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• Australia's National Prison Newspaper

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About Time

The Crash That Changed Everything

After a fatal mistake behind the wheel, I went to prison. This is the story of what happened, what I learned, and how I've tried to make things right.

By Paul Turley

Paul Turley was a young offender, and is now a road safety advocate.

When I was twenty, I bought my first car – a Holden Torana. I loved it the second I saw it. I worked on it for months, stripping it back in mum's garage. Sprayed it a kermit green with a tuxedo black bonnet. It looked a million bucks and I was proud of it.

But I didn't appreciate the dangers and responsibilities of being on the roads. I still remember the haunting words of the old next-door neighbour when he saw it: 'Young men die in green cars.' Stupid old bugger, what would he know?

New Years Eve – 31st December 2004
I was at a house party and was drinking and smoking all afternoon. Rather than wait until morning, I made the stupid decision to drive to my girlfriend, two hours away.

Despite people's best efforts, I got hold of my keys, and set off.

Only minutes into the trip, trying to light a cigarette and find directions in the street directory, I looked up to traffic lights and a T-intersection fast approaching.

Continued on page 12.

'Nowhere Near Enough': More Housing Needed for People Leaving Prison

By Denham Sadler

Denham Sadler is the Chief Reporter at About Time.

The Rainbow Lodge is the oldest and largest provider of post-release housing in New South Wales. It only has room for eight people at a time.

The organisation can provide its housing and programs to 32 people each year, while about 20,000 people are released from prison in the state each year.

This shows the huge need for more housing for people leaving prison, a key factor in reducing reoffending and improving rehabilitation.

Continued on page 7.



Ike Curtis

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Letters

Interrupted Connections

By Lanie

Lanie writes from Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria.

Dear *About Time*,

My name is Lanie and I am an inmate at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. For the past year or so, it’s been getting harder for mail to get through. I’ve been here for nine years and I’ve never had a problem with mail. I don’t understand – they already have the dogs go over it to see if it’s got contraband in it. They x-ray it too if need be. They want us to work on our mental health and stay connected to the outside world and to other people, but how can we do that if our mail gets stopped? I’m worried what else will stop – will we continue to be able to get books, watch TV or even dream?

I love this newspaper and enjoy reading it from front to back and back to front. I really enjoy looking at the artworks. By the way, you published one of my artworks, Deep Ocean. Thank you for that. I am very proud of that artwork. I taught myself to do art as I was severely bullied and abused, mentally and physically, growing up and until this very day and I find it is a good escape for my mental health. It helps me cope with all the stuff that goes on here, in this place I’ve called home for the past nine years. I have a minimum of six years left to go and then hopefully I can leave this place behind me. I’m not sure where I will restart my life once I’m out, but I guess I still have time to sort that out.

Well, thank you and keep up the wonderful work.

Lanie.

Gate Fever

By Axel

Axel writes from Hopkins Correctional Centre in Victoria.

My name is Axel and I’m a raging nerd! The *Pikachu* and *Adventure Time* tattoos prove that. I am back in prison for my second go-around.

I was out for six months in July 2023, before giving up and coming back in for another 12 months. In 2019, I did four and a half years, all this through the torment of Covid-19 and being placed in a terrible prison. When I was released in 2023, I was told, “Good luck. Here are some numbers for you to call,” and sent on my way. The support worker changed every two weeks so I ended up just not talking to them again. I bounced from place to place for two months before finding something semi-permanent. That only lasted two months.

My mental health declined. Nobody would give me a chance. Nowhere would hire me. Nobody understood. I went on dates while I was out, trying to feel loved again, but anxiety just pushed everyone away. I confided in someone, eventually being honest with her, only to have her ghost me. I expected it, but it hurt.

Nobody understood that what I did then is not who I am now.

I woke up everyday waiting for the police to barge in and eventually they did. Now, I thought, I could finally sleep without anxiety. It was then I realised I am institutionalised.

This place, prison, is safer than the real world. Here, I can stop worrying about life’s expectations. However, I am awfully lonely. I have nobody on the outside, only my father who is in the UK. I *Zoom* him often.

All of my friends abandoned me upon my first incarceration, and the two friends I have are going through their own struggles at the moment, so I don’t want to burden them.

I am due to leave here soon, but I again have nowhere to live and I know nobody that I can turn to. To say I am terrified wouldn’t begin to describe how I’m feeling. I don’t want to leave. In the December 2024 issue, there’s an article that describes “Gate Fever”. This is the perfect article for my situation. I don’t want to leave only to mess up and come back. I would rather just stay here and remain comfortable.

The differences or positives this time is that I am seeing a psychologist and in an AOD program, as well as having Vacro in my corner stronger than before. I am not ungrateful for the help. I’m worried that it’s my own low self-esteem that’s going to get the better of me. Hopefully my headspace will be better. I miss so much about being out.

I would also like to mention the ‘Pen Pal’ article by Denham Sadler. This spoke to me in waves. As someone that has nobody to speak to on the outside, a pen pal system would work wonders.

When I get out, I am going to use my skills as a songwriter/performer to start a business and entertain people. I will look forward to seeing future issues and reading about people’s journeys through their hardship.

I will continue to read *About Time* and contribute, as I thoroughly enjoy reading people’s stories and writing to others.

Thank you for reading and never stop smiling.

Call for Questions to the ACT Attorney General and Minister for Corrections

The Attorney General and Minister for Corrections of the ACT have offered to be interviewed by About Time. We would like the questions to come from people in prison. If anyone would like to submit a question to a politician, please write to us and we will try to get them answered! You can send your letters to the following postal address:

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

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A Letter of Encouragement

By Stenzy

Stenzy writes from Brisbane Correctional Centre in Queensland.

To all my Brothers and Brethren in the pen,

My name is Isaac, but everyone knows me as Stenzy. I have just served the most part of five years for armed robbery and GBH and got nearly one and a half left on parole. I calculated all the time I’ve done the other day and I’ve done about eight years all up from 2012 to 2025 – one year being the longest I’ve been out and three and a half the longest lagging I’ve done. I feel I’ve gone from 26 to 39 overnight and well appreciate how valuable time is now. And, going in and out, I have lost many nice places, relationships and family possessions. It’s not easy, and sometimes I think it would have been easier doing the whole lot inside. In fact, I know it would have been easier inside. I want to say you can turn your experience here into a very beneficial thing.

But, unfortunately, the truth is the more we get locked up the easier it is to come back and the harder it is to stay out. But also when you think about it, this place teaches us so many good things (if we could just implement them outside), especially routine, resilience, patience, self-control, grace and humility. But, most importantly, I think it builds character.

And if you’re like me the suicide squad are some pretty cool ones (LOL). But Brothers, seriously, when you look at how much worse off other people in the world have it and you truly understand there really is no rock bottom, then you start to see there are no limits to how good our life could be (and out of anyone we deserve it!). Life is not so bad at all. I had the privilege in Brisbane Correctional Centre to rap and sing in front of the Elders for NAIDOC Week 2023 and it is something I will never forget. My song that I performed can be found on Soundcloud under Stenzy – Wolves if any Brothers are interested, when they get out. I wrote it for us.

Peace always,
From Stenzy.

Unable to Complete Programs for Parole

Anonymous

This writer is from a prison in Queensland.

Hi,

I am currently serving time in a prison in Queensland. Many people here have charges which require us to complete mandatory programs before being released on parole from prison. The problem is many people here can only start programs well after their non-parole period is finished.

At the moment, I have spent nearly four years locked up and can be released in November 2025, but at this stage, it’s impossible for me because I can’t get a start at the programs I need to go home, for lack of facilitators. In four years, I would think I would have had plenty of time to rehabilitate and the prison has ample time to put me through the necessary programs. But at this stage, it could be another two years. I keep asking to start the programs and they keep saying they don’t have enough space for me. I don’t understand. It’s unfair, as I have a mother that has lung cancer and – on top of that – has just been diagnosed as blind. She really needs me out to take care of her and spend time with her before she dies, but at this stage, I’m worried she might die before I’m released.

Like many of us here, I have lots of family to reconnect with and a life to restart or get back to – people that need and rely on us.

At this point, we struggle to even be released on our parole date while being a model prisoner, which I feel is our right. We need more facilitators or rights to complete the courses in the community so we can get back to our families instead of having to serve full time or well past our parole date. I’m sure this is not the only prison in Australia where this is occurring, and it’s not fair on all the prisoners serving time.

Thanks for your time,
much appreciated.

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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 eleventh 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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No ‘Suitable’ Housing For Parole

By Zachary

Zachary writes from Woodford Correctional Centre in Queensland.

Hi guys,

A big shout out to you guys for printing such a great newspaper. Personally I love and look forward to every issue. I am currently serving time at Woodford Correctional Centre, situated 25 minutes west of Caboolture.

It’s a beautiful part of the countryside to do some hard time in. Our prison yard faces a lush green mountain with a lovely meadow farm at its base. It’s funny watching cows coming and going from a secure prison lol.

I’m 46 years old. Before Covid-19 hit, I’d never been to prison a day in my life. But like many other people, I separated from my partner of 15 years during the long Covid lockdowns. Then my mother passed away and I fell apart and ended up homeless. I’ve now spent 4 years in prison for petty drug and property crimes. Completely my fault. But I am trying to make true change and stop this prison cycle. I do not have any family or friends in the Brisbane area, so I’ve decided to return to Far North Queensland, where I have family around the Cairns and Cooktown areas. Unfortunately, the parole board have deemed my father’s address as unsuitable without explanation. This was my only address option, and I am at risk of spending the remaining 2 years of my sentence in custody instead of on parole where I should be just because of an address technicality.

It feels really unfair, especially as I have a son outside of prison who will have to undergo intensive brain cancer treatment without my support as long as I’m here.

I’m eligible for release mid-July if I can find a suitable address, and I’ve applied for a Crest public boarding house address, but they’ve advised me of a minimum 12-month wait time.

Do you guys at *About Time* have any information on parole addresses or parole address providers in Queensland? I just desperately need an address ANYWHERE in Queensland so I can be released from custody. The criteria around address assessment is much more relaxed when applying from outside of prison compared to inside of prison, so I’m confident of being allowed to return to my dad’s address within a month of being released IF I can find an acceptable release address.

Any help or information you could provide would make a huge difference and would make a huge difference to me and would be dearly appreciated by this humble soul...

Thank you if you can and thank you if you can’t. Please keep up the great newspaper. I can tell you it’s a light in our otherwise dark prison l ives – especially those of us without much support and interaction from the outside.

Kind regards,
Zachy

Response from About Time:
Dear Zachary,

Thank you for your letter. We acknowledge that housing is a real issue for so many people. I’m a housing worker volunteering with About Time, and wrote a piece in response to your letter in this paper as I wanted to write about how not enough is being done to solve it. In terms of practical options however, I would make sure that you have a social housing application in and request its “effective date” to be from the initial period of homelessness and that it’s a “priority” application. Make sure the contact details are someone that you will be able to maintain contact with upon release in the event of a housing offer (the Queensland government website says that QCS staff and Re-entry Services staff can assist with this).

Unfortunately with the housing crisis, social housing has become the long-game method (some offers can take up to a decade on priority waitlist).

QCS also launched the Post Release Supported Accommodation program in 2019, which St Vincent de Paul appears to facilitate in these areas:

- Cairns
- Townsville,
- Moreton Bay,
- Toowoomba.

Referrals to be made through QCS staff directly.

Unfortunately, the lack of housing is a really common issue and a big reason why many people end up doing their top and being exited into homelessness, thus begins/ resumes the cycle. Sorry we couldn’t be of more assistance. Wishing you all the best and thank you for your kind words about the paper.

From Charlie, About Time

My Legal Representation

By Wayne

Wayne writes from Wolston Correctional Centre in Queensland.

So here I sit in prison. Legal Aid is granted, and along with an early guilty plea comes 18 months of hell. The firm – which I won’t name – never once visited me, never once accepted a call past a paralegal or receptionist. Mind you, I am already doing seven and a half years. They finally call three days before sentencing! And almost convinced me that a consecutive sentence on top of the seven and a half years of 19–15 years on top, with a 9–11 years on the bottom is the deal agreed with the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) QLD. Luckily, in the week leading up to sentencing, I made contact with whom I now call the “Gods of Criminal Defence”. I sacked Legal Aid and went private with Ashworth Lawyers, North Quay Brisbane. I would have died in prison if I didn’t go private.

My lawyer started visiting me within days of contact and continued with regular visits and phone conferences. I had his direct mobile line, and he answered every call.

My barrister, Greg – also representing Ashworth Lawyers – was a weapon in the courtroom. I went from serving life to getting 3 and a half years on top, parole date straight away to apply, plus Ashworth Lawyers got me no serious violent offence (SVO) declaration and 2 and a half years taken off my original sentence. Ashworth Lawyers are known as – and advertise in the *About Time* paper as – the best in QLD and specialise in serious and complex cases. My case was all of the above, and they went above and beyond. I left the court to serve 40 percent of my new sentence, back-dated – I am soon out the door. David the solicitor and Greg the barrister, I highly recommend – every dollar is well spent if you want to be home with your family.

Thank you Ashworth Lawyers.

From Wayne.

Unable to See!

By Jeffrey

Jeffrey writes from Woodford Correctional Centre, QLD.

Dear About Time,

A problem I have come across here at Woodford is that the only reading glasses you can get (if you are poor and not eligible for free prescription glasses) are #16 and are only 2.0 magnification! Well, if you need any other magnification (like: 1.5, 2.5, 3.0, 3.0 or 4.0), TOO BAD! Read and sign documents at your own peril. I think you get the general idea but I’ll clarify it a little: for the disabled or less literate it can be alarmingly stressful at times when being told to read or sign things.

I, for one, cannot see the reasoning not to include other choices of magnifications on the “Prisoner-to-pay” sale to prisoners (STP) process?

Jeffrey wrote a poem about this in the Rhyme doin’ Time column in Creative

Time Will Still Pass

By Matthew

Matthew writes from Port Phillip Prison in Victoria.

Hello!

I am at Port Phillip Prison (PPP). My name is Matthew and it was my 30th the other day. I have a saying I would like to share with everyone:

‘They can lock the locks, but they can’t stop the clock!’

Second Chance

By Lee

Lee writes from Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria.

Hi, my name’s Leah but my friends call me Lee or B.B., which stands for Blind Bitch. In March 2024, I completed a program called Mates for Inmates. It was a program where we had dogs that came in from the Lord Smith’s Dog Home that needed to be retrained so they could be rehomed to those looking to adopt a dog so they can eventually find their forever home. Also part of this program was working on ourselves. To end our program, we had to submit a short essay or poem of our choice, as long as it had something to do with working to better ourselves. What I share with you today is something that I wrote for the program, but I felt that I needed to share this piece with you:

All I ever wanted was to be given
a chance.
A chance to be loved.
A chance to love.
To be given a chance to have belief,
you have to be believed in.
To have a chance you have to forgive
and be forgiven.
One day, I hope I can forgive myself,
believe in myself and love myself,
So that I accept others to love me,
believe in me and forgive me.
So that I can be given a second chance.

• 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:

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Determined to Make a Difference

By Yvonne

Yvonne writes from State Correctional Institution–Muncy (SCI Muncy), in Pennsylvania, USA.

My name is Yvonne. I’m currently serving a life sentence in State Correctional Institution at Muncy, Pennsylvania, USA. I was arrested in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the age of 21. I have been incarcerated for 41 years.

When I first came to SCI Muncy, I struggled. I had a hard time adjusting to this environment. I was also in denial and couldn’t face the fact that I was given a life sentence. I was angry, bitter, hurt and filled with pain. I didn’t want to think about it, let alone talk about it with anyone. The last thing I wanted to do was share my thoughts or express how I was feeling. Of course, this attitude had a negative effect on my behavior. During this adjustment period I received misconducts for disobeying the rules.

As time passed by I started watching and noticing some of my peers who were also serving a life sentence. They were positive. I was inspired and motivated by what they did from day to day.
They were involved in groups, school, workshops, seminars, church and a lifer’s organization. I was encouraged and decided to make a change. I thought, “If they can do it, so can I!”

I was determined to strive for something different. I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to be honest, open-minded and willing today. I wanted the benefits of a new way of life, a newfound freedom. I was ready to talk about those underlying issues which kept me in bondage for so long. I learned the importance of having a support system. I finally went outside of my comfort zone and asked for help.

I attended and participated in numerous groups. These groups were part of my healing process. The more I shared the more I was healed. Another part of my healing was allowing God back into my life, letting him comfort, heal and strengthen me. I attend church each and every Sunday and have been doing so for years. I continuously count on my higher power to guide and direct my path. I came here with a High School Diploma, so I was determined to further my education by attending vocational, academic and college courses. I graduated from the Education Department six times. I earned an Associates Degree in Christian Counseling. I am currently working on a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology. I love to learn, and all that I learned I gave back to my peers. I was an education tutor for years. I’m currently enrolled in the Penn State/Muncy Tutoring Program.

I worked in the Drug & Alcohol Therapeutic Community for many years. This is an inpatient program, supporting my peers on their road to recovery. I facilitated numerous groups, chaired NA, AA, self-help meetings etc.

My days are very busy. I love to stay busy and keep my mind and body occupied. I’m currently a Certified Peer Support Specialist. My day consists of going door to door checking in with my peers. Motivating and inspiring them. Letting them know that change is possible. It’s not too late. They can make a difference.

This is a mental health unit. I live in the unit, so I’m on call whenever they need me. Since 2013 I worked on many general population units inspiring many women along the way.

Currently I also work with the Young Adult Offenders Program meeting with them, sharing positive readings and getting their feedback, doing yoga postures/breathing techniques and closing with guided meditations.

Throughout my incarceration, I set numerous goals. I remained focused, determined and dedicated. It gave me meaning and purpose. I strived hard and never gave up until I was successful. With this attitude, I obtained accomplishments over and over again. Today I’m a very strong minded person regardless of my situation, encouraging others to be strong. I’m living proof that change is possible. It will endure, benefitting me as well as others I come in contact with.

Today I’m a 62 year old grandmother of five beautiful granddaughters. I have one son who I have a very close loving relationship with. I’m grateful for that and appreciate his support. I had many, many relatives who passed away throughout the years.
My remaining relatives still love and support me. They are important to me because they are my relatives and lifeline to the outside — I love them all very much.

My greatest ongoing challenge in prison is wanting to be with my remaining family members. Just wanting my freedom. Until then, I will remain strong and hold my head up high each day.

I have to admit, I don’t know much about the prison system in Australia. I can tell you what I do know and have learned about Australia!! They have some of the most amazing athletes in the world!!!! I love sports, and I enjoyed watching your country in ACTION during the Summer Olympics in Paris. GO AUSSIES! They represented their country well, winning plenty of Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals!

Yvonne.



• Thank You for Your Letters

As of a few weeks prior to publication, we received letters from Paige, Kieran, Harvey, Matthew, Tony, Jonathan, Jeffrey, Fergal, Travis, Gareth, Justin, Gre, Andrew, Bill, Lance, Christopher, Brendan, Greg, Jacob, Jean, Kieran, Matthew, Mark, Erin, Lanec, Lean, Mahina, John, Dan, Tao, Lee and all those that wish to remain anonymous.

We will aim to publish as many as possible, and we will also try to respond to as many as we can.

Unfortunately, we can’t 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 also cannot facilitate pen pal connections.

Please continue to write to us! We love reading and engaging with your experiences and we love publishing your words. Please also encourage others to write letters.

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News and Investigations

'Nowhere Near Enough': More Housing Needed for People Leaving Prison



By Denham Sadler

Denham Sadler is the Chief Reporter at About Time.

Continued from page 1.

"Generally for every person who comes here, four or five miss out," The Rainbow Lodge manager Claude Robinson told *About Time*. "We just don't get to work with enough people."

Located in Glebe in inner Sydney, the Rainbow Lodge provides three months of accommodation for men leaving prison in the state, along with case management, access to an on-site psychologist and group sessions.

It's one of many housing programs for those returning to the community around the country. But there are not nearly enough to support people leaving prison, and a lack of housing is a key reason why people are denied parole, and why they may reoffend after release.

The Rainbow Lodge will soon undergo a small expansion, and the Labor Party's election win and housing commitments have led to some hope in the sector that more housing will be available for those leaving prison, helping with rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

The Rainbow Lodge recently expanded its services to provide housing to those on bail, which can then be used as a mitigating factor at sentencing.

To do this, two new beds are being placed in a shed at the back of the two-storey house, while new accommodation is being built with funding from the state government. After both of these projects are completed, the Rainbow Lodge will have 13 beds.

The program has been found to have reduced re-offending and help people find longer-term housing. "If you come to Rainbow Lodge and complete the program, your chances of transition back into the community are really positive," Robinson said.

"The best way to get housed coming out of prison is to go into a program like Rainbow Lodge or Glebe Housing or a rehab program. It gives you somewhere safe to go and those organisations work with you to get you housed."

Labor's election win in May means it will go ahead with its planned $1.2 billion to build new crisis and transitional accommodation for at-risk groups, including older women, younger Australians, and those fleeing family and domestic violence.

The Victorian government is also several years into its $6.3 billion Big Housing Build scheme, with more than 100,000 homes being built or completed.

These are positive developments, but far more needs to be done, Vacro senior policy and advocacy advisor Abigail Lewis said. "We are seeing more available housing stock because of the Victorian Labor government's Big Build and its investment in our post-release supported housing program, which is encouraging, and the federal Labor government's commitment to spending on housing will similarly make a difference, but it's nowhere near enough to meet demand," Lewis told *About Time*.

"We need governments to invest heavily in building more homes and making them more accessible to the people who need them most, and that includes people coming out of prison."

There are a number of programs across Australia run by state and territory governments with an aim of helping people leaving prison to access housing.

In Victoria, the Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility Transitional Support Program, run by Jesuit Social Services, provides temporary accommodation and services for men leaving prison who would otherwise be homeless, with room for 44 people at one time.

The Enhanced Housing Pathways program in Victoria was also introduced in 2016 and assists people leaving prison who are at risk of homelessness with individual support. Programs such as this need to be expanded and better funded, Council for Homeless Persons CEO Deborah Di Natale said.

"We need to expand innovative programs to provide people coming back into society with the support and self-care skills they need to successfully integrate," Di Natale told *About Time*. "Ensuring people have the right housing, and are equipped with the right skills, can break the cycle of recidivism."

Also in Victoria, the Reintegration Pathway, run by Corrections Victoria, offers pre-release assessments and pre and post-release support programs, with a focus on housing, and the ReConnect program assists those with high-level transitional needs for up to nine months after they leave custody.

Justice Connect offers the Closing the Revolving Door project, which helps those in prison to keep their housing on the outside and resolve unpaid debts.

In the ACT, the Justice Housing Program provides accommodation to people who may have been incarcerated due to a lack of housing, with 10 houses now available for three months at a time.

In Queensland, the Post Release Support Accommodation Service works with men who cannot get parole as they do not have suitable housing, providing temporary residential accommodation and help to access longer-term options.

The South Australian's Integrated Housing Exit Program provides housing for 12 months for some people who have served a sentence of less than one year.

A lack of access to stable housing is a key reason why many people reoffend and return to prison. It's also a main reason why people are denied parole and kept in prison for longer. In Victoria, a lack of suitable accommodation was listed as a reason for more than 60 percent of all parole denials in 2023-24, while a third of people who withdrew their applications did so because of this reason.

In Tasmania, just under 30 percent of parole applications were deferred due to a lack of housing in the community.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, a third of people in prison in Australia had experienced homelessness while in the community, and more than half expect to be homeless when they are released. And someone who does experience homelessness after leaving prison is twice as likely to return to prison within nine months than those with housing.

Robinson said federal and state governments need to spend far more on housing and programs for people leaving prison.

"We are willing to imprison people but not very willing to reintegrate back into the community," he said.

"If we are serious about making the community safer, we need to be imprisoning less people and offering more alternatives to prison, and funding more rehabilitation beds and services like ours."



VIC

Victoria announces $700mn investment in prisons and officers

The Victorian Government will expand the number of beds in its prison network after its bail crackdown led to far more people being held on remand.

The Victorian state budget included more than $700 million for the opening of the new Western Plains Correctional Centre and more beds in adult and youth prisons, along with the recruitment of extra prison officers.

The Victorian Government passed laws in March making it far harder for many to access bail, and leading to more people being held on remand around the state already.

According to government data, there was a 20 percent increase in the number of people on remand in April compared to last year, and a 70 percent increase in young people held on remand.

To cope with the far more people on remand, the Victorian Government has announced there will be nearly 1000 additional adult beds, the majority of which will be at the soon-to-open Western Plains facility. This will be offset by the closure of Port Phillip Prison at the end of this year, which can hold more than 1000 people.

The Western Plains prison was set to open with about 600 beds but will now be able to hold about 950 people.

The state government will also fund the expansions of the Cherry Creek and Parkville youth detention facilities to hold an additional 88 people.

To staff these expanded prisons, the Victorian Government said it had hired more prison officers and youth justice officers in the last year, and will look to recruit more than 700 extra officers.

The Victorian Government also announced plans to introduce tougher sentences for people in prison found guilty of assaulting or injuring a prison officer.



TAS

Coroner rules insufficient evidence to justify inquest into death of Marjorie Harwood

A Tasmanian coroner has ruled there is insufficient evidence to justify a coronial investigation and public inquest into the death of Marjorie Harwood, a trans woman who died in hospital in 2017 after refusing dialysis for chronic kidney disease.

Ms Harwood served time in Tasmania's Risdon Prison seven times and was placed in the male section of the prison repeatedly, despite her gender identity being known. Ms Harwood was facing another prison sentence at the time of her death.

Rosemary Harwood, Ms Harwood's mother, has been advocating for a public investigation and inquest into the death of her daughter. The application for a public inquest was made on the basis that Ms Harwood had previously experienced incidents of violence, including sexual violence, while in custody and that her fear of returning to Risdon Prison was the key factor in her refusing dialysis.

Coroner Olivia McTaggart found that there was insufficient evidence that any incident of violence took place, despite notes from Ambulance Tasmania indicating paramedics attended to Ms Harwood in October 2017 and that she had disclosed recent sexual trauma.

Coroner McTaggart stated that she found it "inconceivable" that an incident as serious as what had been alleged would not have been reported by a prisoner or that the matter would not have been the subject of incident reports or health notifications.

In response to this decision, community advocates have highlighted the difficulties experienced by trans prisoners, noting that prisoners from minority populations or groups who experience discrimination are more likely to be subject to violations of their safety or rights and are often reluctant to report incidents for fear of further discrimination or maltreatment.

The Department of Justice has previously acknowledged a failure to comply with its own policy regarding transgender prisoners in their decision to place Ms Harwood in the male prison multiple times, despite knowledge of her gender identity and her vulnerability in custody.



SA

Design Flaw Fixed at Port Augusta Prison

A newly developed section of Port Augusta Prison, the Blue Bush Unit, was delayed from opening after a design flaw was discovered that triggered security concerns. The issue involved a window barrier between the officers' station and inmate area, which had gaps wide enough for people to potentially squeeze through. The Department for Correctional Services (DCS) initially did not see the issue as an 'imminent risk' or concern, but the Public Service Association (PSA) challenged that position in a case with the South Australian Employment Tribunal. Following this, DCS agreed not to open the unit until the problem was resolved. The necessary adjustments were completed, and the unit reopened on 28 March 2025. Correctional Services Minister Emily Bourke said on ABC Radio that the issue was resolved quickly, likening it to common construction challenges.

Sewage Leak at Mount Gambier Prison

Mount Gambier Prison in South Australia experienced a major raw sewage flooding incident in April this year. Mount Gambier Prison is privately managed and operated by G4S Custodial Services. According to a G4S spokesman, it was an isolated incident. The flooding was reportedly caused by a blanket being stuffed down a drain, resulting in major blockage. The affected area was contained and cleaned, with carpets, furniture and library books removed and discarded due to contamination.



NSW

NSW Government reviewing 'doli incapax' for young offenders under 14

The NSW Government is reviewing a longstanding legal presumption that children between 10 and 14 are not capable of forming the necessary criminal intent, known as doli incapax.

The NSW Attorney-General announced on May 8 that State Parole Authority Chair and former Supreme Court judge Geoffrey Bellew SC and former NSW Police Deputy Commissioner Jeffrey Loy will lead the review.

They will consider how doli incapax is applied in criminal proceedings, its impacts on intervention options and frameworks for legislation.

Doli incapax was clarified by the High Court in 2016 in a ruling that advised that the prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the child understands their actions were "seriously wrong". After this ruling, convictions for children aged 10 to 13 fell dramatically.

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found children with a proven outcome (either guilty or not guilty) reduced from 76 per cent in 2015-16 to 16 per cent in 2022-23.

Kalkadoon and South Sea Islander woman and Senior Research Fellow in the field of youth justice Peta MacGillivray said, "What needs urgent examination, rather than reviewing the law of doli incapax, is why police are persisting in charging despite clarification of the law nearly 10 years ago."

"Scrutiny needs to be on police practice," she said.



WA

WA Government pledges to improve crisis care in prisons

The WA Government has promised to improve the level of crisis care for people with serious mental health issues in prison following a report by the state's independent inspector.

The WA Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) review of crisis care in prisons in April found that the state's seven crisis care units are "under significant pressure to meet demand" and that the units were outdated and "noisy, lacked stimulation, colour and natural lighting".

In response, the WA Government said it was committed to providing the best possible crisis care in prisons and that work was underway to add new units and improve existing ones.

A new crisis care unit is being built at the Banksia Hill Detention Centre, while the existing unit at Casuarina Prison will be upgraded.

The state government has also provided a funding boost for more clinical and psychological health services staff at Hakea prison.

Work will be conducted to improve the appearance of the crisis care units and create a more therapeutic environment through better lighting, furniture and more artwork.



QLD

New domestic violence offences in Queensland

On 26 May 2025, coercive control became a criminal offence in Queensland.

Under Queensland law, coercive control is defined as a pattern of domestic violence acts that are committed by a person against a current or former partner, family member or informal carer with the intention to coerce or control them and which are likely to cause harm. This can include patterns of physical and non-physical behavior which could hurt, humiliate, isolate, frighten or threaten a person.

This means that, if a person displays a pattern of behaviour by committing more than one act of domestic violence against someone with the intention to control them and if this behaviour is likely to cause harm, that person can be criminally charged with the offence of coercive control. The maximum penalty for committing coercive control is 14 years imprisonment.

On the same day, it also became a criminal offence to use domestic and family violence to aid a respondent to a Domestic Violence Order (DVO). This means that it is illegal for anyone to commit domestic violence behaviours against a person who is an aggrieved or named person in a DVO on behalf of the respondent. The maximum penalty for this offence is a fine or 3 years imprisonment.

If you are a respondent in a DVO, it is important to understand the conditions of the order, as breaching a DVO is a criminal offence in Qld and multiple breaches may amount to the new offence of coercive control.

Prisoners' Legal Service, Queensland does not assist with DVOs or criminal law. If you require legal advice about a DVO or criminal charges, you can contact Legal Aid for free on the Arunta Telephone System by dialling *#04.

This information was provided by Prisoners' Legal Service, Queensland. It is information only and should not be relied on as legal advice.



NT

NT Government hands down budget with nearly $500 million for prisons

The Country Liberal Party in the Northern Territory has handed down its first budget since its election win last year, with nearly $500 million to be spent on corrections and plans to open a prison work camp in Katherine.

The NT budget, released in mid-May, includes a $495 million spend on corrections, with $126 million to be spent in 2025-26. This includes $80 million in 2025-26 to address the increasing number of people in prison in the territory through staffing and prison expansions.

The territory government will also spend $6 million on electronic monitoring and $3.5 million in 2024-25 for Legal Aid NT.

In her budget reply speech, NT Opposition Leader Selena Uibo criticised the focus on prisons, saying this would lead to a "bleak future".

The NT prison population has increased by more than 500 since the election in August last year, and more than 1 per cent of the territory's population is now incarcerated.

The NT Government also recently announced it was in negotiations to open a prison work camp at a Charles Darwin University research farm north of Katherine. This would involve low and open restricted people in custody completing the Sentenced to a Skill program at the facility.

The plan for these work camps was announced last year, but this is the first time that a possible location has been named.



ACT

ACT prison inspector flags understaffing issues

The ACT prison inspector has called on the territory government to increase staffing at Alexander Maconochie Centre and provide those on the inside with access to the overdose-reversing drug Naloxone.

In a review into a suspected drug overdose at the prison, the ACT Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) found that a low number of officers on duty contributed to a woman experiencing a likely drug overdose not receiving first aid for six minutes.

After first aid was eventually given, the woman regained consciousness and recovered.

The report found that a woman began experiencing a drug overdose in a remand cottage at the prison in May last year. Another woman in custody attempted to alert custodial officers via a phone call to the Master Control Room, by banging on the entrance door to the pod and trying to attract the attention of staff in a nearby building.

But the inspector found that this building was unstaffed at the time and that there were delays in the call connecting. Eventually the woman reached an operator, who called a Code Blue, with nurses soon arriving to administer first aid.

The inspector found that the response of the officers "did not demonstrate the urgency that the situation demanded and is required by relevant policy and procedure", due in part to low staffing levels at the time in the prison.

The inspector made a number of recommendations to the territory government, including that within three months a policy framework and staffing capacity be in place and that the prison night shift be sufficiently staffed, with at least two officers in the Women's Community Centre post.

The ICS also recommended that people in prison be provided with direct access to Naloxone, which can reverse the impact of a drug overdose, saying that this "has the potential to save lives".

Rethinking Justice: Inside Victoria's Therapeutic Court System

There's more than one way to address crime: Understanding the reasons behind offending

By Stacey Stokes

Stacey Stokes is a transgender woman who did eight years in a men's prison. She now works on VACRO's lived experience panel, and sits on the advisory boards of Beyond Bricks and Bars, and the Chief Psychiatrist's advisory panel. Stacey runs the T4T support group and writes a Substack, Stacey Stokes.



Willy Pleasance

While hardline responses to crime are constantly pushed by politicians and the media, other approaches – such as "therapeutic justice" models, – are often overlooked. Therapeutic justice doesn't sound as exciting or horrifying as the gangs and true-crime stories, and it's not reported on by the big media syndicates. But *About Time* isn't a big media syndicate – it's a paper for people in prison! And so, we write about what's relevant for you, including different forms of justice. Recently, I had the privilege of shadowing a lawyer working at the Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) in Melbourne, a different type of court than what most of you are probably used to.

The ARC was set up to address the underlying complex mental health and cognitive issues that lead to people breaking the law and ending up in a magistrates' court.

It was expanded after the 2021 final report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. A referral must be made before a matter can be heard in the ARC, and an assessment by an ARC case manager is required to ensure the person meets the eligibility criteria. The court then decides if the person's case is suitable.

The person must be charged with a criminal offence within the catchment area of an ARC (there are nine around Victoria at present) and they must plead guilty. To participate in an ARC, a person must usually be on bail. A referral may be made to the ARC while a person is in custody if it is likely that they will be released into the community.

The person must be diagnosed with one or more of the following: a mental illness, an intellectual disability, an acquired brain injury, an autism spectrum disorder or a neurological impairment, including but not limited to dementia.

The diagnosis must cause a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of: self-care, self-management, social interaction and/or communication.

The person must also be able to benefit from receiving coordinated services. Services offered may be for psychology, welfare, health, mental health, disability, drug or alcohol treatment, housing and support, or other services that aim to reduce the risk of offending or re-offending.

A referral into the ARC can be made by the accused person, their family, community service organisations, magistrates, Victoria Police, lawyers or the Court Integrated Services Program. When a person has a matter in a mainstream magistrates' court, they can make a referral and seek an adjournment into the ARC. This should be made at the earliest opportunity, and can occur at bail hearings or mention hearings. Contested bail hearings are heard in mainstream courts. The person must agree to the matter being heard in the ARC as participation is voluntary.

With all of this in mind, I'll provide an overview of what I saw at the court. The magistrate sat at the bench above us. The two lawyers stood at the table in front of him. The client was seated in the dock. A normal back and forth ensued between the people in the court. And it was all finished with an adjournment and bail extended.

The ARC element of the court then began. The magistrate went down to the table the lawyers had been sitting at. Other people then came and sat around the table with him, including the ARC officer, the defence lawyer, the defendant and the police prosecutor.

Each session began with the magistrate saying "Hello, my name is Magistrate [Name], what would you like me to call you?".

In most cases, the accused person said something along the lines of "Oh, um, my name's Stacey Stokes, but everyone calls me Stokesy" and often the magistrate would then call them by their nickname for the whole session. This familiar approach highlighted the tone of the proceedings.

With the tone set, the magistrate would ask how the accused person was feeling today and whether they had any new police matters. Depending on where they were up to in the ARC process, the accused person would discuss other things as well. The police prosecutor would then check the system and say, "No new police matters, your Honour", confirming what the defendant had said. In this casual setting, the accused person talked about their barriers and trauma, and everyone would listen patiently. Then they discussed the accused person's treatment plan to help them deal with whatever mental health or cognitive issues they were dealing with.

In each session, another defendant would get up and bear their soul to the magistrate. And each time, the magistrate would listen patiently. Big scary-looking people, thin malnourished people, heavily medicated people. All different, all with different stories.

Some would say how hard it's been to get on the straight and narrow, no work, no trust. Others spoke about how hard it is to kick drugs. And each time everyone just sat and listened. Including the police prosecutor.

I asked the lawyer how comfortable they were with their client bearing their soul in front of the police prosecutor. The lawyer pointed out that that is the whole point: to get to the reason for this person's situation and help them and not to try and trick them into confessing to new crimes.

Participants in the ARC are eligible for up to 12 months' support on a treatment plan. During this time they have regular reviews before the magistrate to check their progress: how they are engaging with the support services they've been connected with.

At the end of the ARC program, the participant is then sentenced. The magistrate has the power to give different types of sentences depending on the offence, from sending them to prison to letting them go without a conviction. And I imagine that after successfully completing months of a treatment plan and showing real growth and improvement, having a better outcome is a real possibility.

However, I'm not an expert, so please ask your lawyer for advice and to check if you're eligible.

If your state or territory has a therapeutic court system, let us know! I'd love to see how they all compare. Stay safe in there.

Knitting in Prison: Great Balls of Fibre!

Welcome to Great Balls of Fibre, the very popular weekly knitting group at Risdon Prison's Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison – the brainchild of volunteer Sam, who facilitates knitting groups in the community, and Elise, Creative Learning Officer and queen Pom Pom maker at Risdon Prison.

By Sam

Sam writes about how he first got into knitting and the difference it is making for those on the inside.

No-one's life pans out quite the way they might expect, but it should never be too late to try and get back on course. Every man deserves opportunities to become the best man they can possibly be.

My mother and grandmother could both knit and crochet. In fact my grandmother could do just about anything. I learned the basics as a child and then didn't bother with it for many years. I picked up some unhealthy habits as an adult, and about 10 years ago I replaced one bad habit with a good one. I started by trying to knit a little baby beanie – it wasn't great, but I could see the potential.

Interestingly, knitting has historically been a men's craft. It's inexpensive, transportable, plus there's a bucket of research to demonstrate knitting is about much more than just making things. It exercises memory and fine motor skills, it calms, reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, it can distract from negative thoughts...the list goes on and on.

We started [the knitting group] in January this year and get together for two hours every week. Eight gents come along to each session, and we have a waiting list to join. Each week our core group turns up enthusiastically and on time.

Our skills are improving, and our first beanies are off the needles. We ran an informal evaluation after eight weeks, and here are a few of the comments that we heard:

- "It's relaxing. Teaches me patience"
- "It's a great social outlet"
- "Takes my mind off other things"
- "I felt proud telling my family I was knitting"
- "I sleep better on a Wednesday after this session"
- "I feel a sense of achievement".

The group is currently run in Ron Barwick Minimum Security facility for men. We endeavour to go to medium in the near future.



We call him 'Mother Clukka'



The first beanies the gents completed! Many have never knitted before, and those who have came with only the most rudimentary skills.

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Experiences

The Crash That Changed Everything

After a fatal mistake behind the wheel, I went to prison. This is the story of what happened, what I learned, and how I've tried to make things right.

By Paul Turley

Paul Turley was a young offender, and is now a road safety advocate.

Continued from page 1.

No time to stop. My judgement and coordination were clouded. I was almost four times over the limit. I dropped the cigarette, the street directory fell off my lap. I hit the brakes and tried to veer left. I remember lights, noise and then everything went dark.

I only remember glimpses from the night after that. A bright flash of light before impact. Opening the door and collapsing onto the road in a heap, intense pain in my stomach. Voices of first responders and people trying to help me. A red and white emergency sign as I lay on a trolley, pushed through hospital doors.

New Year's Day – 1st January 2005

I woke up in hospital with mum at my bedside. My mouth was wired shut from fracturing my lower jaw on impact with the steering wheel. My stomach was held together with forty staples.

I looked at mum and asked,"what did I hit?" She didn't respond. I had this terrible, sinking feeling. "I hit another car, didn't I?"

Still, she said nothing, a look of panic on her face, not knowing how to break it to me.

"Are they ok? Can I see them, can we send flowers?"

She began to cry, and her face told the horrible truth.

"They didn't make it did they?' I lay there. Taking a few minutes to try and process what had happened, comprehend the enormity of what I had done. Life would never be the same.



Ike Curtis

I suffered three perforations to my large intestine meaning one foot of my bowel had to be removed. I damaged my right knee hitting the dashboard, requiring surgery.

But I was alive.

Waiting to face court and likely jail time, I wondered, 'why was I still here, but someone else wasn't?'

The manslaughter charge was downgraded to dangerous driving occasioning death and driving with a high range prescribed concentration of alcohol. I plead guilty. I was given five years (2.5 non-parole).

I'm fortunate just to be here today, let alone receive that sentence. Given longer, I wouldn't have objected.

The fact remained. My terrible decision meant my victim never got to live out the rest of his life. No amount of time or money equals a human life.

I was taken into custody in September 2005.

I had to go to prison for the crime I'd committed. If the same thing had happened to someone in my family, I'd want justice. But to say I was anxious is an understatement. I came from a good school with a loving family. I'd read books, seen movies. What would happen to me in there?

While prison is not as bad here as it is in some other countries, it's still a dangerous place where you never want to find yourself. The first prison I went to was overcrowded and unsafe. I had no crew, no friends, no one to back me up.

But I avoided trouble because I played to my strengths. I stayed in my lane and did what I had to do. I went to the gym, and went often, learning that 'training keeps the flies away.' I learnt that if you don't respect yourself, your body and mind, how can you expect others to? I learnt to respect myself, and others thought twice about bothering me.

I was forced to grow up, to decide what sort of person I was going to be.

On the outside, the world carried on. When doing time, you adapt and get on with it one way or another, but friends and family on the outside are the ones that really struggle. My mother struggled the most, visiting me every week. I was lucky to have that level of support.

Once released, I owed it to my family, friends, myself and most of all, my victim, to make up for what I had done.

Prison forged part of who I am today, but it would not define me. I vowed to try and give back. For some reason, I'd survived while my victim hadn't. I had to try and make up for some of the wrong I had done.

I replaced poor habits with good ones, and surrounded myself with supportive people.

I started a charity to honour the memory of my victim and to prevent others from making similar mistakes.

To challenge myself, build resilience and also raise money, I started endurance events. Last year I completed a 243 km triathlon across New Zealand, raising 20k for charity. Next year, I plan to cycle 4000 kms from Perth to Sydney, aiming to raise 200k for charity and share this story along the way.

I quit smoking over ten years ago, and eventually got drinking under control.

At times, I thought this was impossible. But attributing all my greatest failures in life to alcohol, there was no denying the truth: I am a better man without it.

I also became a father, something I am most grateful for. I am blessed with two amazing kids and two step kids.

My message for those inside reading this article is that a mistake does not have to mean the end. You can come back. You can be the best version of yourself. You have the power to be more influential and successful than you give yourself credit for. Just have the courage to ask for and accept help and be willing to work hard.

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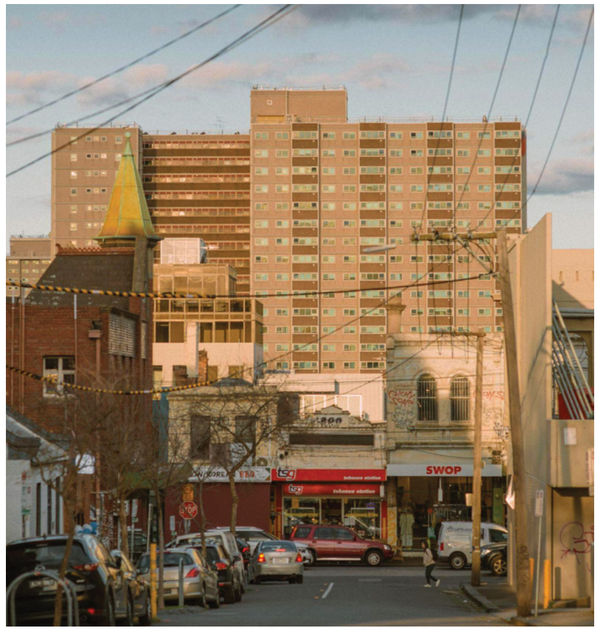
Homelessness: Working in a Broken System



Willy Pleasance

Something is profoundly wrong when we have to turn people away at their lowest point

By Charlie*

*Charlie is not the author's real name.

Charlie works for a homelessness NGO in Naarm/Melbourne.

I support a number of clients – individuals, couples and families – who are experiencing homelessness. Like so many others in this field, I entered this work because I care deeply about people and community.

I recognise that many of those I support have been dealt difficult cards, through circumstances entirely beyond their control, that make it far harder to "succeed" in modern society.

While the core objective of my role is to help people secure housing, the reality is far more complex. I'm also managing risk, safeguarding and, at times, talking people off the ledge. It's gut-wrenching to witness people you've come to care about, people you've built trust and connection with, in profound distress... grappling with suicide, violence, grief and loss.

Appropriate housing is increasingly out of reach. Too often, I find myself urging someone to accept an offer of housing that I know isn't right for them because it might be years before they get another chance, and that next offer could be even worse. It's a brutal choice that fails them and, in many ways, it fails me too.

When I came into this work, I genuinely wanted to help people. I'll admit I was naive to the structural complexity and deep-rooted nature of homelessness.

Homelessness rarely exists in isolation – it's almost always entangled with other forms of marginalisation: untreated mental health conditions, criminalisation, substance use, poverty, systemic racism, family violence. These forces push people further and further to the margins, making the path to stability, let alone thriving, tremendously difficult.

Many of the people I work with have experienced complex trauma that stretches back to childhood. I've heard stories I can't even bring myself to repeat. Accounts of severe abuse, unimaginable loss and systemic neglect – things that no-one should have to survive.

If you've been through anything like this and are reading these words, I want you to know: I see you. And I'm so sorry.

Working in this sector is nothing compared to the experiences of the people I support, but I won't pretend this work hasn't taken a toll on me. Holding the emotional weight of others, day in and day out – especially within the confines of a broken system – has left me depleted. I worry that, if I stay too long, I might become too broken to be of help to anyone, including myself.

Because it's not just about holding trauma. It's the system itself that wears you down. Something is profoundly wrong when we have to turn people away at their lowest point, tell them there's nowhere for them to go, no bed available, no housing option on the horizon. Delivering bad news to people in crisis again and again is heartbreaking. Being unable to offer anything practical, just witnessing someone's pain and saying "I'm sorry" is spirit breaking.

Still, the people I've worked with have given me so much. They've taught me, challenged me, humbled me. All I want – for them and for every person experiencing homelessness – is a safe place to call home and equitable access to the services they need to survive and heal.

I still hold hope. Hope for deeper investment in services that prevent and respond to family violence – for both victim-survivors and those using violence. Hope for accessible and sustained mental health and support for alcohol and other drug use. Hope for meaningful pathways for people exiting prison so they're not released into homelessness. Hope for a system that doesn't just manage people's suffering but truly supports them to recover and belong.



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What is an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)? Fran Shares Her Advocacy Story

Transcript from *All Been Inside*, a Voices for Change podcast

By Fran

Fran is a member of Voices for Change, a self-advocacy group for people with acquired brain injuries and experience with the criminal justice system.

My name is Fran. My interests are horses, music, art, photography, and I really love summer. I love walking up the beach, especially at sunset.

I'm involved with Voices for Change. This group was set up for people who have an ABI (Acquired Brain Injury) or TPI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and have been in prison or in trouble with the law. Anyone is welcome to join our group who has these circumstances. We do self-advocacy. We have spoken to a lot of people, and I have seen a bit of change.

ABIs can be caused by many different things. It can be a car accident, a fall, can be from violence – the list goes on and on. ABIs can also occur due to stroke, brain tumour, drug or alcohol use and the lack of oxygen to the brain.

ABIs have a wide range of symptoms that are sometimes invisible. An ABI can affect your memory and attention and can have an impact on things like your strength and balance. ABIs can affect your senses, including vision, touch and smell, and can lead to speech and language difficulties. These behaviours are often criminalised.

There are so many things that people should be aware of about people who have an ABI that have been in the justice system. It's so easy to judge and to say, "This person did this," and really put people down. But people don't understand.

With my ABI, I knew I was different, but I didn't understand. I wasn't able to keep my job, a lot of things fell apart around me. It was very hopeless and scary. I just thought it was me, of course. So, after my first ABI, I carried on with life.

And then I had a second ABI , which was really horrible. I was in hospital for more than six months. My mind was the same, but my body and my brain were different. I didn't know who I was. I was ashamed. It felt really scary not being able to walk. I had to go home with a frame. I was absolutely gutted. From there, my goal was to walk to the letter box outside, and it felt impossible. It was really hard, but I had a great physiotherapist, and I made it.

I honestly thought my life was over. That was until a support worker took me to an event in the city where I saw a famous advocate, Peta Ferguson. She was speaking bravely and passionately about her life, and I connected straight away – a similar voice, a similar story. I was frightened to meet her, but my support worker took me under his wing, and he introduced us. He got me involved in her organisation called Brain Injury Matters.

I started off quiet as a mouse and not saying anything at all. We had a fantastic coordinator with our group, and she helped get me out of my shell. From there, I became president of the organisation! I spoke at events, which are very important for people. I noticed change, and that is something that makes me want to keep on advocating. Now I advocate with Voices for Change.

At Voices for Change, we have met life-changing and powerful people and organisations that can make a difference. I'm really nervous about doing this podcast, but I knew I had to do it because I wanted to send a message of hope to those who feel all alone, their brain is changed, and life feels so scary. Everything is so difficult. Everything is different – dynamics, friendships, everything.

It's so easy to stay at home or just shut the door and not face things. But I think that, when we have each other, we can start advocating and trying to change the system. I have travelled all over Australia, I've spoken at Parliament and I have changed laws. We have done things that are amazing. It's a place where you can be honest and open and be able to share and not be judged.

I want to see people with ABIs who have been through stigma and are criminalised to be able to come together, shake things up and make everything better. We've lived through awful things, and hopefully no one else has to.



Willy Pleasance

voices for change

Voices for Change is a self-advocacy group for people with acquired brain injury and experience of the criminal justice system. Somewhere between 40-90 per cent of people incarcerated in Australia's prisons have an acquired brain injury – compared to only 17 per cent of men and 9 per cent of women among the general population. We use our lived experience to advocate for this to change.

If you think you might have an acquired brain injury and would like more information, we encourage you to raise it with your support worker or a nurse in your prison. You can also write to Voices for Change at:

Voices for Change
PO Box 297
Fitzroy VIC 3065

Pregnant in prison



Being pregnant in prison can be hard. Getting ready to leave prison and have a baby can be hard too.

PANDA's Helpline provides information and counselling if you are pregnant or have a new baby.

You can call us when you leave prison, or in NSW, contact your Perinatal Mental Health Nurse to speak with us.

Remember, there are people who can help. You're not alone.

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National, free and confidential.

PANDA
Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia

Rewired by Survival

Years of survival rewired my brain to fear what's ahead and forget what's behind. But forgetting doesn't mean healing.

By Andrew

Andrew writes from John Moroney Correctional Centre in New South Wales.



Willy Pleasance

My brain seems to simply have wiped out part of my memory. I think it's for the best. It's never served me well to dwell on the past. I've messed things up so many times and made so many mistakes. To carry that around with me each day would be to carry around an unneeded burden, a constant reminder of a person I used to be – someone I have forever sought to be rid of, following me incessantly like a stray dog.

I hate that person. I try to forget about him and pretend he doesn't exist. Besides, my drug-tangled mind lives only in the future. To it the past is an irrelevant inconvenience. The present is an ungraspable concept, best left for the Dalai Lama or for monks living in secluded hermitude that have the time in their schedules to unravel such an elusive riddle. Let them ponder on that divine paradox.

No, my mind is too busy to live in the present. Who has the time to stop and smell the flowers? There can be no walks in the park when you have threats to anticipate, moves to make, plans to formulate, risks to calculate. Indeed, my mind lives in the future, where there are a million things to worry about, outcomes to predict and prepare for and problems that we can fix somehow by thinking and worrying enough about them. However, it took me a long time to realise that's not how our brains are supposed to work. The clinical diagnosis? Trauma response. Defense mechanism. Symptoms of PTSD, especially when coupled with severe bouts of anxiety, hyperventilation and panic attacks.

When I was given this diagnosis though, I was skeptical and cynical. I thought it was psychological mumbo jumbo you could use to describe any unconventional or irrational state of mind. It was only when I eventually ended up in a residential rehabilitation centre after being given bail, that a therapist explained things to me.

She told me that, after living and being exposed to any environment the mind perceives as hostile or dangerous for extended periods of time, it can enter a state of seemingly never ending fight or flight. This is in response to the constant perceived danger that must be avoided in order to survive.

It explained the constant feeling of anxiety I carried with me every day. That followed me everywhere like the stray dog of my past, always poking its mangy head around the corner a street behind me in a lame attempt to avoid me seeing it following me. It felt silly though. PTSD seemed valid only when I pictured a shell shocked soldier, traumatised from months in the trenches being shot at and bombed. The stereotype soldier of my grandad's generation returning from war. That was what I pictured when she told me I had PTSD. Compared to that, any supposed trauma seems invalid. First world traumas.

The mind has no scale for trauma though, the therapist said.

I had not been to war but I had spent a long time in prison, and I guess the ever-present threat of having your house tipped upside down and someone you've never met wearing a body cam conducting a strip search at four in the morning can leave one feeling on edge.

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This service is currently not permitted in NSW prisons.

• Learn

Writing Prompts: Some Ideas to Get You Started!



Willy Pleasance

By Grace J

Grace has been writing since she was five, and has finally decided to do something productive with it. She loves reading books, talking about books and writing books.

Every creative person knows the pain of finding ourselves in the mood to create. We get our pens, paint brushes, knitting needles, sit down and ready to go and... nothing.

Not a crumb of an idea.

Just staring at a blank canvas, both literally and figuratively, hoping our brains will snap into gear.

Fortunately, we have writing prompts!

Writing prompts are useful in many ways. They're a good starting point to get your brain working, and can also help you come up with your own ideas. In my experience, if I get bad writing prompts, my brain starts to explain why and what could be better. I start thinking, "the character motivation isn't strong enough," or "this plot hook has been done to death," or "I don't like this genre." As you start to get into the reasons for why you don't like the prompts, your brain will start to populate its own.

Which is great – because it means you have ideas! How wonderful!

So, without further ado, here are some creative writing prompts. If you don't like any of them, see what your brain comes up with. The imagination is a wonderful thing!

I've broken them down into two categories:

1. Non-genre fiction: Non-genre fiction focuses more on underlying themes and character development, rather than plot. Some famous examples include *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Great Gatsby*.
2. Genre fiction prompts: These focus more on the plot and setting. *Batman* comics are a good example.

Skip the ones you know you won't like, try the ones you do, or use this as general doodling paper. Whatever tickles your fancy.

NON-GENRE FICTION PROMPTS



Emilio Garcia via Unsplash

Prompt 1:
Your character has just shot the winning goal in a game of soccer. How do they feel? Who was there watching? What happens next?



Juliette F via Unsplash

Prompt 2:
Your character is having a big dinner with family and/or friends, and someone had just said something shocking. What did they say? Why is it shocking? Or, is anyone surprised by what was said?



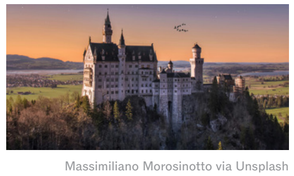
Daniel Hooper via Unsplash

Prompt 3:
Your character has just seen someone they recognise in the yard. Where do they recognise them from? Are they happy to see them? Why/why not? What happens next?

GENRE FICTION PROMPTS



Prompt 1:
A dragon is about to attack the village your character lives in. What kind of dragon is it? Has it attacked before? Why is it attacking? What are people in the village doing?



Massimiliano Morosinotto via Unsplash

Prompt 2:
A castle resides atop a huge mountain. What does the mountain look like? Does anyone live there? What rumours surround the castle?



Christoffer Engström via Unsplash

Prompt 3:
A spaceship has crashed to Earth with aliens steering the ship. What do the aliens want? Where have they come from? What do they look and sound like? Why have they come to Earth?

There you go! Get your imaginations in overdrive with dragons, aliens or soccer games!



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contribute@abouttime.org.au

• Culture

Locked Up on Screen: The Enduring Appeal of Prison Movies

From *Get Hard* to *Shawshank Redemption*, prison movies have always been popular. But why are people drawn to them, and what do these stories fail to tell?



Benjamin Aitken

By Benjamin Aitken

Benjamin Aitken is an artist whose work is influenced by personal experience and a commitment to social change. Aitken applies the insights gained from his experience serving time in prison to his studies in social science, majoring in criminology. Aitken is curious about how his two passions, art and criminology, can intersect and influence each other.

Even before going to prison, I was drawn to prison movies. Now, after my time inside, I'm even more captivated. Not only do I now enjoy criticising the inaccuracies, but I'm interested in analysing their underlying messages. There's a flicker of freedom and hope beneath the surface of prison stories. From gritty dramas to tense escapes, these films have become a staple of cinema. But what is it about them that captivates so many? And what do they really reveal, not just about prisons, but about how we see the people locked inside?

I read 'Are Prisons Obsolete?' by Angela Davis a while ago, and one part that stuck with me was a quote from Gina Dent. She points out that by seeing prisons so often in films and television, we come to see them as a normal part of life. Even one of the earliest films, a 1901 silent film by the inventor Thomas Edison called *Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison*, was set in a prison. Since then, prisons have remained a constant on our screens, becoming so familiar that it is hard to imagine a world without them. But just because we see them often does not mean we understand them.

One comforting trope of prison cinema is the 'redemption arc', the idea that someone enters prison broken, angry or violent, but slowly finds peace and personal growth. There's something satisfying about watching a person turn their life around. Characters like Edward Norton's reformed skinhead in *American History X*, Tom Hanks' compassionate executioner in *The Green Mile*, or Tim Robbins' hopeful banker in *The Shawshank Redemption* all show how prison can become a place of transformation. While these films can offer hope by showcasing the potential for personal growth and change, they sometimes miss the bigger picture.

A focus on the 'redemption arc' often fails to understand the complexity of human life. These films tend to focus on individual change, suggesting that redemption comes down to willpower, morality, or self-improvement, rather than looking at deeper issues like poverty, inequality, or why the person ended up in prison to begin with. In reality, transformation is far more complex, shaped by trauma, mental health issues, addiction, and a system that prioritises punishment over rehabilitation. Yet, films rarely explore these complexities, instead offering neat endings and moral resolutions. Redemption becomes more of a performance for the audience rather than a true reflection of life behind bars.

There are some movies however that try to do more. *The Hurricane* (1999), for example. tells the true story of Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter and his fight for justice, highlighting both his personal struggle and the racism deeply rooted in the criminal justice system. *Dead Man Walking* (1995) also avoids a simple redemption story, instead exploring the moral struggles and complexities of human transformation within the prison system. It raises tough questions about change and whether true redemption is achievable, suggesting these issues are more complicated than the system often allows.

Next, what about light-hearted films, such as *Get Hard* (2015)? Get Hard is a comedy where a rich man, played by Will Ferrell, is sent to prison. He hires a man, played by Kevin Hart, to teach him how to survive behind bars. The film uses over-the-top stereotypes, like outlandish violence, trivial gang representation and sexual threats, to get laughs.

These kinds of films make prison seem less serious than it is. They turn real problems into jokes, making people think prison is just a rough but funny experience. This softens the harsh realities of incarceration, depicting prison as a tough but laughable backdrop, rather than something that deserves deeper questioning.

This ties back to the point from the book 'Are Prisons Obsolete.' When films make prisons feel familiar, they in turn make prison seem normal or acceptable. *Get Hard* might seem like harmless fun, but by turning prison into a joke, it hides how harsh and unfair the system can be, preventing us from questioning its purpose. Prison stories also shifts the focus from the system itself to personal change. They suggest freedom must be earned, and that those who don't 'reform' deserve to stay locked up. But for people inside, prison isn't a joke or a lesson, it's often violent and unjust.

Nevertheless, prison films aren't without value. They can offer connection, catharsis, and hope. However, they also carry responsibility. Filmmakers shape our perception of those inside, deciding whether they're monsters or men, lost causes or survivors. With this responsibility comes the opportunity to do more.

The recent film *Inside* (2024) captures the reality of Australian prison life with more accuracy. It follows Mel, a young man in a maximum-security facility for rehabilitation, who, instead of writing a letter to his victim, wrestles with guilt and darker instincts. Exploring trauma, misguided trust, and the struggle to change, the film offers a raw, honest portrayal of life inside, with a moving yet confronting ending. It feels like a step in the right direction.

Perhaps it's not just what prison films say about prisoners, but also what they say about the viewer. And importantly, it's about what stories are being left untold, and why. What could we learn if these untold stories were brought to light?

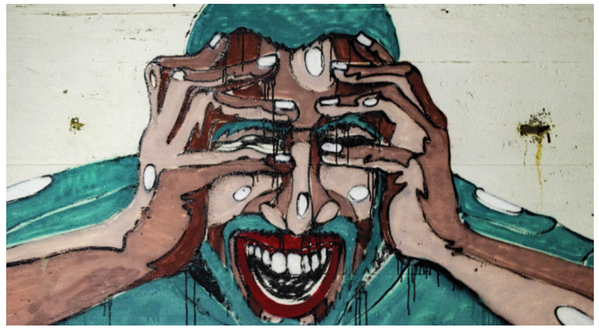
• Health

‘Lizard Brain’: Fear as an Instinctive Response

We are hardwired to react to danger. Here’s how it works in your brain and body.

By Annalise de Groot

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



Aarón Blanco Tejedor via Unsplash

We are hardwired to know how to react to danger – when we perceive a threat, our bodies instantly assess it to determine how we should respond.

Unfortunately, our brains sometimes make mistakes when we perceive a situation differently from what is happening.

Imagine you see something out of the corner of your eye, it’s a dark colour and it’s moving fast and low to the ground. You jump to the conclusion that it’s a snake. Because our brains are hardwired to think that snake = potential danger, you might immediately feel a rush of adrenaline, become extremely alert, feel your palms getting sweaty and your heart start to race. These are all signs that your sympathetic nervous system has been activated, and your body has started to prepare itself for an attack. This is also known as “fight or flight”. The whole point of this system is to prepare you to assess and respond to threats, to survive.

Because this threat detection and response happens automatically, we can sometimes find ourselves in an elevated state without knowing how or why we got there.

Essentially, what happens is the brain recognises a possible threat and then tries to determine if we can escape (flight), attack and overpower (fight) or distract or deter (freeze). This whole process happens extremely quickly, often before we have properly assessed whether the threat is real or not. Take the example from earlier, of a dark, fast-moving shape seen in the corner of your eye. If you jumped to the conclusion that this was a snake, your brain might determine that the best way forward is to freeze to avoid the snake noticing you. After a few seconds of standing as still as possible, you might realise that it was not a snake after all. While this is a pretty harmless example (after all, you probably just look a bit silly), this pattern of responding to perceived threat can become a problem when we start dealing with other people.

Imagine you are in the yard, and you notice someone staring at you. You start to feel on edge, your body is in the fight or flight state, you think that this person is getting ready to attack you, so you attack first. This might seem like a reasonable response when your brain is in fight or flight mode, but, unfortunately, the brain is not taking in all the information needed to properly determine if there is a threat. This is because the brain is in survival mode, focused only on safety, without acknowledging the possibility that there may be other explanations.

When our brains are in survival mode, which is where fight or flight is activated, we are not able to access our higher-order thinking and therefore struggle not to react immediately.

Fear is an important emotional state, as it protects us from potential threats. If the potential threat was a snake or if that person in the yard was going to attack you, it is, of course, important to be prepared and to respond.

Unfortunately, if we do this without first investigating the validity of a potential threat, we run the risk of reacting inappropriately. We don’t want to turn off this system entirely, but we do want to increase our ability to properly assess the threat. To do that, we need to regulate our nervous system so that we can access higher-order thinking. I like to use the STOP skill to do this:



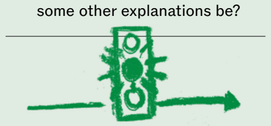
S: Stop. Pause, don’t react yet.



T: Take a breath. A big deep breath will help your nervous system calm down and signal to your body and brain that you don’t need to react immediately.



O: Observe. Think about what you see. Gather as much information as you can. Is there really a threat? What could some other explanations be?



P: Proceed with caution. Now that you have all the information and you are no longer in survival mode, you can decide what to do next.

When we use this skill, we give our brains enough time to consider the situation, without putting ourselves in danger.

Think about the scenario where someone was staring at you in the yard. If you stop, breathe and observe, you might notice that they are staring not at you but at something behind you. Or perhaps they are trying to get your attention because they recognise you. Then, you can proceed with caution. You might decide to approach, ask them what they are looking at or ignore them. If you have determined using the STOP skill that they are a threat, you can decide if you should use fight, flight or freeze rather than letting your survival mode brain decide for you. This will also allow you to consider the pros and cons of each response and therefore make the best decision for yourself.

The point of understanding fear is not to take it away. It is important to understand how this process works in your brain and your body so that you can make informed decisions about how to act, rather than acting on instinct alone.

Cell Workout

This was originally submitted to *Inside Time* by Luke, who is incarcerated in the UK.

PART 1:

1. 10 Wide Press-ups
2. 12 Squats
3. 10 Normal Press-ups
4. 12 Squats
5. 10 Diamond Press-ups
6. 12 Squats

X 3 Rounds
With a 30 second Plank between each round.

PART 2:

1. 25 Crunches
2. 12 Squat Thrusts
3. 25 Sit-Ups
4. 12 Squat Thrusts
5. 25 Leg Raises
6. 12 Squat Thrusts

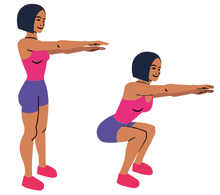
X 3 Rounds
With a 30 second Wall Squat between each round.



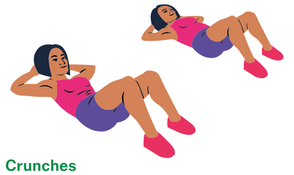
Press-up (normal)
Wide – hands further apart.
Diamond – hands close together.



Plank



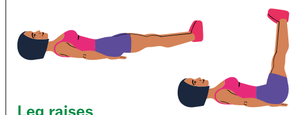
Squat



Crunches



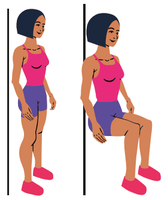
Sit-ups



Leg raises



Squat thrusts



Wall thrusts

All exercises reprinted with permission from *Inside Time*.



• Staying Healthy?

Do you have any questions about your health? Are there any health topics or exercises you’re interested in learning more about?

The Health section is dedicated to different aspects of physical and mental health, from exercises and yoga, to strategies for dealing with trauma, providing health inspiration and guidance for trying to keep healthy. If there’s anything you want to see featured here, please write to us!

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Call 0478 861 131

● Legal Corner

Understanding Australia's Legal System: How Legislation and Common Law Work Together

By Daniel Vansetten

Daniel Vansetten spent almost 12 years in prison and has, since his release, gone on to study a Bachelor of Laws. Daniel uses his lived experience and study to assist people to understand the law and works with advocates across Australia for prison reform.



Willy Pleasance

The information provided in this article is information only and is no substitute for legal advice. If you would like advice about your situation, you should consult a lawyer.

Australia has two sources of law: legislation and common law. Legislation is made by parliaments and is available in documents called acts. Common law is made by judges in court decisions and covers areas that have not been legislated. In other words, if parliament has not made a written law about something, judges must decide cases based on earlier court decisions. Earlier court decisions serve as precedents.

The common law system has been developed by judges on a case-by-case basis and, bit by bit, building upon the precedent and interpretation of the court's earlier decisions, created a wide body of law.

Historically, the common law system emerged in England in the Middle Ages before written laws came into being as a way to apply local customs to resolve disputes. A core principle of this system was that disputes must be resolved based on what occurred in similar cases. When Australia was colonised, this legal system was brought over and applied here. Over time, outdated common laws have been replaced by legislation or reinterpreted by judges to reflect changing societal values and circumstances.

Legislation always has priority over precedent, which means if the court hands down a precedent on a certain matter parliament can make laws that override that precedent for future cases. This is often seen in matters where there has been high public outrage over a decision by a court. In such circumstances, although the new legislation cannot apply retrospectively to the case that caused public outrage, politicians will often promote the new legislation as safeguarding the community against similar crimes occurring in the future.

Current legislation is relatively easy to find through websites created specifically for each state, territory or the Commonwealth. For example, the current version of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) is available on the NSW Government legislation website, while the current version of the *Crimes Act 1958* (VIC) is available on the Victorian Government legislation website. The reference to "1900" or "1958" in the name of these acts is the year the act was passed as law in parliament. This does not mean the law is outdated. Acts are amended as required by parliaments to keep them current.

While legislation can also be found from other online sources – for example, Austlii – the best and most accurate source for current legislation is always state and government websites.

QLD, TAS, WA, ACT and NT are commonly referred to as having codified criminal laws, meaning that the laws are found (to a greater extent) in legislation. This should make it easier to find and understand exactly what is or is not an offence. However, criminal laws in one jurisdiction may be located across various acts and so may be difficult to locate. For example, criminal laws in Queensland may be found in the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld), the *Drugs Misuse Act 1987* (Qld) and the *Regulatory Offences Act 1985* (Qld).

Legislation is specific to the jurisdiction in which it is created. For instance, legislation created in NSW Parliament is specific for offences committed in NSW. Likewise, legislation created in the South Australian Parliament is specific to offences committed in South Australia.

The Commonwealth Parliament also creates laws for certain types of offences. A breach of these offences will result in charges under the federal legislation no matter which Australian state or territory the crime is alleged to have been committed in. For example, importing a border-controlled drug into Australia is considered a federal offence and will result in charges under the *Commonwealth Criminal Code 1995* (Cth).

Common law is more difficult than legislation to locate because it only exists in court judgments. Therefore, to find specific common law, one must know which case is the most relevant case providing that law. This can involve lengthy searches through case law databases and, if inexperienced at researching common law, is more prone to error with respect to finding current and relevant precedent.

Criminal laws in NSW, VIC and SA are found across legislation and common law. While the legislation confirms the different types of offences, common law is often relied upon to properly define the offence. Common law created in one jurisdiction may (depending on various factors) assist in defining law in another jurisdiction.

For example, section 26 of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) confirms that conspiracy to murder is illegal. It says, "Whoever conspires and agrees to murder any person ... shall be liable to imprisonment for 25 years." This law goes no further to describe what the term "conspires" means, and so the common law is left to provide this definition. The case of *R v Rogerson* (1992) 174 CLR 268 provides a definition for "conspire", finding that conspiracy requires evidence of an agreement and an intention to commit the unlawful act and that the unlawful act need not be completed.

It is important to note that the extent to which common law can be codified varies between states. For example, unlike in NSW, conspiracy in Victoria is codified in legislation – in s 321 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (VIC), which sets out the way in which a conspiracy might be committed in Victoria.

Principles of access to justice in Australia provide people the right to access the law. However, as shown above, it can be complex. Please contact your lawyer or community legal centre to understand how legislation or common law may apply to your case.



Legal Q&A

By Brian

Brian writes from Wolston CC in Queensland.

My name is Brian. A lot of guys here are talking about new legislation coming in the near future, but I haven't found it anywhere. It is called "Daniel's Law". I was wondering if you could explain it and when it will take effect and who it will apply to?

Thank you and take care,
Brian.

Response from About Time:

Hi Brian,

Thank you for your letter. Daniel's Law is incoming legislation in Queensland which involves the creation of a Public Child Sex Offender Register. The Queensland government has allocated $10 million to set up this register, and has said it plans for it to be launched by the end of this year.

It is proposed to include information of individuals convicted of a child sex-related offence, with further information on the type of offences to be included to be announced by the state government.

The current register in Queensland, which cannot be accessed by members of the public, applies to a long list of offences connected with child sexual abuse or possession or production of material that depicts sexual abuse of children.

The new register under Daniel's Law proposes to operate across three tiers, with the only publicly available information being on individuals who have convicted a "reportable" crime and who have breached bail.

Further information on convicted offenders will be available upon request by individuals, while parents and carers will be able to directly ask for information on an individual.

The Queensland government plans to establish a public website where photographs and personal details of "offenders" who have breached bail and their location is unknown will be publicly available.

Under the plan, individuals will be able to ask for a photograph of a convicted offender if they are identified in their area. The details of what is your "local area" have not yet been announced by the state government.

The plan will also allow parents or guardians to directly ask about someone who has regular, unsupervised access to their child and see whether they are on the register.

The laws are based on a similar scheme which has been running in Western Australia for more than a decade, while the Tasmanian and South Australian governments have also announced plans to introduce sex offender registers.

The Western Australian register covers high-risk serious sexual offenders subject to supervision orders, serious repeat reportable offenders and individuals convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for five years and more and concern is held that they may pose a risk to the lives or sexual safety of one or more persons.

The law however has yet to pass in Parliament, and further details on how it will operate and what convictions it will cover will be revealed later this year.

Important Note:
The information provided in this article is information only and is no substitute for legal advice. If you would like advice about your situation, you should consult a lawyer.

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• Reintegration

Being Released



Willy Pleasance

My freedom is beautiful, and I am grateful for it

By Kelly Flanagan

Kelly Flanagan is a female First Nations artist with lived experience in the Victorian prison system. She is a proud member of the FIGJAM collective and continues to advocate for those women who are still suffering inside the prison. Kelly is also using her lived experience to write her first book.

Let's talk about being released. My release date was the 18th of March 2025, and in one month I have accomplished so many things. Release for me has been easy in some respects and difficult in others. I must admit that I am enjoying freedom.

I go to AA on Tuesdays and NA on Thursdays, and whenever I can get to any other meetings I go as well. I don't mind if they're AA or NA as long as I'm getting my recovery somewhere. I still pray every morning to a God that I do not fully understand. Now I live, breathe and enjoy freedom. I am trying to do good work in the community, trying to follow my heart and help those women that I've left behind in prison at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC). I am concentrating my efforts on stopping the lockdowns at DPFC. I want the girls to know that I have not forgotten about them. I am working with a group of passionate women out here trying to create some change. Watch this space ladies. And Wendy, I know I owe you five dollars! (LOL. Inside joke. Sorry everyone else!)

The thing is I am tired of not being heard. Prison was hard for me. I mean, not physically hard, but mentally it was hard. No matter how hard you try, you're not an individual anymore – you're simply a criminal reference number.

Some exciting opportunities have come up for me. I helped give a lecture at RMIT University with a friend of mine from Flat Out Inc. I was so scared, let me tell you. But it was the most interesting thing I have ever done. I spoke to an auditorium full of people studying a Master of Social Work – "Contemporary Themes in Professional Practice". Whatever that means, right? I talked about my experiences being a woman in custody, my release and my future goals. All the students seemed to love it, and after the lecture students came up to me and told me how wonderful my contribution was. I also loved it. Public speaking is my thing. Who knew? Not me, that is for sure.

Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that I would be doing that four weeks after being released from prison.

I've also joined an amazing collective called FIGJAM. FIGJAM is a collective of formerly incarcerated women – like me. We share similar interests, a passion for advocacy and we stand strong for and with women that are still incarcerated. We are working on having strip searches abolished in prisons for good. I feel at home with these folks.

Who would have known that, after a 3-year prison sentence, I could fit into the community and be more valued and respected than I have ever been in my life. There is life after prison and, let me tell you, that life for me is beautiful. But it's not without its challenges. After doing a long time in prison, being in open spaces with large numbers of people, I can find it hard to breathe and it can be overwhelming. I have noticed that I am home before dark because that's what I'm used to. I am going to figure that out over time. Maybe it will change, maybe it won't. I have taken the time to be kind to myself and to notice these things. I don't see them as a fault. I just acknowledge them and move onto other thoughts.

What I find interesting is that after being released there is support available for you if you want it. I have been lucky in my journey. I have women and services who have backed me 100 percent. I do urines twice a week; I see my parole officer twice a week; I go to drug and alcohol counselling at VAHS once a week; I go to NA and AA meetings and get involved with FIGJAM, Flat Out, About Time and any other organisation that will have me. I am trying new things, and I am stepping out of my comfort zone. When you read this, I hope it helps you to see that, when you are released, it can be amazing too.

There is a beautiful life waiting for you. Grab it. There are people in the community who will help you along the way.

Learn to ask for help. It's ok to ask. Everyone needs help at times.

I am writing a book about my experience. It helps me to heal and to work through my trauma and pain. There are so many stories like mine, and I think the community needs to hear them. My life is important. I am just as important as a Prime Minister, as an auntie, as a mother, as a daughter – my story matters and I deserve to be heard.



• Tell Us Your Story

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



Ask Izzy: What Is It, and How Can It Support You When You're Out?

In conversation with Claire at the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO)

By About Time

What is "Ask Izzy"?
Ask Izzy is a website and an app that connects people in need with housing, a meal, money help, family violence support, counselling and much more.

It is free and anonymous, with thousands of services listed across Australia.

Ask Izzy can also be accessed on your phone even if you don't have credit or access to wifi.

What is the purpose of "Ask Izzy"?
People leaving prison often need support such as housing and don't know what's out there to help get their lives back on track.

Coming out of prison can be really hard, and lots of things can be extremely overwhelming. For example, not knowing where to top up public transport cards or phone credit can be tough. An app like Ask Izzy lists all these places, so it's a one-stop shop for things people might need.

Example: Ralph uses "Ask Izzy"
Ralph**, had recently finished his prison sentence and sought help from his Case Manager, Claire.

Ralph's family, mother and friends still lived in Bendigo, but the only support housing available for him was in Sunshine, nearly 2 hours drive, and he didn't have a car. He'd got through the first week since his release date but suddenly realised he wouldn't have any food for the weekend. He called Claire on Friday afternoon, "I've got no money for food. I don't know where to get food. What should I do?"

Claire got on the phone with Ralph, opened up the Ask Izzy website, entered his postcode and listed off the local places he could go. She then sent the most appropriate services as a hyperlink to Ralph's email. The app allows you to share things to emails and phone numbers easily. Since then, Ralph has been able to access any emergency support service he needs and continues to use Ask Izzy by himself.

Many people returning to community after prison can find themselves feeling shocked, overwhelmed and isolated. Ask Izzy is a place for people when it feels like there is nowhere else to turn.

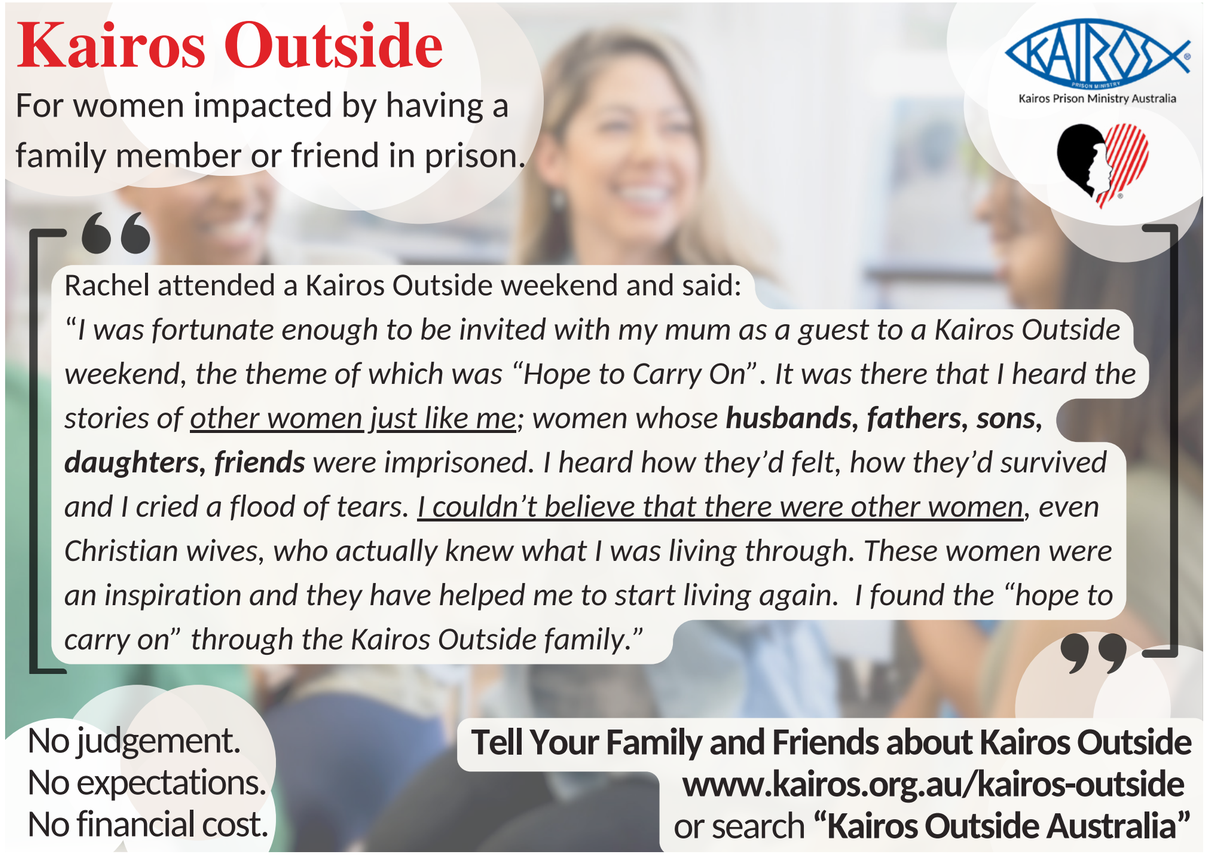
Case Workers use Ask Izzy
Case workers, like Claire at the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO), can help you navigate Ask Izzy and other challenges when you get out. They can also link you up with more programs, advocate for you and respond to what your individual needs are.

"Everyone is different. It's not a one size fits all. We have so many types of services for so many different types of people. For example, if a frontline worker calls me to ask whether I know of housing for a transgender person, I'll recommend they start with Ask Izzy. The platform will provide a list of places they can start ringing on behalf of their client. That's another function of the website and app: it filters not just local but also the most appropriate, vetted services for people and their specific needs." Claire shared.

Thank you Claire for talking with us, and we hope people find help with Ask Izzy when they get out.

**** Ralph is not his real name**

Visit askizzy.org.au, powered by Infoxchange, a not-for-profit social enterprise tackling the biggest social challenges through the smart use of technology.



• Mob

The Strength Within: Part 3

An interview with Johnathan Binge and Marie Mitchell

By VALS and Marie Mitchell



Nico Smit

This interview was part of Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service's Invasion Day webinar in January this year. The Q&A spoke to an incredible panel of First Nations people, each with their own unique experiences of the criminal legal system. The interviews amplify that burning spirit that lives within all of us. Marie Mitchell, a proud Yorta Yorta woman and the leader of VALS Statewide Community Justice Programs, spoke to the panel about their experiences, learnings, strengths and challenges. This month, we share the last segment with Johnathan Binge.

Q: Johnathan, could you please introduce yourself?

My name is Johnathan Binge and I'm Gamilaraay/Gamilaroi, Dunghutti and Gumbaynggyirr. I was born in Moree, that's my country, but currently living in Naarm now. I'm just a black fella moving through the motions!

Q: Johnathan, you've done so much in music and community work. Can you please tell us a bit about your journey and what motivates you?

My experience has been growing up our way – coming from Moree, a small country town, not living off much – to the big city, Melbourne. It took us a while to settle down. We went through most of the women's refuges, just me and mum, until we landed in Heidelberg. From there, it was a revolving door. Some of our first joint contacts with police was because of family violence.

By the time I was around 8 years old, police knew me by my face and name in my community. I had my school just to the back of us on the flats, and then straight across was the old police station. I started to fall in with the mob in my area. All of us are living in similar conditions, so, if you ain't going out and doing what these mob is doing, then you got to be smart and go through school. But that wasn't me. I had a lot of problems through school. A lot of racist teachers that mum and I clashed with. Also, my mum didn't tell them about me having ADHD too, so I was just a bad kid. I was seeing stuff happen in my house and I had no other outlet. And I just found (school) a real indoctrination. I don't want to be a part of that. I don't want to assimilate like that. And I just never went.

The pipeline for my community to youth detention was quick. By the time mum passed away, around 2013, I was 13 years old. I had two options – go back home to Moree and figure it out or stay down here and continue what I was doing. So I chose to stay.

Me and my younger brothers – I'm the oldest out of five – but four of us live in Melbourne, Naarm, we were split. But that wasn't after being moved around, place to place, house to house and for various reasons we were separated.

From 2014 to the day before I turned 18, I was in out-of-home care with Berry Street. That kind of environment just fostered the same behavior that I was falling into. I'm happy to say today that I went from being represented by VALS in court to jumping on this panel and speaking with you mob. But it's been a long road, trying to figure out what regular life is. I barely made it through school. I got a Year 12 equivalent and I don't intend to be studying more.

I love working with my community. I love writing my music. I like speaking, doing whatever I can to kind of get myself in a better headspace. But it's hard. We've got a lot of mob passing away, and that brings up too many feelings for me that puts me back in that mode.

I started working at the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), doing deadly stuff in an all-blackfulla team. We do writing workshops and mentoring with young black fellas – and my own experience can help. It's about how I can get them to see that me expressing my way can also be an available tactic to them to push themselves out of poverty. I've been focusing on keeping it like that and trying to be positive in myself.

Q: Can you expand on how your experiences with child protection and youth justice systems influenced your work with FYA and your involvement with young people in the music space today?

With FYA, I think, "How would I as a young person in that situation want to come into these spaces?" I try to make it as available and open as possible.

Throughout my years, there were various programs popping up for at-risk youth at the time that really helped shape the way that I think about my future. I think about the openness of the people that you would call mentors or workshop facilitators and the way that they interacted in a holistic sense but also just being genuine in who they are and not trying to put on "I know everything" or "I've been around/I'm older". I try to be open to taking either criticism or being able to slow down the way that they run these programs and try to serve community in the best way that they can. If my programs and the stuff that I'm trying to run ain't available for young blackfellas that grew up the same way that I did then I don't want to run them at all and I don't want to be a part of that work at all.

I think back to experiences in this work like Blak Up!, which was run on Gunditjmara Country. It was a 4-day camp and conference, and we would get together and have discussions on things like how do we get out and escape the system or how do we work around it. We did art together and then ended each day with a musical performance with various blackfella artists from across the country coming through and sharing their experience in a fun way with music and all that. There were a lot of solid young blackfellas that were real staunch. And it was so solid just watching them sit in their power and learn things. We've had deadly feedback from that program. Whether it be professional or just trying to escape the system in that way, mob have pointed to that experience – with all of those solid mob coming out on sacred country – as something that still drives them today, which is really special for me.

The other piece with music, I swear to god, I wouldn't be alive today if I wasn't writing. That's just as simple as it is, bro. I watched so many bodies get put in the ground growing up. I knew, I knew for a fact I was coming up next. That was just how I was living, you know? I'm telling you now, if I wasn't writing, I wouldn't be alive today. That's just it.

Q: As a rapper, how do you think music and artistic expression can help young people in vulnerable situations navigate their emotions and experiences and build strength and resilience?

I think back to something that my psychologist told me – where that whole process of holding something within your body for so long, and mentally being trapped in that kind of jaded way, where you're a slave to your experience.

Writing down and having something go from the mental trauma to a physical piece of work, it then becomes not just your responsibility anymore. It goes from just a mental thing stuck within your head to a physical piece that you can choose to do whatever you feel.

You can express it to other people. You can pass that paper to other people or you can simply just burn it and it doesn't exist anymore. The symbolic piece of getting something out from being stuck inside your head to a physical piece that is no longer just your responsibility and you're sole bearing to hold onto.

I always think back to that when I'm writing. I know that, if I'm feeling bad through that day, then I might move to the paper. We got phones and all that now, but it's so simple – these are just concepts. Being able to express in any way, whether that be art, whether that be music, whether that be writing or whether that be filmmaking. Putting your mind into that space to grow out, you think about the brain, it's like a skill tree and things that you extend and grow the more that you actually do it. Build up those kinds of networks, you just stick with it, you do it, you're expressing that way and it's going to help you eventually, then it's not just your responsibility anymore.

Q: Other than doing your amazing music now, do you feel you are well supported currently in community and is there anything you feel would help you to succeed further?

I have had a lot of unlearning to do. I've had to hold on to the memories, things that I've done that I can't let go. There's mental barriers that I still have to try and break down. The way that I see it – and this isn't for everyone because mental health is a journey that you take within yourself – is that, if I'm not on top of keeping connected to my community, that's on me. But, at the same time, the way that my depression works in particular is when I find myself spiraling and getting inside those patterns again then it's easy for me to sit within myself and fester in that.

The only way for me to break out of that is to go and do things within community. No matter what it be, it's connecting with my people, talking with my mob. It's hard to be a black fella and understand that, one, they want to make you a subject and, two, after it's all said and done and you finally get the tick of approval to being an adult, all of the traumas and things that are being brought upon you and stuff that you've had to endure and also the things that I particularly put myself through... After learning a lot of those behaviors, it's a big undertaking to break those walls down and learn about our particular context. It's a lot to sit with, knowing the structures, the policies that are built upon wanting to steal our land and wanting to break our people. Sitting with that and knowing the simple day-to-day ways that the colony has messed with me.

It's also a big undertaking for our community to continue to fight. I look to the older mob that are out there speaking on our behalf, particularly as a young person – I'm 25 now. I know it's on me to keep my mental health up, but it's also a great thing to have a support system that you can rely on. I'm happy throughout my life that I've had three younger brothers that I need to keep myself okay for.

I can't speak to other mobs' experiences, because there's so many mobs I know that have taken the other way because they didn't have those support systems, and it still kills me.

So it's a hard one. It's a hard question for me because I'm still trying to learn how to take care of myself.

Thank you to Johnathan, Marie and VALS for the conversation.



Moving Forward
By Shubz
Yorta Yorta/Wemba Wemba people
2024

One of the meeting places in the top corner represents me. The kangaroo represents me moving forward, going home to Country to be with my family and kids. The kangaroo is one animal I know that can't hop backwards so that's why I chose the kangaroo to represent me moving forward with my life.



Seasons
By Luke S
Bindal people
2025

Up north there are only two seasons – wet season and dry season. This painting is my representation of this.

Creative

Jesus DMC – Based on a True Story

By John

John writes from Port Phillip Prison, Victoria.

This is a story about Jesus DMC (Da Mouse Christ).

Rob (my cellie) and I were about to go to sleep one miserable cold night, and a mouse (Jesus DMC) died and went up to the pearly gates and knocked. St Peter opened the gates and said, "Ahh, Jesus DMC, I've been waiting for you. Tell me, what happened to you? I really want to know."

Jesus DMC said, "Well, I broke into Port Phillip Prison, ya know. One miserable cold night, ya know. And snuck into a cell, ya know. And there was a spare bed, ya know. So I stashed myself under it, ya know. And there were two green blokes in there, ya know. One Great Big Fat Huge Green Bloke, ya know. And a Shifty Looking Little Green Bloke with a furry face like mine, ya know"

St Peter stood in front of the gates and said, "Hmm, please please us Jesus DMC and tell us more."

Da Mouse Christ continued. "Well, then the Shifty Looking Little Green Bloke with a furry face like mine chucked what appeared to be half a sweet biscuit near the door, ya know. And it looked okay, so I took a bite, ya know. I was right and it was half a sweet biscuit, you know. So I continued to eat it, ya know. Gotta fuel the machine, ya know what I mean?"

The question was rhetorical and the mouse continued being allegorical, saying "and so the Shifty Looking Little Green Bloke with a furry face like mine, looked at the Great Big Fat Huge Green Bloke and went 'shh!' and pointed at me, ya know. Then the Great Big Fat Huge Green Bloke picked up a great big huge green shoe and went to piff it at me, ya know. But the Shifty Looking Little Green Bloke with a furry face like mine shook his head, ya know. So whilst I was watching, the Great Big Fat Huge Green Bloke put the great big huge green shoe back on the floor.

"Tell me more!" said St Peter.

"Well, then the Shifty Looking Little Green Bloke with a furry face like mine snuck off behind the other bed and got himself his own little prison, ya know. It was one of those little round green bin things. He put it over the top of me and I panicked, ya know. I put my tiny little hand on my tiny little neck and my tiny little heart was going like a bat outta hell, ya know. Suddenly, I felt myself rising up and looking down, ya know. All I could see was me lying on my back with my tiny little legs pointing up, ya know. Then I heard the Great Big Fat Huge Green Bloke and the Shifty Looking Little Green Bloke with a furry face like mine, laughing! And so, I ended up here with you, ya know."

St Peter then said, 'That sounds a bit far fetched son, but come in anyway. I believe you."

The End.

My Brother Anthony

By Karie

Karie writes from Numinbah Correctional Centre in Queensland.

Brain tumour, brain tumour, a darkness you can't see
Oh how I hate you, you took my brother away from me
We watch him fade as you dig your heels in
He'd beaten you once before, we never thought that you would win

You took away who he was one day at a time
His body became his jail cell but he didn't do a crime
When the end came we were glad he was free
Free from all the pain you caused, from your captivity

Now he soars on angel wings, smiling at us from above
Even though he has gone, every day I still feel my brother's love
I miss him dearly and think of him every day
Memories are all that's left now, brain tumour you can't take that away

Brain tumour, a disease that isn't talked about
Brains are important, there isn't any doubt
So if my brother's story can save just even one
His life would not be forgotten and the tumour never won



By Greg, Karreenga, VIC

Ode to Ashton – Now Eighteen

By Jacqui

Jacqui writes from Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre in Queensland.

My little boy has grown so strong
I can't believe its been this long
Since he raised his tiny head
And gazed at me in the hospital bed.

I held you tight against my chest
And promised to always do my best
To give you all you'd ever need
And make sure you would succeed.

You always wanted to help mum out
Around the house or out and about
And that was merely just the start
To seeing the size of my little boy's heart.

I can't believe how fast you've grown
And even though I've always known
How smart and strong and extra kind
You have become heart, soul and mind.

We've had so many ups and downs
But you've always kept me on solid ground
You are so much more than a bundle of joy
You're my giggly, gorgeous, mischievous little boy.

Broke My Heart

By Mahina

Mahina writes from Numinbah Correctional Centre in Queensland.

Being in jail has given me time to think,
As I lay in my bed and slowly sink,
It's given me time to reflect on my past,
And think back to a time that just would've lasted,
Not a day passes by where you've not crossed my mind,
When I needed you the most it was you I couldn't find,
I will never forgive you for the way you treated me,
All the repeated lies, hurt and misery,
You could never understand just how bad you broke my heart,
You left me to question my own actions as I slowly fell apart,
I thought we were unbreakable, I thought we were a team,
But you being with someone else I now know what this means,
I must learn to focus on myself, and understand self-love,
And finally actually put myself first because enough is now enough.



Acrylic, Pastel on Black Paper 2024

Golden Mud

By Leonor (through Somebody's Daughter art programs in DPFC and Tarrengower prison)

This painting was inspired by a photo that I found in the National Geographic of January 2011 taken by Robin Hammond. It's a gold miner in the border province of Manica. The area draws lots of workers from neighbouring Zimbabwe, who pan for traces of precious metal in Turbin water. I just love how at peace and happy he looks. It's just incredible that mud can be so beautiful. I really enjoyed working on this painting.

My Name is Meth: A Poem of Truth

By Kelly Flanagan

Kelly was formerly incarcerated at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria.

I destroy homes, I tear families apart,
take your children, and that's just the start.
I'm more costly than diamonds, more precious than gold,
The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.
If you need me, remember I'm easily found,
I live all around you — in schools and in town,
I live with the rich; I live with the poor,
I live down the street, and maybe next door.
I'm made in a lab, but not like you think,
I can be made under the kitchen sink.
In your child's closet, and even in the woods,
If this scares you to death, well it certainly should.
I have many names, but there's one you know best,
I'm sure you've heard of me; my name is Meth.
My power is awesome, try me you'll see,
But if you do, you may never break free.
Just try me once and I might let you go,
But try me twice, and I'll own your soul.
When I possess you, you'll steal and you'll lie,
You do what you must — just to get high.
The crimes you'll commit for my narcotic charms
Will be worth the pleasure you'll feel in your arms.
You'll lie to your mother, you'll steal from your dad,
When you see their tears, you should feel sad.
But you'll forget your morals and how you were raised,
I'll be your conscience, I'll teach you, my ways.
I take kids from parents, and parents from kids,
I turn people from God, and separate friends.
I'll take everything from you, your looks and your pride,
I'll be with you always — right by your side.
You'll give up everything – your family, your home,
Your friends, your money, then you'll be alone.
I'll take and take, till you have nothing more to give,
When I'm finished with you, you'll be lucky to live.
If you try me be warned — this is no game,
If given the chance, I'll drive you insane.
I'll ravish your body, I'll control your mind,
I'll own you completely, your soul will be mine.
The nightmares I'll give you while lying in bed,
The voices you'll hear, from inside your head.
The sweats, the shakes, the visions you'll see,
I want you to know, these are all gifts from me.
But then it's too late, and you'll know in your heart,
That you are mine, and we shall not part.
You'll regret that you tried me, they always do,
But you came to me, not I to you.
You knew this would happen, many times you were told,
But you challenged my power and chose to be bold.
You could have said no, and just walked away,
If you could live that day over, now what would you say?
I'll be your master, you will be my slave,
I'll even go with you, when you go to your grave.
Now that you have met me, what will you do?
Will you try me or not? It's all up to you.
I can bring you more misery than words can tell,
Come take my hand, let me lead you to Hell.



Send Us Your Art

We're looking to print more artwork from people in prison. If you have any sketches, paintings, creative pursuits – send them to us. Staff members at your prison may be able to scan and send them to us via email.

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

'Rhyme Doin' Time'

A column for people to express their concerns via the pen!

By Jeff

Jeff writes from Woodford Correctional Centre in Queensland.

Our Plight, My Sight: A poem about not being able to access the right reading glasses

I came to gaol 'cause done the wrong,
Was drinkin' whiskey 'n smokin' bongs.

When corner came I did not see,
The turning road, just like a vee.

At speed it rolled to grinding stop,
Atop my head, my glasses not.

Now sit in cell of nought to read,
The glasses gone! Of what I need!

I ask the system, to provide,
For that, my sight be magnified.

I need a choice for me to pick,
But only 4's will do the trick!

But alas at Woodford, ain't no claims,
For only 2's are in the frames.

Maybe time! They'll see our plight,
To give me 4's and then my sight.

Thank you for the suggested column Jeffrey! Poetry is a great outlet to express yourself, including any frustrations you may have. Please write to us!

• Play

Quiz

1. Which team won the inaugural NRL Premiership in 1998?
2. Which current NRL club has won the most premierships?
3. Who is known as the “King” of Rugby League?
4. Who was the Dally M Medal winner for best and fairest in 2023 season?
5. Which team plays its home games at BlueBet Stadium?
6. What is the maximum number of interchanges allowed per team in a match?
7. In what year did QLD’s eight-year State of Origin series winning streak begin?
8. Who holds the record for the most tries at State of Origin level?
9. What are the derogatory nicknames of the Blues and Maroons?
10. Which team did the Penrith Panthers defeat in the 2022 grand final?

Card Game – War!

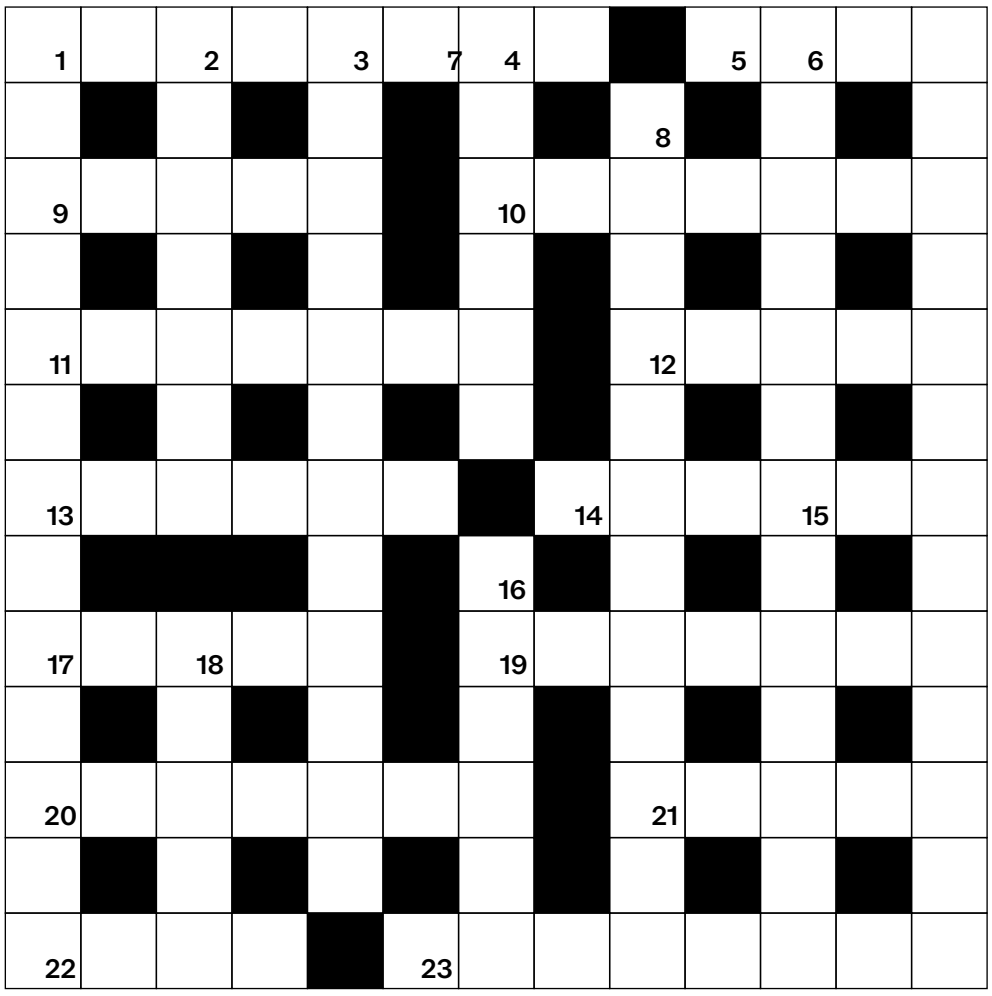
Objective:
The goal of the game is to have the highest card in each round to win points. The player with the most points at the end wins.

Set up:
You will need two or more players and a deck of cards (no jokers). Shuffle the deck and deal the entire deck evenly among all players. Each player keeps their cards face down in a stack.

Game play:
1. Each player simultaneously flips the top card from their stack and places it face up in the center.
2. Compare the values of the cards. Cards rank from 2 (lowest) to Ace (highest). Suits do not matter in this game.
3. The player with the highest card wins the round and collects all the cards played in that round, placing them at the bottom of their stack.
4. If two or more players tie with the highest card, a “war” begins:
5. Each tied player places three cards face down and one card face up.
6. The highest face-up card wins all the cards on the table.
7. If there’s another tie, repeat the war process.
8. Players continue flipping cards each round until one player has all the cards or the game reaches a predetermined time limit or number of rounds.

Winning the Game:
The player who collects all the cards or has the most cards when the game ends is the winner.

Crossword



ACROSS
1. Took something for yourself (8)
5. Drove quickly (4)
9. White waterbird (5)
10. Newspaper piles (7)
11. Fine food and wine lover (7)
12. Old unit of weight (5)
13. Rhymes with magic (6)
14. Meet a challenge (4,2)
17. Sports fields (5)
19. Opposite of sensible (7)
20. Reduce (7)
21. Cool or distant (5)
22. Abominable snowman (4)
23. Inner part (8)

DOWN
1. Exaggerates importance (13)
2. French island (7)
3. Very eager, keen (12)
4. Flag symbol (6)
6. Bridge support (5)
7. Rude (13)
8. Teach to accept a belief system (12)
15. Insult (3-4)
16. Common bird (6)
18. Head of the monks (5)

Categories

Create four groups of four! Each group of four has a common theme.

TIGERS	HIGH	FULLBACK	BEER
WING	GRAPPLE	LATE	BULLDOGS
MEAT PIE	EELS	CHIPS	CRUSHER
PROP	HOT DOG	SHARKS	CENTRE

Crossword Answers (ACROSS)
1. Pocketed
5. Sped
9. Egret
10. Bundles
11. Epicure
12. Ounce
13. Tragic
14. Step up
17. Ovals
19. Idiotic
20. Subside
21. Aloof
22. Yeti
23. Internal

Crossword Answers (DOWN)
1. Pretentiously
2. Corsica
3. Enthusiastic
4. Emblem
6. Pylon
7. Disrespectful
8. Indoctrinate
15. Put-down
16. Pigeon
18. Abbot



Quino Al via Unsplash

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:

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

contribute@abouttime.org.au

Bad Jokes

Q: What do you call a rugby league team that never wins?
A: A try-hard.

Q: Why did the rugby league player bring a pencil to the game?
A: In case he needed to draw a line break.

Q: Why did the rugby ball go to therapy?
A: It had trouble handling pressure.

Q: How do you know someone’s from Queensland?
A: They’ll tell you after every Origin win

Quiz Answers
1. Brisbane Broncos
2. South Sydney Rabbitohs
3. Wally Lewis and Kalyn Ponga
4. Kalyn Ponga
5. Penrith Panthers
6. 8
7. 2006
8. Greg Inglis
9. Cockroaches
10. Parramatta Eels

Category Answers
Animal Mascots: Tigers, Eels, Sharks, Bulldogs
Tackles: High, Crusher, Grapple, Late
Positions: Centre, Prop, Wing, Fullback
Match Food: Meat Pie, Chips, Hot Dog, Beer