a powerful narrative that resonates deeply with the viewers. It intimately portrays the mentoring program designed to support these young women as they navigate their life through the complexities of self-worth, resilience, and identity. This program presents a crucial support system for the girls, providing guidance and a sense of community.

The documentary introduces the girls in different stages. It involves Aubrey, a bubbly 5-year old, who is the "smartest in her class"; 10-year old Santana, whose father's absence puts her in a righties fury; 15-year old Raziah, who is struggling with her mental health issues; and 11-year old Ja'Ana, who is eager to visit her father but doesn't remember him as her mother refused to let her visit him in prison.

For Patton, this documentary was not about prison rehabilitation, but the girls' willingness to find forgiveness. Patton's vision for the film was to pick up the energy and journey of these girls and translate it through the screen.



Netflix

● Legal Corner

Freedom of Information (Part One of Two)

A how-to guide on requesting access to your personal information and why it's important

By Daniel Vansetten

Daniel Vansetten spent around 12 years in prison and has since gone on to study a Bachelor of Laws at university. He is a lived experience advocate for the rights of people in prison.

This is legal information and not advice.

Introduction

This is the first of a two-part series on Freedom of Information (FOI), (also called Right to Information). In this part, we explain why FOI is important and how to lodge an application for information.

How and what decisions are made by prison authorities

Prison authorities regularly make decisions for individuals in prison. These include for case management, prison transfers, parole and community supervision, and the need to participate in rehabilitation programs. These decisions must be justified by the information the authorities hold or have access to. Prisoners subjected to these decisions often do not know what information has been used to make these decisions and, therefore, may not know whether that information is incomplete or incorrect.

The specific information that prison authorities use to make decisions may include prisoner case notes and behavioural reports, clinical pre- and post-treatment reports, findings and recommendations from your initial intake interview, even records of past decisions. If this information is either incomplete or incorrect, then a decision made as a result may be inappropriate.

You may have a right to access some or all of this information under Freedom of Information. Each state and territory has its own Act that covers your rights and processes on information held by government departments. These laws can allow individuals to access their personal information. There are, however, some circumstances where information may be exempt from being provided to you, such as when it includes personal information of others or when disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

State/ Territory	Cost	Fee Waiver	Address for accessing prison records	Legislation	Address for accessing health records
ACT	$0.00	Not required	Freedom of Information, Justice and Community Safety Directorate GPO Box 158 Canberra City, ACT 2601	Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT)	ACT Health Freedom of Information GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601
VIC	$32.70	Yes	Freedom of Information Corrections Victoria GPO Box 123 Melbourne VIC 3001	Freedom of Information Act 1982 (VIC)	Justice Health GPO Box 123 Melbourne VIC 3001
NSW	$0.00	Not required	Corrective Services NSW Locked Bag 5000 Parramatta NSW 2124	Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)	Justice Health PO Box 150 Matraville NSW 2036
QLD	$0.00	Not required	Right to Information Corrective Services GPO Box 1054 Brisbane QLD 4001	Right to Information Act 2009 (QLD)	**Release of Information PO Box 73 IPSWICH, QLD 4305
SA	$42.00	Yes	Freedom of Information Correctional Services GPO box 1747 Adelaide SA 5001	Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)	Prison Health Services 28 Woodville Rd Woodville South SA 5011
TAS	$46.75	Yes	Right to Information Department of Justice GPO Box 825 Hobart TAS 7001	Right to Information Act 2009 (TAS)	Correctional Primary Health Services PO Box 104 Lindisfarne TAS 7015

Identifying issues

In most situations, the information that prison authorities have is likely complete and correct. However, if you are subjected to a decision that does not seem appropriate, then it may be that there is something wrong with the information considered to make that decision. This is where Freedom of Information (FOI) processes can assist.

Incomplete or incorrect information may be the result of many things. It could be caused by a genuine mistake. It could be that information has changed over time and was not updated on certain records. Or it could be caused by incompetent record keeping or even something sinister.

No matter the reason, decisions made from incomplete or incorrect records can have a significant impact on you.

Freedom of information processes also provide avenues to update or correct that information if required.

How to make an application

Freedom of information processes vary across each jurisdiction. Most jurisdictions provide a pre-made application form to assist with making an application.

Any person in prison seeking to make an application should first ask prison management whether there is a pre-made form for applications. If there is no pre-made form, then people can simply write a letter to request information. Your letter must contain:

1. Your name and address (the prison address if you are in prison)
2. That you are applying for personal information under the relative legislation (see table below for legislation by jurisdiction)
3. Specifics about the information you seek, with relative dates if known. For example, you may seek: 'all case notes recorded against me between 01 June 2022 and 31 May 2024'
4. Whether you are seeking a fee waiver due to financial hardship

See the following table for the address to send your application. This address can also be used for general inquiries about the processes for accessing your personal information.

Fees and fee waivers

People who live in New South Wales, Queensland or the Australian Capital Territory can access their personal records without any fees. Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia all charge a fee (as per the table below). These fees can be waived for financial hardship. Most jurisdictions usually consider people in prison as facing financial hardship. Simply state in your application that you are applying for a fee waiver due to financial hardship due to imprisonment and provide your CRN (or prison number). You will be notified whether the fee waiver is granted.

South Australia, however, requires more information to prove financial hardship. A person incarcerated in South Australia must prove that they are not receiving enough money to cover their total weekly expenses. This is often easy to prove, and may require a simple written explanation of your daily prison expenses together with a print off of your prison account. Your explanation can include why you need to spend on supplementary canteen food, such as health food to ensure a balanced diet or sweets to minimise the mental health impacts of the prison environment.

FOI for medical records

Obtaining personal information is not just limited to information held by prison authorities. People can also obtain their medical records from prison health services. Applications for health records must, however, be made to the health agency rather than the prison authorities. Find the relevant addresses in the table above.

****Readers in Queensland:**
There are eight different addresses for accessing prison health records in Queensland, depending on the institution in which you are incarcerated. Please see health staff for the correct address for your institution.

Part two – next edition

Stay tuned for part-two in the next edition of About Time, where we explain the review processes- what to do if you are unhappy with the response to your application.

If you find that any information here is incorrect, please let us know.

Still Paying Your Mortgage in Prison?

This article is sponsored by Mortgage Stress Victoria.

Mortgage Stress Victoria is funded by the Victorian Government, we provide free help for Victorians experiencing mortgage stress and who meet our eligibility criteria. If you have an appointment with us, you can then access free help from a lawyer, financial counsellor and social worker.

Almost all prisoners will be eligible for our service.

Incarceration is a key contributor to mortgage stress, while in prison staying up to date with your mortgage re-payments and other bills can be hard. Talking with lenders such as banks from inside prison can make the problem worse, debts and bills can get out of control and make them more difficult to manage when you exit prison. Difficulty talking with services or individuals from inside prison can be barrier to organising your life.

Our financial counsellors can help by providing once off information to you about your non legal debt options, and provide ongoing help such as asking for hardship assistance including asking for a pauses on payments, debt waivers, and payment plans.

Our legal team can provide advice about loans, debt and fines, and ongoing help when debt related court proceedings have been started against you. We can also check if you are entitled to compensation or a debt wavier.

Our social work team can help by supporting you to work towards personal goals, apply for grants of money, housing, Centrelink payments (when you have exited prison). They can support you to access medical treatment, wellbeing and family violence support, and they can help you communicate with external supports you already have.

The assistance our team can provide is not limited to the above. If you can't contact us yourself, you can ask a trusted person to contact us for you and speak to us on your behalf on an ongoing basis. We will not speak to another person about your circumstances without your approval.

There are different stages of mortgage stress:

1. It is difficult to pay your debts and bills.
2. You have fallen behind on repayments or missed due dates for bills.
3. You have been sued by a creditor.
4. Your family members or you have received a notice to vacate your mortgaged property or a warrant for seizure and sale of personal property.
5. You house or personal property has been taken by the Sheriff.

We can assist you at any stage of mortgage stress.

Our message to you is, get help as early as possible because you will have more options available to you.

You are eligible for an appointment if you satisfy the following criteria:

- You have a mortgage over only one property in Victoria; and
- You have a household income of less than $75,000 or recent experience of family violence;

or

- Your experience as a victim-survivor of family violence has directly caused you to have a mortgage over more than one property.

Our contact details are:
Free call: 1800 572 292
Email: info@mortgagestress.org.au
Webform: Mortgage Stress Victoria

Write to us:
Level 8, 63 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000
Or ask a support worker to help connect you with us.

Get help with your mortgage stress.

We accept referrals from support services and individuals who are supporting you to find help.

Mortgage Stress Victoria



Reintegration

This section is intended to assist readers who will soon be released. We want to help prepare you for the outside. We will rely on relevant experts to provide monthly themed educational content about reintegration services and opportunities.



Identification

Reprinted and updated from VACRO's Getting Started: A guide for people leaving prison

By About Time

We all need identification. Identification (or ID) is a document that proves who you are. Some forms or ID are more useful than others but any official document with your name on it can be used.

A lot of services require you to show ID before they can assist you. Different agencies require different types of ID. For example:

- To see a doctor and get prescriptions filled, you need a Medicare Card
- To get material aid you need a Health Care or Pension Card

There are many types of ID, including:

- Birth certificate
- Passport
- Drivers Licence
- Proof of Age Card
- Medicare Card
- Tax assessment
- Health Care Card
- Utilities bill

And many more...

ID is sometimes called POI or Proof of Identity documents.

When do I need ID?

You will need ID to:

- Open a bank account
- Get a driver's licence
- Claim Centrelink payments
- Rent a house
- Apply for a credit card

And many other everyday things... You will need ID on your first day out.

When to get ID

Money is scarce in prison and most ID isn't free. You may think ID is a waste of money but you need ID as soon as you get out. You also need ID to get ID and starting out with nothing will make things harder. When you're still in prison the staff can verify who you are.

The prison can give you a letter to confirm your identity before you get out. This can only be used with some agencies if you don't have enough other ID. For example this can be used to get a birth certificate.

If you have no ID when you leave prison you will need to contact previous service providers (such as telephone, gas or electricity companies) and ask them to send you documentation that you can use as ID, like past bills.

What ID will I need?

Photo ID is very important. If you can't get a driver's licence or passport you should get a proof of age card.

Some ID will be accepted in some places and not others. For example: pubs will only accept photo ID.

Some places ask for more than one piece of ID. Some places will ask to see 100 points of identification. They can change their requirements at any time so check before you go.

The more forms of ID you have the better.

Useful ID

Photo ID with your name and address is the best. A birth certificate is also handy and is cheaper than some other forms of ID.

A Health Care Card is also good. It can be used as ID and helps you get cheaper services and prescription drugs.

You should aim for the following set of ID:

- Proof of Birth
- Photo ID
- Medicare Card
- Bank Card

Some ID is free (eg Medicare cards) and other ID doesn't expire (eg birth certificates). So you should get these as soon as possible.

Proof of Birth

If you were born in Australia, proof of birth means:

- A birth certificate
- An Australian passport

If you were born outside Australia, proof of birth means:

- An Australian citizenship certificate
- An Australian certificate of residency
- An Australian visa
- An Australian passport

Centrelink also refers to 'Proof of Birth' as 'Commencement of Identity'.

Birth Certificate

You can apply for a copy of your birth certificate from the Registry where you were born:

Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Phone: 1300 369 367
GPO Box 4332, Melbourne, VIC 3001
Customer Service Centre:
Ground floor, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne (near Southern Cross Station).
Website: https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm /certificate-applications

Australian Capital Territory Registrar-General's Office
PO Box 225, Civic Square, ACT 2608
Phone: (02) 6207 0460
Website: www.ors.act.gov.au

New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 30, Sydney NSW 2001
Phone: 1300 655 236
Website: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au
Email: bdm-webmail@agd.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory Births, Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 3021, Darwin, NT, 0801
Phone: (08) 8999 6119
Website: www.nt.gov.au
Email: RegistrarGeneral.DOJ@nt.gov.au

Queensland Births, Deaths and Marriages
PO Box 15188, City East, QLD 4002
Phone: (07) 3247 9203
Email: bdm-mail@justice.qld.gov.au

South Australia Births, Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 1351, Adelaide, SA 5001
Phone: (08) 8204 9599
Website: www.ocba.sa.gov.au
Email: applications.bdm@agd.sa.gov.au

Tasmania Births, Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 198, Hobart, TAS 7001
Phone: 1300 135 513 or (03) 6233 0755
Website: www.justice.tas.gov.au
Email: bdm@justice.tas.gov.au

Western Australia Births, Deaths and Marriages
PO Box 7720, Cloisters Square, Perth WA 6850
Phone: 1300 305 021
Website: www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au

New Zealand Births, Deaths and Marriages
GPO Box 365, Sydney, NSW, 2001
Phone: +64 4 474 8150 or 1300 559 535
Website: www.dia.govt.nz
Email: bdm.nz@dia.govt.nz

Costs:

Standard certificates: Around $55, depending on the state/territory (+ postage).

Applying from Prison

Step 1
Contact the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) in your state of birth. Ask them for a birth certificate application form OR ask the prison staff for help and Prison ID, if you need it.

Step 2
Fill out the form and send it to Intel. Intel will confirm your identity and forward the documents to the BDM Office.

If you were born overseas you can't apply for a birth certificate from prison. You can apply for copies of Australian government issued documentation such as citizen certificates or residency papers.

Applying after Prison

If you have all the ID and the application fee, the easiest option is to go to the BDM Customer Service Centre.

Applying by Mail

Step 1
Download or Ask the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages for an application.

Step 2
Make photocopies of your original proof of identity (POI) documents and have them certified (see below).

Step 3
Mail your documents with the completed application form and fee back to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

If you were born outside Australia, citizenship papers, visas and residency certificates can be used as proof of birth.

To access any of these documents you can visit the Department of Home Affairs website at http://www.immi. gov.au/allforms/pdf/119.pdf.

You can also call them on 131 881.

The cost of a new citizenship certificate is $275.

If you can't access the internet ask for help from someone who can.

Passports

Getting a passport can be complicated and they are expensive.

If you need one for your release, talk to prison staff for help.

Once you are out, contact a Post Office for the latest information.

Driver's Licence

Each state/territory has its own authority that manages drivers licences and other road and transport requirements.

VIC Roads:
Phone: 131 171
Website: https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/

Services NSW:
Phone: 13 77 88
Website: https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/

Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads:
Phone: 13 23 80
Website: https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/

Services Tasmania:
Phone: 1300 135 513
Website: https://www.service.tas.gov.au/

Access Canberra:
Phone: 13 22 81
Website: www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/

Service SA:
Phone: 13 10 84
Website: www.service.sa.gov.au/

You will need to renew your licence if it has expired.

In Victoria, VicRoads will send you a letter about five weeks before your licence expires. This will go to your last known address so make sure VicRoads has the right details.

Driving with an expired licence is a criminal offence. If you have lost your card and want to check the status of your licence, call VicRoads or the equivalent in your state/territory.

Renewing an Expired licence

If your licence has expired by less than five years you can call the road authority and ask them to send you a renewal notice.

If you're not sure where you will be staying, have it sent to a safe address (such as a relative's house).

Proof of Age Card

If you don't have a drivers' licence or passport a Proof of Age Card is your next best option for photo ID. It only costs $10.

You can pick up a Proof of Age card application form at most pharmacies or post offices.

You can also ask prison staff about getting a form.

How to apply

Step 1
Take the completed application form and your ID to an 'Authorised Referee' and sign the form in front of them.

An 'Authorised Referee' is a person who:

- can witness the signing of a statutory declaration (a list of qualified persons can be found inside the application form)
- has known the applicant for at least 12 months
- is on the electoral role

The Authorised Referee must then complete and sign the Authorised Referee declaration on the application form.

Getting started

Step 2
Go to a Photo Point agency to get your photograph taken (some prison locations will be able to take the photo for you) and lodge the application form. Take along your identification documents as the person from the agency is required to check your documents and also sign the application form.

Making a false statement is a serious offence.

Medicare Card

Medicare via Services Australia
Phone: 132 011

A Medicare card is important ID. It is easy to get and free.

You need your Medicare card to access government subsidised medical, eye and hospital care and prescription medicine. Replacement Medicare cards and other information will be sent to the last known address. To advise Medicare of a new address, call them, visit a Services Australia office, or go to their website: https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare

How do I get a Medicare card?

If you have previously had a Medicare card, you can ask for a replacement to be sent out to you. You should be able to organise a Medicare card from prison with the help of prison staff.

After you are released, call them to find out if you can replace your card over the phone.

If you have never been enrolled in Medicare you will need to provide identification to show you are eligible. Ask them what you'll need to bring in when you talk to them.

If you don't have enough ID tell them your circumstances. Your release papers are normally accepted as identification.

The 100 Point System

Many organisations will require 100 points of ID. They have their own systems so each piece of ID will be worth a different amount depending on the agency.

Photo ID and birth certificates are generally worth the most points.

Here is an example:
Drivers License = 70 points
Birth Certificate = 50 points
= 120 points

Driver's licence = 50 points
Medicare card = 20 points
Key card = 20 points
Phone bill = 15 points
= 105 points

Certified Copies:

Sometimes you will be asked to send certified copies of documents when you apply for ID.

A certified copy is a photocopy signed by someone who has seen the original document.

Only certain people are able to certify documents. The list includes: pharmacists, police officers, solicitors or barristers, public servants, justices of the peace, doctors, dentists, court registrars, accountants or psychologists.

Never send original documents by mail unless you have to. They won't be returned and may not even get there.

Tax File Numbers

ATO: 13 28 61
If you have lost your tax file number or need to update your details, call the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

To obtain a tax file number for the first time (as an Australian Resident)

Step 1
Go to Centrelink or an Australian Tax office to get the form. The form is called Tax file number – application or enquiry for individuals (NAT 1432). You can also call 1300 720 092 to ask for it.

Step 2
Send your form to the ATO with the following 3 documents to prove your identity:

- One document that is either: a birth certificate, citizenship certificate, or an overseas passport with a visa.
- Two documents that are either: an Australian passport, an Australian drivers license, Australian Learner's Permit, Medicare card, bank account statement, Australian Firearm License, Tertiary student ID card, secondary student ID card.

Step 3
Your tax file number will be sent to you in the mail.

Other forms of useful ID

There are many documents that can be used even if they are only worth a small amount of points. These include:

- Student ID cards
- Health care cards
- Gas, phone or electricity bills showing your name and address
- Other licences (e.g. forklift)
- Car registration papers
- Tenancy agreements
- School certificates or reports

Almost anything with your name on it can be used as ID so hang on to all your records and official correspondence.

• Health

Depression

Some thoughts from behind bars of one of the world's most commonly diagnosed mental health conditions

Anonymous

The author writes from Ravenhall Prison in Victoria.



Austin Kehmeier

Depression is overrated and we all have to deal with it.

Firstly, depression is a mood disorder that can cause a person from any age group to lose interest in everyday activities and loss of happiness.

There is no simple cause of depression, but there are a variety of reasons for the causes. For instance, lack of happiness from relationships, sadness or feeling empty due to someone passing away can cause a person's lack of sleep, disorganisation, excessive eating and other health problems.

Certainly, there are a few reasons which cause a person to be feeling 'down' or depressed, but luckily there are also ways of dealing with these mood disorders.

From personal experience, I find jogging is really helpful when my mind becomes overcrowded with negative thoughts. A person can generally connect with good friends, family and nature when feeling empty or down to uplift their mood.

Other factors could be professional support, such as psychological therapy, medication and regular exercise which are also great for stabilising the mood.

Healthy eating is also considered beneficial. Music is always good to listen to, particularly when one is feeling down and sad.

Overall, the beauty of life is that we don't stay the same, so our mood is destined to shift on a daily basis according to what mood we go through and the experiences we have each day.

Dealing With Mental Health in Prison

Understanding and managing difficult emotions

By Annalise de Groot

Annalise is a psychologist at PsychOrium Forensic and Clinical Psychology Services.

Sadness. Stress. Fear. These emotions feel like they are swallowing us whole. When we feel these emotions, it is hard to see anything other than the feeling, especially when in prison. Every emotion has a message behind it. Sadness tells us that we are missing something, or that we need time. Stress tells us that there is something we need to do, and that we need to act. Fear tells us that we are in danger. When we feel these emotions in a healthy way, it is because they are matched to the situation. If you're under attack, you should feel afraid. If someone hurts you, you should feel sad. If you've got a court date coming up, stress is normal.

For some of us, our emotions start to misfire, and they can give us messages that don't match the situation we are in. This can often happen when we have lived through trauma, abuse and instability.

Sometimes, the emotions are so strong that they make us feel like they will never end, and this becomes so unbearable that we will do anything to make the feeling go away. This is when mental health problems can start to happen. If you are constantly feeling like you're on edge, unsafe, afraid, if you feel sad and helpless all the time, or if you feel like there is no hope for your future, you might be experiencing this.

The best way to help yourself is to ask for help from a health professional (like a psychologist, counsellor, social worker or nurse). Unfortunately, this is not always an option. Here are some things that you can do to help yourself when you feel like you are not coping with your emotions.

1. Express how you are feeling – this can be in words, lyrics, drawings or through conversations.
2. Practice relaxation and grounding skills:
   a. Take deep breaths, count each breath in and out until you reach 10, then do it again.
   b. Look around you and list five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.
   c. Count the number of things you can see that fit into a category (e.g., number of blue things, number of lights).
3. Practice distraction skills – playing games, sport/exercise, reading, music, conversation, look at photos or speak to family/friends.

Important:
This piece is not intended to provide specific mental health advice, treatment or diagnosis. If you feel that the information provided here might be relevant to you, please seek professional advice through the public health service in your area.

• We Need Your Feedback!

Are you and your friends receiving the newspaper every month?
We are distributing the newspaper to every prison, and we have asked your staff to provide the copies to you directly. We want to hear from you:

- Are you being told that the paper is available?
- Are there enough papers going round?
- Have you experienced any issues or difficulties getting your hands on a copy?
- If you only have access to a digital copy, would you also like a physical paper?
- What do you like about the paper? What do you want to see differently?

Please send us a letter to let us know if there are any issues, and we can help fix them. Please ask your friends for their feedback as well, and put that into your letter.



Stretch It Out

By The Prison Phoenix Trust

If you're getting joint pains because of not moving around much then try this routine, which will stretch all your muscles and make you feel better. You don't need much time or space to do it but it can make a big difference.

1. Back arch:
Repeat the below sequence five times.



Step 1: Breathe in



Step 2: Breathe out

2. Plank movement:
Repeat the below sequence five times.



Step 1: Breathe in



Step 2: Breathe out

Hold the following poses for five slow breaths each.

3. Back and chest stretch:



4. Arm stretch:



5. Groin stretch:



6. Lower back stretch:



7. Back stretch:



8. Leg stretch:



Relax in the following position for five minutes.



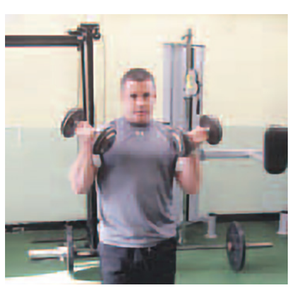
Hitting the Gym: Dumbell Workouts

By Rod Eames and Brian Colclough

This month we will be looking at two exercises that target all of your muscle groups but can be used at various speeds, reps and intensity.

1. Shoulder press:
Start standing with feet shoulder width apart, curl the dumbbells up, then twist around and press from your shoulders. This utilises your bicep and shoulder muscles. Lock out your arms so they are in line with your ears and above your head. Then bring the dumbbells back down to your shoulders and return to the waist. The more controlled and strict the movement the better, as this will prevent rocking and any cheating.

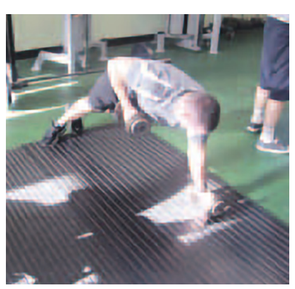




2. Push-up, row and lift:
Squat down with the dumbbells to the floor and thrust your legs out so you are now in a push up position. This utilizes your leg muscles. Perform a push up still holding on to the dumbbells. This works your chest and triceps.



As you come in to the raised position from the push up, perform a single arm dumbbell row with your right arm. This works your back, biceps and also fires up your core.





As you row your right hand up to your chest twist and turn in to a T-side plank, raising the dumbbell up and tensing your core. Hold yourself rigid in this position for 2 seconds, and then return to the start position for a press up and repeat on the other side.

After this, thrust your legs up into your chest, and return to the standing position. This is one repetition.

You can do this with progressive weights and in reps of ten. Start with 5kg dumbbells, and progress upward 7.5kg each time. See how far you can get and how long it takes you. Alternatively perform a pyramid set. If you don't have dumbbells available, you can use grip medicine balls or kettle bells.

All exercises reprinted with permission from *Inside Time*.

• Mob

Welcome to the Mob section!

Here is a section made by Mob, for Mob! If you have any suggestions or you'd like to contribute, please write to us! In this edition, we've included a letter from Aaron, pictures from The Torch and a community fact sheet from Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.

I Feel Like I Belong

By Aaron

Aaron writes from a Victorian prison.

I am back in jail once again. I'm no stranger to jail. It would be my seventh or eighth sentence in ten years. I identify as an Indigenous man. I have since I was twenty, when my mother did the family tree. I never felt like I belonged until after following my family tree up and finding out I was from a mob in central NSW, Barkindji. I have never felt like I am where I am meant to be.

When I go to art and meet with all the other brothers, now I have started painting, I love to feel like I belong with the Koori Boys.

Moving forward, I am part of the Torch Program. I can't wait to be released and start doing art on the outside with my son. He is always wanting to do what I am doing. I would love to have a shared piece with my son.



• Write to Us

We are a new paper; a new idea. We welcome all of your thoughts about how we can make this as successful as possible. Is there something you want removed from the paper? Something you want added? Let us know.

We want to hear from you. Write to us via the below postal address:

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au



Goanna Dreaming – Future Freedom
By Corey O.
Wiradjuri
2024

This painting is about my totem, the goanna, always looking out for me. The sunset with family table, camping ground and important places along the way after my release. I can't wait for my time to be free. To be with my children and family and enjoy a lot of time with them, as I've lost a lot along the way in jail.



Our Mob's Dreaming
By A. Smith
Waka Waka
2024

All the different tribes coming together to yarn about our Future Dreaming and what our Mobs should be looking forward to in the future.



Connecting with Country
By Albert T.
Noongar
2024

When you connect with your Country, the Country will connect with you, heal you and give you that sense of belonging. The hand print represents me being so far from Country, and when released, going home and connecting back to the Country that I call home.



Wandayali (Echidna) Dreaming
By B. Ward
Nari Nari/Wiradjuri
2024

This is a painting of Wandayali Wiradjuri word meaning echidna. He is chasing ants, his favourite food. He represents me, once I'm back on Country. I can't wait to have a Boree (fire) tunuut (by the river) and catch guya, kuya (fish) and ignor (crayfish) some of my favourite foods.

Ending Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

By Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

This information from Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service explains the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and some ways we as a community can work towards ending deaths in custody. Our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of all those who have passed in custody.

What was the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody?

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) was an inquiry called by the Australian Government in 1987, after growing public attention on the deaths of Aboriginal people in prisons and police stations. Over four years, it investigated 99 individual deaths of First Nations people across Australia and the systemic problems which had helped cause them. The Commission's final report in April 1991 found major failures by all Australian governments, police and prison authorities had contributed to the deaths of First Nations people in custody, and made 339 recommendations to address these problems and end Aboriginal deaths in custody.

What has been done since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody gave its report?

The 339 recommendations from the RCIADIC included changes to prison conditions and procedures, reforms to how police worked, and changes in the law to keep Aboriginal people out of prison. Unfortunately, Australian governments have not done enough to implement these recommendations, and in many cases circumstances have gotten worse. For example, the Victorian Government has only recently decriminalised public drunkenness (this crime was disproportionately used to charge First Nations people) – more than 30 years after the RCIADIC's report. The Commonwealth Government's own review of the implementation of the RCIADIC recommendations found that only 64% have been fully implemented with an independent report by Aboriginal scholars finding that number was much lower.

How can we end Aboriginal deaths in custody?

We need to reduce the number of Aboriginal people who are incarcerated. Reducing incarceration rates for First Nations peoples will require changes in employment, housing, health and social support – not just the legal system. However, several simple legal changes would immediately make a difference.

Public drunkenness

Criminal charges of public drunkenness are disproportionately used by police against Aboriginal people. The tragic case of Tanya Day, who died in custody in December 2017 after being arrested for being drunk in public, shows how Aboriginal people are brought to police stations when they pose no danger. After extensive advocacy by the Day family, Victoria passed a law to decriminalise public drunkenness. This means that in Victoria, people who are drunk in public will receive a health-based response, however, the details are still being worked out by the Victorian government. Victoria is the second-last Australian state to decriminalise public drunkeness, with Queensland being the last to keep the criminal offence.

Reform Victoria's punitive bail laws

Over thirty years ago, the RCIADIC recommended that all Australian governments should "revise any criteria which inappropriately restrict the granting of bail to Aboriginal people". Instead, Victoria has consistently tightened its bail laws. Changes in 2013, 2017 and 2018 have made it harder to access bail, especially for people without stable housing. As a result, the number of unsentenced Aboriginal people held in Victorian prisons quadrupled from June 2015 to June 2019. More than half of the Aboriginal people who have died in custody since the Royal Commission had not been sentenced to jail time – they died while being held by police or 'on remand', waiting for a trial after they were refused bail. There have been some recent changes to Victorian bail laws following the inquest into the passing of Veronica Nelson, which has had some positive impact on remand rates. These will be discussed in a future edition of About Time.

Raise the age of criminal responsibility

Currently, children as young as 10 can be imprisoned in Australia, with Aboriginal children being detained at nearly seven times the rate of non-Aboriginal children in Victoria. Experts have found that raising the age to 14 would reduce the number of Aboriginal children in prison by 15%.

Improve prison conditions through independent inspections and higher standards

Conditions in prisons and police cells can have devastating effects on the mental and physical health of Aboriginal people. The use of solitary confinement needs to be ended, and healthcare within prisons should be equivalent to what is available in the community – both these measures were recommended by the RCIADIC in 1991.

Independent oversight can effectively improve conditions in prisons and police cells. Under an international treaty, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), Australian governments have to establish an independent agency to inspect prisons and make recommendations for how conditions need to be improved. OPCAT was explained in Issue 2 of About Time, for those who still have access to the paper. Aboriginal people should be consulted on how detention inspections can be culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people.

Recipes From Inside

Pumpkin Soup



Ingredients:

- 1 brown onion, chopped
- 500g of pumpkin, chopped
- 3 cups of chicken stock
- Bay leaf, garlic and/or chilli flakes (optional)
- ½ cup of rice, rinsed of starch (until clear)
- Salt and pepper (to taste)
- 2 tbsp of butter (or oil)

Method:

1. Heat butter (or oil) in a saucepan on medium to high heat.
2. Add the chopped onion and stir until clear (approx. 2-3 minutes).
3. Add the chopped pumpkin and stir until soft (approx. 2-3 minutes).
4. Add herbs and spices.
5. Add rice.
6. Add chicken stock.
7. Bring to the boil, cover with a lid and reduce to medium to low heat.
8. Simmer for 30 mins.
9. Blend with a stand blender until smooth.
10. Serve (and enjoy)!

Creamy Carrot Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp of oil
- 1 large brown onion, chopped
- 5 large carrots, chopped and peeled
- 2 cups of chicken stock
- ¼ cup of cream
- ¼ cup of milk

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan on high heat
2. Add the chopped onion and stir (approx. 4-5 minutes).
3. Add carrots, stock and bring to the boil.
4. Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes.
5. Leave to cool for 5 minutes.
6. Add the cream and milk.
7. Blend with a stand blender.
8. Serve.

Chicken Stock

Ingredients:

- 8 chicken drumsticks
- 2 carrots, cut into chunks
- 2 celery stems, cut into chunks (Broccoli stems work if no celery available)
- 1 onion, peeled (brown or red)
- 1tsp of salt and pepper (each)
- 10 cups of water

Method:

1. Place all of the ingredients into a saucepan.
2. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat to medium to low heat and simmer for 3 hours (with the lid on).
3. Remove the chicken drumsticks. You can use these for further meals such as:
   a. chicken fried rice
   b. chicken francaise
   c. chicken egg mayo sandwich
4. Remove the vegetables.
5. Pour liquid through a strainer into 3 containers with lids (each container holds 3 cups).
6. Freeze for future use.

Broccolli Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 brown onion, chopped
- 500g broccoli and stems, chopped
- 2 tbsp of butter (or oil)
- 3 cups of chicken stock
- Salt and pepper (to taste)

Method:

1. Add all of the ingredients into a saucepan (except the stock) and stir until sauteed (approx. 5 minutes).
2. Add the chicken stock and cook until boiled.
3. Reduce the heat to medium to low and cover with a lid. Leave to simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Blend with stand blender until smooth.
5. Serve!

These recipes were provided by Mark, who writes from Ravenhall Correctional Centre in Victoria.

Get Published in About Time



Your contributions are the centerpiece of the paper. If you would like to contribute to About Time, please send your letters to the below postal address:

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PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au

You can provide any contribution at all: letters, short-stories, poetry, artwork, puzzles, games, jokes, cartoons, investigative stories, reflections, advice, or anything at all.



Creative

Heaven From Above

By Malsnight

Malsnight writes from Junee Correctional Centre in New South Wales.

A wee bit of heaven
Drifted down from above,
A handful of happiness
A heart full of love.
The mystery of life
So sacred and sweet,
The giver of joy
So deep and complete.
Priceless and precious
So loveable, too —
The world's sweetest miracle,
Baby doll, is you!

The Birds and the Bees

By Lance

Lance writes from South Coast Correctional Centre in New South Wales.

Behind cement walls and razor wire,
I can see a tall tree
Swaying in the breeze it reminds me,
the day I'll be free

Then in come the birds from out of that tree
I watch these birds with envy and I wish it was me

I wish I could be out there with nature, and free
That's the smell I miss, the decaying leaves of a gum tree

Nature is beautiful and every day you could see
But in jail, that's gone, instead you're behind lock and key

Locked away from nature will bring you to your knees
The only way to see it now, is from the birds and bees

With jail life you're removed from nature, you agree
In all its glory, nature I hope one day again, I'll see

Even a crow, a pest of a bird I'm glad to see
In the yard I feel good from just seeing a little bee

Sometimes there are magpies, cockies and plovers, all three
It makes my day and reminds me again of being free

After years of looking at these trees waving at me
They're telling me to keep going, because one day I'll be free

When I'm down I just keep looking at those trees
Because sooner or later, in will come the birds and the bees

Dream Girl

By Bukks

The woman of my dreams; she isn't there.
The woman of my dreams; she doesn't care.
The woman of my dreams; she isn't real.
The woman of my dreams knows not how I feel.
Yet I know her name, I know her look, I know her smell.
I know exactly how her body tastes as well.
I've traced her body from her head down to her toes.
I've gently stroked her face, her ears and her nose.
I've stroked my fingers through her brown, blonde hair.
I've watched her do her thing while unaware.
I've given her sweet kisses in the night, I held her as I slept & it felt right.
Been on my mind every single day & night for years.
She's been the cause, and then the cure of my tears.
I always watch and wait to see her once again.
And when she's there, I never want it all to end.
She knows me not and yet I know her well.
I think it must be heaven where she dwells.
I always wish and wonder how we could meet.
I'd put my head down and I'd rub & kiss her feet.
I wonder if anyone could know just how this feels?
She's real and yet she isn't real.
Always imagining the life I live with this lady.
Yet I cannot even consider it a maybe.
So even though I know it never will be true.
All I can do is dream my every dream of you.



Lina Trochez

Not Just Words

By Ashleigh

Ashleigh writes from Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria.

The voice is beautiful; my lungs fill with a relieved gasp.
I expected a prison sentence.
A feeling of chest tightening, breath weak, metal and voices.
A life of strip searches and beatings.

But I have a table of warmth
and empathy, compassion and communication.
An unwavering sense of belief and understanding, with the outcome forever changed for me, and everyone is utterly breathtaking.

A chance, I tell you, at real recovery, support and the understanding of who we are, our background, our life, our everything.
With a simple question. A simple 'why?'
Which leads to further questions, then genuine support.
'Why are you here?'
'Why did you do it?'
The real truth, the further questions.
'How can we help?'
And help.
I mean, real help.
Homes, counseling, communication, support, warmth, food, clothing, necessities and so much more.

Where the media report on the person behind the story, not a glamorous lie.
Where everyone understands that people need support and help, not hard and forced solitude.
Where governments say 'no' to prisons and 'yes' to actual help and improvement.

And do it.
Actions, not just words.

Not Going Home

By Lance

Lance writes from South Coast Correctional Centre in New South Wales.

When in jail some don't want to go home, it's true
Hard to believe, so I will find out more for you

Are the dudes for real, or a screw loose in the head
They would rather stay in jail, than going home instead

Let's take a close look as to why this comes about
Why they don't want to go home, when it's time to get out

Think about it my friend, are they insane?
Maybe packing up and going home is too much of a pain

In jail they have their mates, a bed and all the meals
So why would you go home when this lifestyle appeals

Their time is spent relaxed and nothing to worry about in life
While on the outside, cost of living is causing financial strife

They're probably not missing a screw or even silly
While snug and warm in bed, others outside are finding it chilly

Jail to these dudes is not a bad place after all
What a life they have, playing cards and kicking a ball

Inmates that want to stay, the real life they have forgot
While others are chomping at the bit and are off like a shot

• Play

Quiz

1. Name the 7 Countries that have H as their second letter.
2. Which singer/songwriter's real name is Calvin Cordozar Broadus Jr.?
3. What are the two longest rivers in the world?
4. What type of fish is Nemo?
5. Kiwi fruit is originally from which country?
6. Name the three children from TV's The Simpsons.
7. Name the two biggest stars of the Fast & Furious movies.
8. Which Australian band sings 'Never tear us apart'?
9. Which Indigenous professional basketball player currently plays for Utah Jazz?
10. Which heavyweight boxers competed in the Thrilla in Manila?

Boggle

Discover as many words as possible. A word can only be formed if each letter is side-by-side, above or below, or on the diagonal with the next.

A	X	I	T	P
F	L	L	S	O
E	N	P	E	N
K	C	H	A	T
P	E	M	B	E

Word Morph

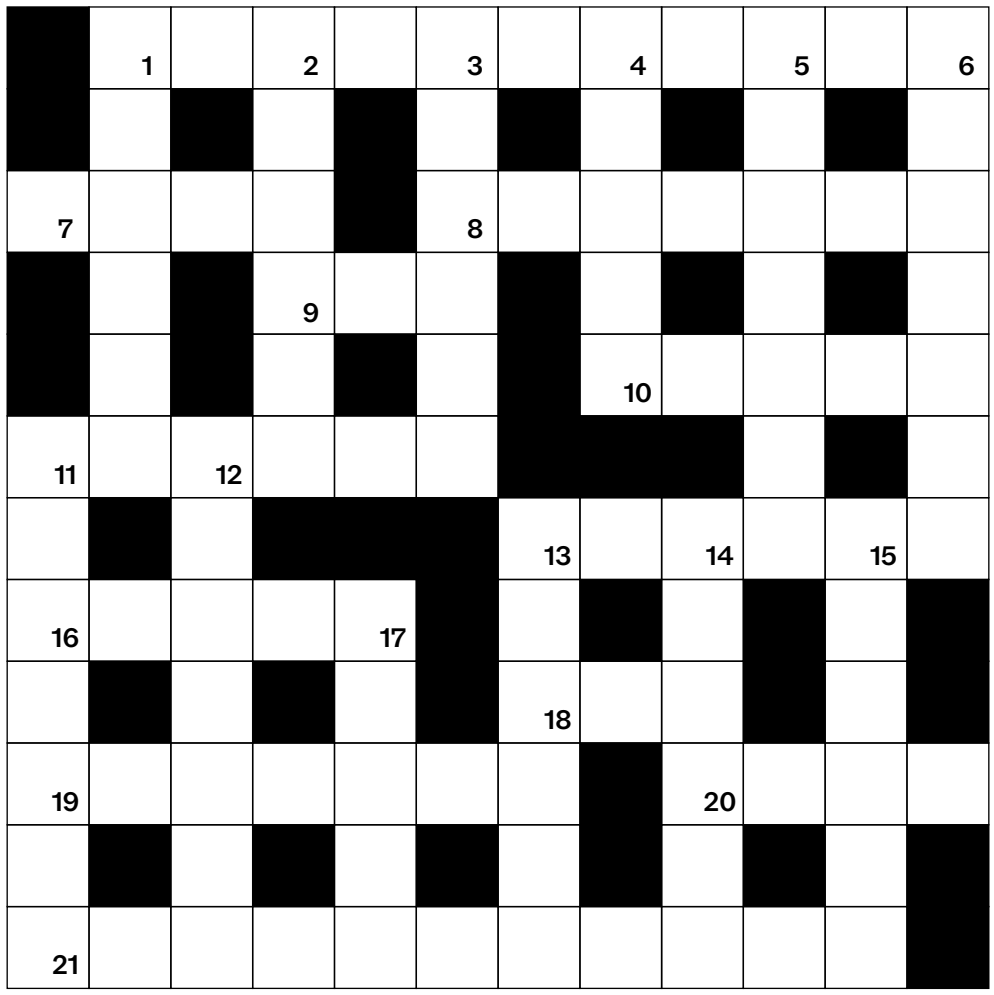
Morph one word into another by changing one letter at a time.

①	PEELS
②	
③	
④	
⑤	HEART

Crossword

ACROSS
1. Very small (11)
7. Gratis (4)
8. Shade of red (7)
9. Carefully examine beforehand (3)
10. Nairobi is the capital (5)
11. Intense dislike (6)
13. Waterproof jacket (6)
16. Destroys (5)
18. Lettuce type (3)
19. Mimic (7)
20. At that time (4)
21. Amber-coloured liquid (11)

DOWN
1. A small port (6)
2. Intelligent (6)
3. Expelled (6)
4. Explosive noise (5)
5. Type of pale beer (7)
6. Reduce (7)
11. Traditional Irish game (7)
12. Petty (7)
13. Entry (6)
14. Shellfish (6)
15. Resting (6)
17. Shadow (5)



Bad Jokes

Q: Why was the math book so sad?
A: Because of all its problems.

Q: What does a spy do when they get cold?
A: They go undercover.

Q: Why can't zoo animals take tests?
A: There are too many cheetahs.

Q: Why didn't anyone want to go trick or treating with Dracula?
A: Because he is a pain in the neck.

Q:Who did the ghost take on a date?
A: His ghoul-friend.

If you have a better joke please send them to us!



Dominik Vanyi

Caption This...

Submit a caption to this photo, and we will print the three finalists (including the winner) in the next edition.

Submissions:
Please send your submissions to the below postal address:

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Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au



Last Month's Submissions:
Thank you for your entries into last month's caption competition!

WINNER!
The Three Meer-Cat Ears!
(Like the three musketeers!)
Jenny, Tasmania

Runner Up:
Did someone say KFC?
Shona, NSW

Word Morph Answers

1. PEELS
2. PEERS
3. PEARS
4. HEARS
5. HEART

Crossword Answers (ACROSS)

1. Microscopic
7. Free
8. Scarlet
9. Vet
10. Kenya
11. Hatred
13. Anorak
16. Ruins
18. Cos
19. Imitate
20. Then
21. Golden syrup

Crossword Answers (DOWN)

1. Marina
2. Clever
3. Ousted
4. Crack
5. Pilsner
6. Cutback
11. Hurling
12. Trivial
13. Access
14. Oyster
15. Asleep
17. Shade

Quiz Answers

1. China, Chile, Thailand, Philippines, Chad, Bhutan and Ghana
2. Snoop Dogg
3. The Nile and The Amazon
4. A clownfish
5. China
6. Bart, Lisa and Maggie
7. Paul Walker and Vin Diesel
8. INXS
9. Patty Mills
10. Muhammad Ali vs. Joe Frazier III