SPECIAL MOMENTS IN PRISON
Samantha on finding love while incarcerated
2–4. LETTERS

NEW NSW VIRTUAL BAIL COURTS
What you need to know about the changes
12–15. EXPERIENCES

THE ROAD BACK
Understanding reintegration and re-entry
20. REINTEGRATION

PUZZLES, GAMES AND MORE
Even a delicious recipe for an oreo cake
27–28. PLAY

ISSUE NO. 14 SEPTEMBER 2025 ABOUTTIME.ORG.AU

About Time

Australia's National Prison Newspaper

Write to Us:

Share your story, your thoughts, your hopes or your dreams. Tell us what's going on inside. Ask us any question.

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000



LETTERS · NEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS · EXPERIENCES · LEARN · HEALTH · MOB · LEGAL CORNER · REINTEGRATION · CULTURE · CREATIVE · PLAY



EXPERIENCES

Stay Connected, Stay Educated: Vickie Roach's Message to Those Inside

Vickie Roach, a proud Yuin woman, successfully won the right to vote for most people in prison while she herself was serving a prison sentence. She is now a prominent advocate for people in prison, particularly women and First Nations people. She spoke to About Time about surviving, growing and maintaining hope.

By Denham Sadler
Read on page 12.

Ike Curtis

EXPERIENCES

My Story: Facing Deportation

By Leslie

Leslie writes from a prison in QLD.

My name is Leslie. I am a 66-year-old New Zealander and I have been incarcerated since August 2023 on a charge of dangerous driving causing GBH.

At my first court appearance in September 2023, I was fortunate to have a legal team that was aware of the immigration law surrounding international prisoners and that advised me to research deportation and visa cancellations and enlist immigration lawyers as soon as possible.

My barrister explained that, once I am sentenced, the court is obliged to inform the Department of Home Affairs of the outcome in my head sentence and, if the prison time exceeds 12 months, I would be on immigration's radar for deportation. I was shocked and fearful at hearing this. I incorrectly assumed my permanent residency visa granted in 1980 on arrival in Melbourne was a lifelong entitlement.

My lack of knowledge and fear of deportation prompted me to take my barrister's advice as soon as I was remanded. I began my research. My first port of call was the PLS (Prisoner Legal Service) free call via Queensland Correctional Services prisoner telephone service and RAILS (Refugee and Immigration Legal Service). RAILS was more difficult to access because I had to liaise with them initially through my barrister in my criminal matter and then by post. Both agencies provide essential information, advice and a list of specialist immigration lawyers to assist detainees prepare their appeals and represent them against deportation.

The cost of immigration lawyers unfortunately was prohibitive (the cheapest estimate I received was $15,000). I therefore had to work things out myself. I was forwarded a 200-odd page visa cancellation document by both PLS and RAILS. It is an imperative guide to completing your submission to the department.

In the guide is a visa cancellation document. It explains exactly what the department expectations and requirements are and also provides examples to address the appeals process and the options available to you. These include an appeals process through the tribunal and direct appeal to the minister should your submission to avoid deportation be declined.

Continued on page 14.

Contents

2 – 4 LETTERS
Experiences of The Incarcerated

6 – 11 NEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS
‘Navigating a Minefield’: The Mental Health Crisis in Australia’s Prisons
Heather Calgaret Inquest: Her Life Was Precious and Her Passing Was Preventable
The Latest in Criminal Justice Around the Country
Rethinking Risk Assessments in Prison Settings
The Dark Side of Gains

12 – 15 EXPERIENCES
Stay Connected, Stay Educated: Vickie Roach’s Message to Those Inside
Acquired Brain Injuries and Prison
My Story: Facing Deportation
Seeing My Mother

16 – 17 HEALTH
Demystifying Hepatitis C
Learning From Guilt (the Emotion, Not the Plea!)
Planking ... Let’s Make it a Bit More Challenging!

18 – 19 LEGAL CORNER
New Virtual Bail Courts in NSW
DNA Testing in Queensland Under Review
Legal Q&A

20 REINTEGRATION
The Road Back

21 CULTURE
Longest Running TV Shows in Australia – That You Can Still Watch Today!

22 – 23 MOB
Yarning With People in Prison to Create a Training for Lawyers
Jilbi Coming Together
Aboriginal Art in Custody

24 LEARN
Grandpa’s Secret Street Machines: The 90s Japanese Sedans That Accidentally Ripped

25 – 26 CREATIVE
Poetry, Art and Creative Writing From Behind Bars

27 – 28 PLAY
A Collection of Monthly Puzzles and Games

Letters



Samantha and Thor

Special Moments Do Happen in Prison

By Samantha

Samantha writes from a prison in the ACT.

Hi, my name is Samantha. I am 34 years of age and I’m currently in the Alexander Maconochie Centre in the ACT. Alongside me is my partner, Thor, who is 36 years of age. I have known Thor for just over 20 years. I have been in and out of jail since 2020, and Thor has been in and out since he was 12 years of age. I have been in love with Thor since I was 15, so it’s been a true love story in the making. We had gotten together in 2019, and it was a dream come true. We had our ups and downs, but doesn’t every relationship. We went our own ways in 2022 because of one big mistake I made, and I will always hate myself for it. For two years I hated life and all I wanted was the man I have always loved back. After two years of hell and misery, in October 2024, Thor and I had made our way back to each other. I couldn’t believe it, because it’s all we both had ever wanted over the past two years. Thor had then been arrested and locked back up in December only a few days before Christmas, which was sad because all we wanted was to spend our first Christmas back together at home. I then was arrested in April 2025. It was sh!t coming back to this place because I was leaving three children behind. But, for Thor, I have never been so in love in my whole life the way I am in love with him.

He is one of a kind, and there is no one that compares to the one and only Thor, my one and only.

On 10 July 2025, we had our inter-jail visit, and on that visit Thor was sitting in front of me reading something out that he had written and at the end of it he got down on one knee and asked me to MARRY him. It touched my heart and brought tears to my eyes and it was a BIG YES from me.

Special moments do happen in prison. It was the moment of my life, and I can’t wait to spend the rest of my life with him.

S&T
TOGETHER FOREVER, NEVER APART

Stay Strong and Be Kind to Yourselves

By Kaiya

Kaiya writes from a prison in NSW.

Yaama About Time editors and fellow readers,

Hey guys, my name is Kaiya, and I’m a proud First Nations Gomeroi/Gamilaaray jinung from Country. I’m writing to say many THANX for your monthly editions. Really! So much appreciation. Your papers have helped me through many tough times. Both strength and struggle.

This is just a letter to introduce myself as this is my first initial posting. I have been in and reading since Issue 1, many moons now. I look forward to becoming a part of this journey. So I have been incarcerated in maximum security 43 months now and, sadly, I feel I am becoming emotionally detached from the world outside. I know me saying “can you believe it” to you guys ain’t gonna sound crazy and be battered eyelashes at.

I have been knocked back parole three times now, and it’s getting exhausting trying to hold up my end when there are no appropriate support systems in place. When I first sat for parole last year, I lowkey wished I never got it, ay – just anxiety mostly. And I got what I hoped for – x3. Now, 10 months later, the best thing to do is stay off the grid, read me sum books, pepper my case management for education or employment and progress – I guess. Stay ready and sit pretty 365!

One thing I dislike is when somebody thinks you can’t do it. There they go underestimating our ability to run it up. Like, righto! The system is failing us! Every month I’m reading, let alone seeing, all of us – we are struggling and tryna make sense of this. Then, when I question their policy and procedure, I’m case noted as a difficult inmate and told my behaviour is aggressive – excuse me? Honestly *slaps forehead* ... I’m on a path of enlightenment – my spiritual growth – since 2020. And it’s *whistles* a whole other calibre. I know I ain’t the only one.

We are sumn different – working thru the hardships, pushin through the pain. I’m proud of ya’ll. The struggle is real. Stay strong my ppls, and be kind to yourselves.

Much love, strength and street knowledge.

Yours truly – Kaiya.
Always was and will be.

Mistakes

By Anthony

Anthony writes from a prison in NSW.

Mistakes are made. Sometimes we don’t always know why or how these mistakes are made. Mistakes can’t be taken back. However, we can learn from them.

Sometimes they are minor, but sometimes they can also be major. Minor mistakes can often be fixed with an apology or a way of showing remorse. Major mistakes, can these be fixed so easily? No, not always. It does mean you have to work harder, earn back respect or earn back trust.

In 2024 I made a major mistake which landed me in prison. This cost me everything – everyone I love turned their back on me, and everything I owned was stolen. This was the worst time of my life.

You can’t turn back time, nor can it be erased. While I’m here, I’m losing time and I’ll never get it back. Although it’s 100 percent my fault that I’m here, while I am here it makes it hard to prove to the ones I care about the most how sorry I really am.

It also makes it hard to earn the trust back, also to earn the love and respect back.

The part I hate the most is I can prove to the justice system how sorry I am, how remorseful I am or even how much I’ve changed, but the justice system wasn’t the ones I hurt.

Then sometimes as we get older we realise that we only get one chance at getting things right, like being a good husband, father or friend. These are the times that there is no room for mistakes.

Luv Ya Bro, on the ‘Inside’ and the ‘Outside’

By David

David writes from a prison in NSW.

Rarely have I heard men, real men, express their “luv” for one another on the outside so regularly as I do in the yard or in the yelling from their cells after muster.

It takes trust, courage and fearlessness for “real” men to be so open in their expression of “luving” one another.

This seems to me to indicate they sense a belonging not often enjoyed by many men on the outside.

What would you think this implies?

Would it show that many incarcerated men do have the capacity to tell one another how much they are appreciated by sharing the practical things of life – milk, bread, coffee, tea, toilet paper, meals, jam and minties – and often asking each other, “Is there anything you need, bro?”

Does this suggest, at last, they have a sense of belonging and acceptance from another? Maybe this belonging and acceptance has sadly been missing from some family members and friends due to the nature of the less good behaviours in the past?

In their sorrow, shame and guilt, maybe they find those in their family and their friends too judgemental and self-righteous to offer them the chance to make amends? Especially when they want to desperately change!

And so they at least begin to express their need to belong and accept others by saying, “Luv ya bro.”

David.

An Apple a Day

By Belly

Belly writes from a prison in QLD.

To the editors at About Time.

Congratulations on your 12th issue.

One year seems so fast when you look back on it. I look forward to each and every issue. Thanks again.

I have recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and, as a result, I am allocated one extra piece of fruit every day. So the daily fruit ration might be bananas. I will get one banana and an “apple”. In fact, the real bananas thing is I always get an “apple”, never ever anything else. And I am not being narky or anything, but, ever since I have had an “apple a day”, I have not been able to see the doctor once. Lol.

Thanks guys. Warmest regards.

Belly

For My Brothers

By Aidan

Aidan writes from a prison in VIC.

Hi About Time,

I am Aidan. I am 30 and currently live at Hostel MRC. I wrote this for my Brothers and their Brothers.

Where would we really be without our Brothers.

Send my love to my Brothers past and the lonely left along the way, I who left will write.

Thank you and I hope these words help with a loss or even ease the pain of a bad decision.

Love you all and miss my long lost home Port Phillip, “PPP”.

Living With Diabetes in Prison

By Jon

Jon writes from a prison in VIC.

Hello readers,

I have been incarcerated now for 25 years and I am suffering from a diabetes related sore feet nerve condition. I have no feeling in my feet, and as the nerves have nothing to do they attack my feet 24/7. I am writing to see if anyone else is suffering from this condition and, if so, could let me know what you are taking and if they are effective?

As I am sure you know if you suffer from this condition, it is a real burden on your health and day-to-day activities.

If you can help, please send your letter to About Time – thank you.

Jon

Remembering Lorna

By Jessica

Jessica writes from a prison in QLD.

To About Time,

Approximately one month ago, Lorna was released from SQCC. On 15 July, we got the devastating news that she’d passed away. She always stuck up for the underdog and fought against the bullies.

She was an advocate for us girls, always fighting for a better world, but she was also my best friend, and I’ll miss her every single day.

I wrote this poem and thought it’d be nice to share because Lorna was loved all over.

Rest in peace, Lorna AKA Bonnie
From Jessica at SQCC.

An ode to the beautiful Lorna:

Feel no guilt in laughter
She knows how much you care
Feel no sorrow in a smile
That she’s not here to share

You cannot grieve forever
She would not want you to
She’d hope that you would carry on
The way you always do

So talk about the good times
And the ways you showed you cared
The days you spent together
All the happiness you shared

Let memories surround you
A word someone might say
Will suddenly recapture
A time, an hour, a day

That brings her back as clearly
As though she was still here
And fills you with the feelings
That say she’s always near

For if you keep those moments
You will never be apart
Lorna we love you deeply
You’re forever present in our hearts

Rest in peace, Lorna

Written by Jessica, loved by the girls at SQCC

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 fourteenth 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

Subscribe

About Time is distributed free of charge throughout the prison system. It is available to other readers via a postal subscription service. Please email the below address for more information:

subscribe@abouttime.org.au

Advertise

Advertising in About Time is a unique opportunity to reach an otherwise shuttered population, while also contributing to a much-needed resource. Contact the below email address to find out more.

advertise@abouttime.org.au

Donate

We are a group of volunteers, entirely reliant on external funding to produce, publish and distribute each edition. Please visit the below website to support us if you can.

www.abouttime.org.au/donate

About Time is published 12 times a year by the not-for-profit company, About Time Media Ltd
ISSN #2982-0758

The Long Road

By Bukks

Bukks writes from a prison in VIC.

Hello again, it's Bukks,

I've moved on now to a restricted minimum prison now. I just thought I'd write to let you know how I'm doing. It's a big move for someone who has been in so long and I didn't really want to do it to be honest. I was happy and comfortable and in jail that is a big thing.

I'm still writing poetry as a way to get stuff out of me, better than a psych, I think? My pen-pal went home, deported back to her home country. I get to talk to her on the phone when she's not too busy so it's all good.

Why does time move so slow? Seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years, year after year. I wonder if other people have ever felt invisible? This is how I feel a lot for some reason. I have been through so much just during this one sentence.

I started off as basically a kid, drug-using, fighting, running amok and slashing up even. I'm way past that now, I'm a man, I've grown, I think? I haven't slashed up in a long, long time which is one good thing, I guess. I turned to Islam which has helped me so much, but being honest I don't feel too worthy? What can you do, life's a trip you know?

I lost a lot of time to the slot as well, it's like being in Cryo, like Demolition Man, except you are awake the whole time. I get lonely enough without having to go back there. I have worked my way out of maximum, medium and am now in a restricted minimum. Restricted as it still has a fence around it so you are not going anywhere!

Would I even run off if I could? Where would I even go? I don't know what's left for me outside of these walls? I hate it and sometimes it makes me hate myself? I'm doing stuff now like the TPP so I can get into uni if I want? It's funny to think I may do uni at what, 45, 46? I won't be doing it this year so I guess at the year after and that?

I'm going to be honest with you again, I don't feel any prouder or anything? Old school poets would call the way I always feel melancholy, or so I've learned. I don't know what if anything I'll ever get to make of myself? Who cares about a 49/50-year-old who has spent more than half his life in prison and / or juvenile justice centres?

So what is left for me? I will just keep writing poetry and see what comes of it? It's not like I'm gifted with any other talents? Too bad I didn't realise I was actually good at something a lot sooner, what can you do? So, I'm a 44-year-old poet, at a restricted minimum-security prison who still has at least four and a half years left? I just keep on going, you know, what else can I do?

It's been a long, long road and I still feel not much closer to the end. If I didn't say I'm scared of getting out, I'd be a liar! Not that I have to worry about that for a while. I get to eat a lot better here, bonus. I can still write my poems.

It Could Have Been Me

Anonymous

This author writes from a prison in VIC.

In response to the piece from June 2025, Issue No. 11, about Paul Turley's accident – I can't imagine how it must feel killing someone in the event of an accident. He made a mistake and he has to live with this memory.

When I was in my late 20s, I had a nice high-powered sports car, flogging it all the time and blowing the engine and turbo, so I did a V8 turbocharged engine swap. One summer night, kicking back with mates at my place drinking up, time was getting late, so we all decided to break and get a good night sleep for a Saturday right cut.

I took my car out to a car wash in another suburb. There is a BP servo/wash at the end of my street – I don't know why I didn't just go there, but the feeling of showing off my car was on my mind. It was there I met someone who wanted to drag race me.

We both went around the round about and planted it hard down the straight, and, as we got closer to the intersection, my right wheel turned and I slammed the left side onto the traffic lights, wiping it clean off the ground. I landed around 80 metres or so on the other side of the road and got out, did a runner, but cops caught up to me that night. It was 3 am.

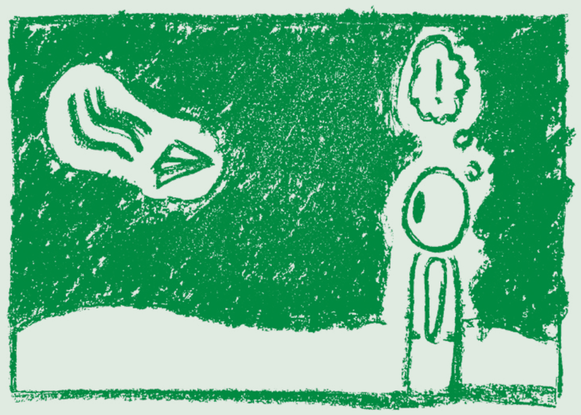
I'm fortunate I didn't end up killing anyone that night. I usually always have a passenger with me, but that night I didn't have anyone in my car.

When I went to the wrecking yard the next day to pick up the car, I saw the left side all caved in, roof all smashed and chassis twisted. I didn't know how bad a shape my car was in, so I told them to keep it as I had no point taking it.

So was my lesson learnt about drinking while driving? Well, I got my licence back, the car had an interlock, and I didn't drink as I had that. I really don't want to lose my new car that I have.



Paul draws from a prison in NSW.



Thank You for Your Letters

As of a few weeks prior to publication, we received letters from Michael, Roy, Hannah, Deonia, Roland, Jacqueline, Shane, Laurence, Kamara, Jamie, Dougie, Shane, David, Adrian, MJ, Elijah, Joe, Alex, Rebecca, Edward, David, Derek, Theodore, Gary, Garth, Gareth, Norman, T, Jordan, Henry, Lex, R, JB, Brad, Joanna, all those that chose to remain anonymous and many more.

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

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

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

If you would like to contribute to our Letters section, please 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:

contribute@abouttime.org.au



If you've been hurt, we're here to help.

We're Australia's leading personal injury lawyers.

Our expert lawyers can provide legal support on a 'no win, no fee' basis for the following legal services:

Disability and unemployment compensation

If you have an injury, disability or illness that prevents you from being able to work, you may be eligible for a lump sum payment.

These payments come from an insurance policy included with most superannuation accounts. You don't need to touch your super to access the compensation payment.

The injury doesn't need to be work-related, and while it comes with extra challenges, it is possible to claim from prison.

Workplace, road and medical injuries

Our dedicated lawyers specialise in different compensation schemes around Australia, including for:

- workplace injuries
- motor vehicle accident injuries
- medical negligence injuries, including medical error, like a missed diagnosis or a botched procedure
- occupational diseases where you have been exposed to toxins that led to the development of a disease, such as asbestos or silica.

We also help with institutional childhood abuse claims, Wills disputes and more.

No Win, No Fee.

If we don't help you win compensation, you won't have to pay our legal fees.

It doesn't cost anything to know where you stand.

Call us on
03 9605 2700
or Mail us at
21/380 La Trobe Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

News and Investigations

‘Navigating a Minefield’: The Mental Health Crisis in Australia’s Prisons



By Denham Sadler

Denham Sadler is the Chief Reporter at About Time.

Trying to get mental health care while in prison is, according to Ashleigh Chapman, like “navigating a minefield”.

Chapman, who was released from a Victorian prison earlier this year, said it can take months or even years to get an appointment with a mental health specialist to discuss your needs while in prison, and even longer for a first actual appointment.

“There is not enough staff to help others, and the organisations who help are not getting help either,” Chapman told *About Time*.

“There is no money to help those who are struggling and then it becomes a death in custody or a life-altering disability due to the way you are treated, due to not being able to see a counsellor.”

It’s estimated that about a third of all people in prison in Australia have a mental health diagnosis. Despite the huge need for support and care, a lack of staffing across the country has meant that many people in prison have been unable to get help.

The experience of trauma and mental health conditions are far more common in the prison population than the wider Australian community.

A key issue is the lack of staff, including psychologists and psychiatrists, to provide the level of mental health care required in Australia’s prisons.

According to Trevor Ma, who works as a forensic psychiatrist in NSW, prisons have become “our largest and our most underfunded providers of mental healthcare for the severely mentally ill”.

When he started working in prisons, Ma said he was “quickly confronted” with the “sheer volume of mental ill health”.

“My battle against the never-ending waitlists, teething with trauma, psychosis and general suffering had begun,” Ma wrote in a recent journal article.

“My naive aspirations to do good were becoming increasingly distant as the uneasy realisation of being complicit in the widening disparities for mentally ill prisoners set in.

“For a prison psychiatrist, it is hard to deliver quality care that is anywhere close to being equivalent to outside of the prison walls. Inside I witnessed the traumatised become re-traumatised, and the ill get punished.”

According to a United Kingdom benchmark, there should be 11 mental health nurses per 550 people in prison to ensure those in prison receive the same level of care as they would in the community.

Research by the Queensland Centre for Mental Health found that the ACT is the only Australian jurisdiction to meet this standard.

The ACT has 10 mental health nurses employed at its only prison, the Alexander Manonochie Centre, which incarcerates about 420 people. There are also two psychologists at the prison and five “counsellor-type positions”.

But all other states and territories fail to meet this benchmark, with many falling far below it.

This means that people in prison face significantly long wait times to access any support or to be moved to a mental health facility.

Several coronial inquests into deaths in custody around the country have found major barriers in accessing mental health supports in prison and recommended major changes.

The inquest into the death of Simon Cartwright at the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre in New South Wales found that he had been on the waitlist for a Mental Health Screening Unit for three weeks before he died.

The inquest heard from an expert who said that Australians would be “horrified” to hear about the delays that people in prison face in accessing mental health care.

Another inquiry into the death in custody of Tim Garner in 2023 found that a psychiatrist had recommended he be transferred to a mental health facility, but he was held in prison as a bed was not available.

There have been some signs from state and territory governments that they are aware of the issue, with some announcing funding for more workers and others launching new programs.

In Victoria, the pilot of the men’s counselling program will launch at the newly opened Western Plains Correctional Centre and in the Ripley Unit at Marngoneet Correctional Centre by the end of the year.

The program will provide individual counselling on the impacts of trauma with an aim to support personal rehabilitation and develop coping skills and strategies.

In Queensland, more than $15 million has been provided in the coming years to help hire 24 more mental health positions in the state’s prison, and the Individual Recovery Support – Transition from Correctional Facilities Program was recently launched.

In Tasmania, the Prison Mental Health Service was launched late last year, and now employs three clinical nurse specialists. This is part of the response to a report in 2020 which found a “clear deficit in the resources available to deliver mental health services to the existing prison and detainee population”.

Serious and Complex Crimes

ASHWORTH LAWYERS

- **Leading** criminal law firm in Qld
- Over **40 years’** combined experience
- Exclusively practising in **serious and complex crimes**.
- **Strategic criminal defence** - we look at every *angle* to achieve your **best outcome**
- Prompt **communication** and compassionate approach

OUR CLIENTS HAVE SAID

“Ashworth Lawyers were nothing short of amazing”
“The support, advice, and professionalism were second to none”
“Truly went above and beyond to achieve the best possible outcome”

Ashworth Lawyers | Level 10 Quay Central
95 North Quay, Brisbane QLD 4000 (07) 3012 6531
At this time, we are a private law firm and do not offer Legal Aid.



Important Note:
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this article contains images and names of people who have died.

Heather Calgaret Inquest: Her Life Was Precious and Her Passing Was Preventable

Coroner delivers damning findings around prison healthcare and parole systems

This is a shortened version of a media release from Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), originally published on the day of the inquest findings



The Calgaret family outside the Coroner’s Court of Victoria

On 28 July 2025, almost four years since the tragic passing of Heather Calgaret, Coroner Sarah Gebert delivered the findings and recommendations from the coronial inquest into Heather’s passing. The Coroner found that not only was Heather’s passing preventable but she should not have passed away in the manner that she did.

Heather Calgaret was a proud Yamatji, Noongar, Wongi and Pitjantjatjara woman. She was born in Dandenong and was the middle child of her large family. She was also a mother to four beautiful children, who she loved dearly and desperately wanted to be reunited with. She was very proud of her culture and enjoyed painting and writing. Heather was the rock of her family, always helping and caring for everyone.

Heather died in custody in November 2021 after being administered a high dose of buprenorphine despite not having a history of opiate use. She was found in critical condition at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) by her sister, Suzzane, who describes Heather as her “soulmate” and “other half”. Heather was only 30 years old and was less than 10 weeks away from completing her prison sentence when she passed away.

The Coroner found that Heather should not have been prescribed such a high dose of buprenorphine and that this dose was likely to have contributed to Heather’s respiratory depression, collapse, cardiac arrest and subsequent death. The Coroner found that the administration of this high dose of buprenorphine was inappropriate and, without it, Heather would not have passed away. The Coroner also found that, if Heather had been properly observed and monitored after her buprenorphine dose, she could have been treated appropriately and her passing may have been prevented.

For the first time in Victoria since the toughening of parole laws, this coronial inquest examined Victoria’s parole application system, including delays, the availability of programs, and support for obtaining suitable accommodation. Heather had been eligible for parole for almost one year before she passed away. She was denied parole one month before she passed due to lack of suitable accommodation. The Coroner agreed with the expert opinions of Dr Amanda Porter, Dr Crystal McKinnon and Karen Fletcher, finding there were numerous issues with the way Heather’s parole application was handled, including Corrections Victoria’s lack of adherence to metrics, poor engagement with Heather, poor documentation practices, lack of cultural engagement, lack of availability of required treatment program, and insufficient support to identify suitable housing options to enable her release on parole.

The Coroner found that Victoria’s parole system is operating in a way that may make it impossible to give effect to some court sentences and is also inconsistent with the department’s commitments to Aboriginal self-determination and reducing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victorian custodial settings.

The Coroner also commented on how the removal of Heather’s youngest child, who she gave birth to in custody, was a pivotal moment in Heather’s deteriorating mental health and overall wellbeing. The Coroner found that it was a missed opportunity to support an Aboriginal woman to move forward and break the cycle of child removal. The Coroner commented on the deep trauma caused to Aboriginal women when their children are removed, which is unique trauma historically linked to colonial violence. The Coroner said Heather’s application to have her newborn child stay with her in prison was considered in a way that focused on deficits rather than strengths.

Coroner Gebert, and the expert health panel who gave evidence before the inquest, all agreed that there was a significant decline in Heather’s health while she was in prison. It was found that she did not have access to adequate culturally safe care to address this declining wellbeing, despite there being multiple opportunities for intervention. At the time that she was incarcerated, healthcare at DPFC prison was delivered by private provider CorrectCare Australasia (CCA). Heather gained over 60 kilograms while she was in prison, developed type 2 diabetes and obstructive sleep apnoea and was prescribed seven or more medications – despite not being provided with sorely needed mental health or holistic treatment. Expert witness Professor Newman commented that, in Heather’s case, medications alone were unlikely to be effective. Heather attended over 100 medical appointments throughout her time in custody. Records show Heather was only seen four times by a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Since Heather’s passing, healthcare in DPFC is now provided by a public provider as per recommendations that came out of the passing of proud Gunditjmara, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta woman Veronica Marie Nelson, who was also incarcerated at DPFC at the same time as Heather. However, Coroner Gebert today stressed the importance of having Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations available in prison to meet the need for culturally safe and appropriate care for women.

Suzzane Calgaret, Heather Calgaret’s sister, and Aunty Jenny, Heather Calgaret’s mother, said:

“Today doesn’t necessarily bring us peace about Heather’s passing – because we already knew what had happened to her. If anything, it has just reassured us. All we have left now are memories of Heather. We have her voice on the radio, the photos that will remind us that she was here and that she was alive.

“There’s that quote – ‘Don’t think about the memories too much because that will kill you faster.’ We have used this as sort of a defense mechanism; it’s too much for the heart. It doesn’t even matter what happens to the doctor and the nurses; they still get to walk around with their life intact.

“When I went into the room and tickled her, I knew something was wrong, I knew her spirit was already gone. That moment, I have to live with every day. Knowing that my sister didn’t turn her head or open her eyes to me.

“We thank the Coroner. She had a lot to determine in the findings and she really studied it through and through. She did have a lot of heart, and I think she really empathised with Mum through her feelings and emotions. She had a few tears.

“We’re all human at the end of the day and we need to learn to appreciate each other no matter what race, colour, shape or size.

“Life really is precious.”



NT

Role of private prison guards expanded

The role of private prison guards in the Northern Territory is set to be expanded as the number of people incarcerated continues to grow.

The Northern Territory government earlier this year signed a six-month contract with G4S for the use of private prison guards to manage the transfer of people from prison to the courts.

The duties of these private prison guards will now be expanded, with reports there are plans to "strengthen [their] support" for external escorts, hospital bedsits and watch house services.

More than 400 children in the Northern Territory were held in police watch houses from late August to early March, and 388 of these children were First Nations.

This represents about 1.5 percent of all children aged between 10 and 17 in the Northern Territory.

Federal government raises concerns with criminal justice reforms

The federal government has raised concerns with the Northern Territory's youth incarceration rates and the re-introduction of the use of spit hoods in youth prisons.

Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy recently met with Northern Territory Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro.

In this meeting, McCarthy said she "made very clear the concerns I have in regards to First Nations youths in watch houses and the reintroduction of spit hoods".

The use of spit hoods in youth prisons was banned eight years ago, but the Northern Territory government recently moved to reinstate their use.

A vigil was held last month outside the Alice Springs watch house to highlight the "cruel and degrading conditions" in centres like this.

The vigil was organised by the Justice Not Jails organisation, which said the current situation in the Northern Territory is a "humanitarian crisis of ongoing colonial violence".



TAS

More needs to be done to Close the Gap

Tasmania is falling behind in many of its efforts to Close the Gap, including when it comes to the number of First Nations children in the child protection system and in youth prisons.

The Productivity Commission recently released its report into how the states and territories are meeting their Closing the Gap goals.

It revealed that across the country, just four of the 19 targets are on track to be met.

In Tasmania, the rate of First Nations children in child protection and youth detention remains far higher than non-First Nations children in the state.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service CEO Jake Smith said this shows that far more needs to be done to improve conditions in the state for First Nations people.

"Tasmania does not need tougher laws or increased police powers or presence – this is at odds with what the government has previously promised," Smith said.

"Everything else is reactionary and will not assist in achieving results."

Tasmanian Liberals to stay in power

Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff has kept power after a no-confidence motion against his Liberal government was voted down.

It came after neither major party was able to secure a majority at the snap election held in July.

The election saw the Liberals secure 14 seats, Labor 10 and the Greens five, along with five independents and an MP from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers.

This means that neither party was able to form a majority government, and debate has raged since over whether the Liberals or Labor will form a minority government.

Labor in mid-August moved a no-confidence vote against the Liberal government, but did not get the support needed for it to pass.

This means the Liberals will continue to govern in Tasmania, but will need support from crossbenchers to pass legislation.



WA

Nearly all prisons in WA overcrowded

Nearly all prisons in the state are overcrowded or at capacity and the wider system is "in crisis", the Western Australian prison inspector has found.

The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) released its report on a follow-up inspection of Hakea Prison in Western Australia, last month.

It found that those incarcerated at Hakea are being held in conditions that are "entirely unacceptable" and that "do not meet the basic level of decent treatment required under national and international human rights and standards".

Severe overcrowding at the prison is leading to up to 80 men sleeping on mattresses on cell floors near toilets.

This is "symptomatic of a prison system in crisis", the inspector said, with seven prisons in WA over their designated population capacity, and eight at more than 95 percent capacity.

"The prison system is full and there is no spare capacity for more prisoners," the OICS report said.

The inspector found that there are significant barriers for people in Hakea to maintain contact with the outside world because of limited access to phone calls and regular cancellations of social visits.

The OICS recommended a formal inquiry be launched into the operations of Hakea Prison to identify solutions that will restore the rights of people in the prison, implement a normal daily routine and create a safe working environment for staff.

Some optimism at state's largest prison

There is a "building sense of optimism" at Western Australia's largest prison following a number of troubled years, but there are ongoing concerns around lockdowns and poor food and water quality.

The OICS released its report last month based on inspections of Acacia Prison last year.

The prison is the largest in Western Australia and is privately operated by Serco.

The OICS said the prison now features a well-functioning health centre with improved psychological health services and good access to dental care.

But it also heard of widespread concerns around regular lockdowns at the prison, poor food and worsening living conditions.

"Our inspection found several areas needing improvement, including deteriorating living conditions, limited employment opportunities, reduced access to education and programs, and concerns about food and water quality," OICS Commissioner Eamon Ryan said.

The poor quality of water at the prison, including sediment in the drinking water and a metallic taste, was frequently raised by people in the prison.

The OICS said that Serco was told of this issue and said it had addressed it, but a recent visit to the prison heard continued complaints about it.

The inspector was told that a funding application for a water filter at the prison was rejected by the Western Australian government.



SA

Prison placement guidelines reviewed

The rules deciding what prison people are placed in have been reviewed and will be changed by the state government.

The South Australian government announced a review into the guidelines around which prison people are placed in to address "gaps" in the current system and ensure that certain inmates are excluded from low-security facilities.

This review presented a number of changes to the current guidelines, which the state government said it has accepted and will be put in place.

These changes include giving a stronger victim perspective in the management of serious offenders and what prison they are placed in, the South Australian government said.

The changes will "ensure the department has a stronger victim focus relating to the case management of serious offenders", and a "higher degree of oversight prior to any transfer decision made".



NSW

Yarning Circle opens at Long Bay prison

A new Yarning Circle for First Nations cultural reflection and connection has opened at the Long Bay Correctional Complex.

Yarning Circles have been used by First Nations people for thousands of years to share knowledge, strengthen relationships and increase understanding in a respectful and inclusive space.

The Yarning Circle, which will also be open to prison staff and visitors, will allow people to engage with First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing.

The space at the Long Bay prison features artwork by Josh, a Wiradjuri inmate, showing stingrays, whales and jellyfish.

An opening ceremony was held at the Yarning Circle last month.

Child incarceration rates increase

The number of children held in youth prisons in New South Wales has increased by 34 percent in the last two years.

Data released last month also revealed that First Nations children now make up 60 percent of all children in detention, and a third of all adults in custody in the state.

Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT CEO Karly Warner said the new figures are a "wake-up call".

"Despite committing to Closing the Gap in the over-imprisonment of Aboriginal people, the NSW government continues to enact laws and policies that drive up mass incarceration," Warner said.



QLD

Largest prison in the state opens

Operational commissioning of Queensland's largest prison commenced on 25 July 2025, with people expected to be incarcerated at the site from later this year.

Security testing has been taking place at the Lockyer Valley Correctional Centre over the last two months, and the first people were expected to be incarcerated at the facility this month.

The prison will hold up to 1536 people, making it the largest correctional centre in Queensland.

There are now 800 staff working at the prison, which is on 22 hectares of land and features 40 buildings.

It is the first new prison to be opened in Queensland in more than 10 years.

According to Corrective Services Commissioner Paul Stewart, the Lockyer Valley prison will have a "significant" focus on rehabilitation, and that this will be at the "heart of this centre".

Construction of the facility cost nearly $1 billion.



VIC

Western Plains prison officially opens

The Western Plains Correctional Centre has officially opened in Victoria, with up to 900 people to be incarcerated at the facility by the end of the year.

The $1 billion new prison has sat empty for more than two years since construction was complete.

Most of the people to be held at the prison will be moved from the Port Phillip Prison, which will be shut down by the end of the year.

An opening ceremony was held at the prison in July, and there are now 400 custodial officers working on site.

The prison has eight accommodation units, and a 44-bed close supervision and support unit.

There have been 20 people incarcerated at the prison since April after they were moved following a suspected carbon monoxide leak at Barwon Prison.

Treaty negotiations nearly finished

Negotiations on Australia's first state-wide treaty between the Victorian government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria are nearly finished.

The treaty negotiations are now "well advanced", the Victorian Labor government has said, with a bill to be introduced to the state Parliament once it is finalised.

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria was established in 2018.

It comes after the Yoorrook Justice Commission released its final truth-telling report in July.



ACT

Calls for independent inquiry into First Nations deaths in custody

A review into the over-representation of First Nations people in the ACT's criminal justice system has called for an independent review into recent deaths in custody in the territory's only prison.

The Jumbunna Institute recently handed its report to the territory government, including nearly 100 recommendations.

It recommended an independent inquiry into the deaths of seven men at the Alexander Maconochie Centre from February 2023 to February 2025, and for the ACT government and coroner to speed up coronial investigations into deaths in custody.

There should be more structured days at the prison with "purposeful activities" meeting the cultural needs of First Nations inmates, the review found.

It also called for urgent reviews into racism in ACT Policing and at the prison.

It found that racism is widespread in some areas of the ACT government, and that First Nations people in the territory "continue to be targeted and continue to experience excessive use of force" by police.

At Lauren Tye Legal we're not just your legal team – we're your strongest defence.

Whether you're in Victoria or anywhere across Australia, our experienced criminal defence lawyers are here to fight for your rights, your freedom, and your future. Our team of lawyers bring the expertise, discretion, and relentless advocacy you need when it matters most.

✔ 24/7 AVAILABILITY ✔ LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, INTERSTATE REACH
✔ PROVEN TRACK RECORD IN ALL COURTS ✔ TRANSPARENT, FIXED-FEE OPTIONS

L|T
LAUREN TYE LEGAL
CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYERS

Call now for a free confidential consultation.
When your future is on the line — make your first call count.
(03) 7020 6519 Laurentyelegal.com.au
11/456 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000



Rethinking Risk Assessments in Prison Settings

What are risk assessments, and how do they work?

Stacey Stokes interviews Emma Russell

Emma Russell is a researcher based at La Trobe University.



Willy Pleasance

Stacey: Emma, you do research on risk assessments. What is a "risk assessment"?

Emma: When an individual is assigned a risk classification of low, medium, or high risk by corrections, they have been given this classification through a risk assessment. Some people describe a risk assessment as a kind of "tick box" exercise, based on a series of questions and factors. These factors typically include: their attitude (to their offending), their relationships and their criminal history.

Stacey: What made you interested in risk assessments?

Emma: I started out researching how risk is being understood in bail applications. I was speaking to people working in the community sector supporting people in prison and people exiting prison. I quickly learnt that "risk" doesn't only dominate discussions about whether someone should get bail or be remanded, but risk is increasingly dominating discussions about whether someone should be able to leave prison on parole and whether someone is entitled to structured support post-release. Those I spoke to were very concerned about risk assessments being used to determine eligibility for post-release support programs, so I decided to look into this further.

Stacey: Is this focus on risk a problem?

Emma: Yes. Firstly, the focus on "risk" is taking away a person's agency to decide what support they want and need and what might benefit them as they're returning to the community from prison. Secondly, when a risk assessment tool is being used to decide whether or not someone has the chance to access post-release support, then the nature and quality of the tool and the evidence underpinning it needs to be looked at more closely. This was reiterated by everyone we spoke to.

Stacey: I talk to many people in custody, and one of the issues that comes up is risk assessments and access to support services versus actually getting parole. Is that something that you found?

Emma: For this research, I worked in a team with Nina Storey and Gabriela Franich, and together we interviewed workers who are supporting people in prison to prepare for their release into the community.

We asked: "What issues are risk assessments creating for you in your work to try and support people exiting prison? What issues do you see that risk assessments are creating for people in prison?" And they raised a lot of issues. For example, people in prison will be put in these impossible positions where in one setting – such as a parole application – being assessed to be low risk will be beneficial. But in another setting, such as seeking access to a post-release support program, being seen as low risk is disadvantageous, because many people won't be eligible unless they are assessed as high risk.

This creates a real bind for people. You might want to get out of prison as soon as possible on parole, but you also want access to support. And so this creates all these kinds of contradictions.

Originally, these tools were designed to determine what kinds of programs people should complete in prison. But now we're seeing these tools being used to make other decisions, such as whether someone is eligible for post-release support – and this is giving rise to unintended consequences.

Stacey: Why do you think that is?

Emma: Most people believe it's because of funding constraints. There is limited budget available for post-release support services, and the small budget means that they can't offer support services to everyone who wants them, and so justice departments are using risk assessments as a way to limit access. Using risk assessments for this purpose, rather than individual discretion, might seem "objective" or "neutral", but, as our research participants explained, the results can differ according to the person conducting them. And there are a lot of critiques of these tools in the research literature.

Stacey: Can you explain the criticisms of the risk assessment tools?

Emma: One of the biggest criticisms is that these risk assessment tools assume that the criminal legal system is neutral and that nobody would ever be treated differently because of their race or gender or sexuality or class background. This is also the criticism internationally – these tools are also used in Canada and to different degrees in the US, the UK et cetera. So, instead, these tools focus on the psyches and histories of individuals as if they live in societies that are free of racism, sexism or homophobia, which is not the case. In reality we have a lot of evidence of the ways that the criminal legal system is applied very differently to different populations.

Stacey: Instead of using risk assessments to determine who is eligible for post-release support, what should we do instead?

Emma: Almost unanimously those we interviewed say that it should be simply a self-identified needs approach, where an incarcerated person has access to information about what programs and supports are available post-release and what they entail. This will allow them to make an informed decision about whether or not that would be of use to them.

Ultimately, more resources are needed to ensure people thrive and flourish after prison. It isn't just about whether someone is going to reoffend or not – there's so much more to it than that.

We Need Your Feedback!

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

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

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



The Dark Side of Gains

Steroids, drug use and the link to Australian men in prison

By Ronin Cruise

Ronin is based in Queensland and has been out for a few months. He wrote a book during his time in prison called Pri-Zen.



Victor Freitas via Unsplash

Australian men are bulking up at alarming rates. But there's a toxic truth beneath it all: steroid use. They might have originally been about gains, but steroids can ravage lives. They are linked to impulsive behaviour, mental health issues and drug addiction. There is a link between steroid use and men who end up in prison because their effects can lead to all sorts of unintended erratic behaviours – and the consequences can be dire.

Unlike other drugs, where the user's behaviour changes quickly and drastically, steroid usage causes a slow, gradual change that is almost unnoticed at first. But, over the course of a few months, they can transform someone into a completely different person: pursuing lustful desires, using other drugs, drinking alcohol, impulsively spending money or shopping or even having violent bursts of road rage, like when driving behind a grandmother trying to drive at the speed limit. For most people, these changes may not be too dramatic; for some, they are a recipe for disaster. But there is little to no information or support services for people who use steroids.

Many men who go to prison were on the juice before coming in. Does anyone ask about this? No, not at all. They ask about all the other drugs – but why not steroids too? Where is the support given by health professionals to help us understand the real consequences of these synthetic hormones we inject into our bodies and how they impact the decisions many make before we come to prison?

Think about all the erratic decisions you made as a hyped up teenager. Now think about all the bad habits you've accumulated over all the years. Now put those both together and add NOS! Of course it's going to lead you to do, say and use things you wouldn't in your natural state.

It's time to talk about steroid use. Write to us at About Time to keep the conversation going.

Write to Us

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

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

contribute@abouttime.org.au

New Community Support Services Booklets for People Leaving Prison in QLD

Prisoners' Legal Service has recently produced Community Support Booklets for prisoners in Queensland containing contact details for support services throughout Queensland. These booklets can be used to prepare release plans while in custody or to connect with services after release. They are available for the following regions:

- Torres Strait Islands and Northern Peninsula
- Weipa, Napranum, Aurukun, Lockhart River, Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw
- Mareeba, Hopevale and surrounding areas
- Cairns, Yarrabah, Innisfail and surrounding areas
- Mt Isa and surrounding areas
- Townsville, Palm Island and surrounding areas
- Rockhampton, Gladstone, Emerald and surrounding areas
- Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay
- Mackay and surrounding areas
- Cherbourg, Kingaroy, Chinchilla, Dalby, Warwick and surrounding areas
- Toowoomba and surrounding areas
- Bayside, Redlands, Stradbroke Island and surrounding areas
- Gold Coast and surrounding areas
- Inner city Brisbane
- Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan and surrounding areas
- North Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Gympie and surrounding areas
- South Brisbane and surrounding areas

If you are a prisoner in Queensland, you can request copies of any of these booklets by writing to Prisoners' Legal Service at GPO Box, 257, Brisbane, Qld, 4001.

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



Facing Criminal Charges?
We Can Help

Don't face this alone. Let us guide you through the process, answer your questions, and prepare you for court.

Contact **Stary Norton Halphen** today for dedicated support from one of Victoria's leading criminal law firms.

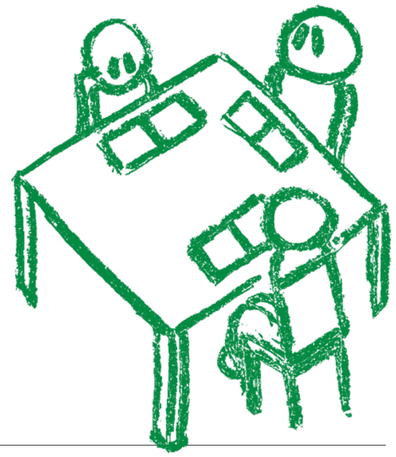
Your future deserves expert representation.

Call us on 03 8622 8200

Stary Norton Halphen | Criminal Law Specialists
www.starylaw.com
city@starylaw.com
03 8622 8200
First Tier Doyles Criminal Law 2025
Law Institute of Victoria Accredited Specialist

Experiences

Stay Connected, Stay Educated: Vickie Roach's Message to Those Inside



By Denham Sadler

Denham Sadler is the Chief Reporter at About Time.

Continued from page 1.

When Vickie Roach was first incarcerated at the age of 17, a friend sent her a letter with a message she still carries with her today.

"Keep your shit together, don't let the bastards grind you down," it said.

This is a message she's carried across the more than 50 years since, through a number of stints in prison, successful human rights challenges and decades of campaigning for those inside.

It's also her main message to those currently in prison.

"That stayed with me, and it has all this time," Roach told *About Time*.

Since breaking free from the incarceration cycle, Roach has been a tireless advocate for people in prison, particularly women and First Nations people.

A member of the Stolen Generations, she was removed from her family by authorities in 1961, when she was just 2 years old, and given a criminal record at that age for "neglect by way of destitution".

Roach dropped out of school when she was 13 and was incarcerated for the first time before her 18th birthday.

In 2007, while incarcerated at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria, Roach led a High Court challenge against a Commonwealth law banning all people in prison from voting.

The landmark Roach v Electoral Commissioner case won the right to vote for those in prison serving a sentence of less than three years.

For a 30-year period of her life, Roach was stuck in the revolving door of a number of prisons and the criminal justice system.

Her message for those currently inside is to keep strong, participate in as many programs and education chances as possible and contact family and friends as much as you can.

She said one of the things that helped her get through this was undertaking a master's degree in writing, which she successfully completed while serving time at Dame Phyllis.

"I hadn't even finished high school – I left school when I was 13. I didn't have a BA, but I had a master's degree," she said.

"Some of the screws were really supportive, and we had the very first graduation ceremony within the prison. We had the whole procession, with puffy hats and the head of the university, and they brought the mace. They did the whole shebang.

"That was gratifying and validating that they'd recognised it was actually something pretty special I'd achieved."

She urged those in prison to pursue education if they can – to escape from day-to-day life in prison and to provide opportunities after release.

"I would have never tried to get into university if I was out of prison. It would've been impossible," she said.

"Doing education gave me a way out and actually gave me higher pay. It gave me an escape – being in education instead of being amongst the rest of the jail. It was like a haven."

These small acts of resistance, such as standing up for your rights or completing an education course, can help to get through a period of incarceration, she said.

"It's about learning about yourself, learning about life, about resistance and about the prison industrial complex," Roach said.

Roach also said it's important to get involved with as many other programs as possible, particularly those that may help other people in prison too. During her time in prison, Roach worked as a peer educator, providing education on blood-borne viruses to people arriving in prison.

She also helped to provide training with guards and other workers at the prison.

"The difference between the ones that hadn't been trained by us and the ones that did get that one hour with us was astonishing," Roach said. "They didn't treat us like we had 12 heads.

"It completely changed the dynamic in jail."

Roach has been fighting for the rights of those in prison since she was released and still believes there is a better way. She provided evidence to the Yoorrook Justice Commission, Victoria's first formal truth-telling process into historical and ongoing injustices against First Peoples in Victoria. Roach advocated for healing places rather than prisons.

"We have to heal rather than punish," Roach told the commission. "People meting out vengeance and punishment and cruelty will only reap bad things in the future for society."



Send Us a Letter

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

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

contribute@abouttime.org.au

Acquired Brain Injuries and Prison

Michael's mission to raise awareness of ABIs



By Michael

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

About:
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 percent of people incarcerated in Australia's prisons have an acquired brain injury – compared to only 17 percent of men and 9 percent 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:

PO Box 297
Fitzroy VIC 3065

My name is Michael, and I am a person who has an ABI (acquired brain injury) and I have done a lot of time in prison. I'm here to try and make it better for people who have an ABI and are in or have been through the justice system.

I'm a pretty easy-going guy. I like to laugh and joke around a lot, but I also know when I have to be serious. I've had enough hassles in my life over the years, so I like to try and make my life and everybody else's life around me as comfortable and easy as can be.

I was never any good at school. I couldn't read or write when I was younger. I mucked up in class and got sent to the principal's office so I didn't have to be embarrassed about not being able to read or write. From then, I just dragged my way through school. I got up to about year 9 until I got asked to leave.

From a young age, I'd steal things – cars and motorbikes – and rob factories to make money. We weren't a rich family, so whatever I got I stole because my mum and dad didn't have money. I made my own way and grew into a criminal. I was in boys' homes from the age of about 13, for stuff like riding motorbikes. And then I hit Pentridge, because I escaped from the boys' home. From then, I just didn't really look back.

My crimes got bigger and became out of control. When my parents died, 2 months apart from each other, I was 18 and I just didn't care about myself, let alone anybody else. I did what I had to do to survive.

I got the ABI from a motorcycle crash when I was younger and when I've overdosed a couple of times. When I was at Marngoneet prison in around 2010, I spoke to a counsellor about my accident and they said, "Oh, maybe you've got an ABI."

I didn't know what it was and didn't remember the next day what we were talking about. My doctor then said, "I want to do a few tests to see if you have an ABI." She sent me off to see some specialists. When the doctor told me about the ABI, I didn't know what to think because I didn't know what an ABI was.

The doctor explained to me what it was like to have an ABI – and it was what I'm sort of like. Someone with an ABI can have difficulties with a range of things. It could be with speech, with learning or with the capabilities of a normal person that doesn't have an ABI. They see things differently. It's a disability, but it's hard to explain. It's hard having an ABI. I feel like I'm different. I know I'm not, but I feel like a second class citizen, because I don't understand a lot of things.

I was 47 years old when I found out that I had an ABI. I'm hoping they can work out the people that have ABIs earlier and they can come up with a way to keep people out of prison. Because, let's face it, prisons are sad, lonely places, especially for people with ABIs or mental health issues. All those times going to prison, I hadn't been screened. I couldn't read when I got in – I taught myself in jail how to read and write by reading the newspaper. If in some way they could have screened me for ABIs at the start, I think my time in prison might have been shorter and a lot different.

Since 2017, I haven't been back in prison, and I've been doing Voices for Change. It's changed my life. It's got me out of the gutter, so to speak. I've got a roof over my head, and I've got a partner – I've got everything that I need. Sometimes I haven't got money, but I'm alive. When you've had enough, you've had enough. The things that matter to me now are my family that I have left, my group that I'm involved with – Voices for Change – and my church.

There's not another group in Victoria like Voices for Change, and we want to make more of them. We go to different places in the community, and we talk about people that have an ABI that have been through the justice system and explain what it's like and how hard it is for people that have an ABI – we want to make everybody aware. Awareness is what makes things grow, and I want to make our group Voices for Change grow into something big.

My Story: Facing Deportation



Willy Pleasance

By Leslie

Leslie writes from a prison in QLD.

Continued from page 1.

One thing that did concern me was that, once the department informs you your visa has been cancelled, you have 28 days to submit your appeal to the Department of Home Affairs National Character Consideration Centre. No exceptions!

I had no idea how long I would remain on remand, and, once sentenced, I expected the Department of Home Affairs to contact me. I knew I needed to get ready. The evidence required for my type of visa – S501(3A) – could only be supplied to me through the FOI (freedom of information) process. In my case, it took almost a year to gather medical records, mental health records, QPS records, probation and parole records, corrections records, court records and ATO records dating back to the date of my arrival. Other documents required were character references from family, friends, community members, business associates etc.

I was sentenced after a year on remand and expected a visit from sentence management or Home Affairs officers to confirm my visa cancellation.

I was fully aware of the time constraints to submit my application within 28 days after notification of visa cancellation, and I had only just received all the documentary evidence required and finally able to start a rough draft of my submission. With all the criteria I had to address, with accompanying documentary evidence, this took me a further 4 months to complete.

Thankfully, I still had not been contracted by the department as expected and was even hopeful that either the department had overlooked my case or I was no longer "under their radar", as my barrister had suggested. My hopes were raised significantly after I contacted Sentence Management, who informed me the Department of Home Affairs advised them I wasn't required to do anything in relation to my visa cancellation.

I am now 8 weeks away from my release and, to my surprise, I get a call from an immigration official to inform me my visa would be cancelled the day of my release and I would be escorted to a detention facility. If I chose to appeal the decision, I had 28 days to do so or face certain deportation.

I'm telling my story as a warning to all international prisoners in Australian prisons regardless of visa type – if you meet Border Force enforcement criteria for deportation, don't wait for confirmation. If you want to stay, start your application ASAP.

In the 2 years I have been in this unit of maximum 90 inmates, five have been detained and three already deported – one to Africa, one to India and one to Germany – all on student visas. There are currently 17 others, myself included, with various visa types, from spousal, student, permanent, residency, work and full citizenship.

A major proportion of the prison population have basic literacy levels and complex medical and mental health issues, come from low socio-economic demographics, have language issues and certainly do not have a spare $15,000 to engage professional immigration lawyers to navigate through the visa cancellation process.

I'm not sure whether About Time is available at immigration detention centres (I hope so). However, I intend to send in a follow-up article from Pinkenba Detention Centre whilst I await the outcome of my application.

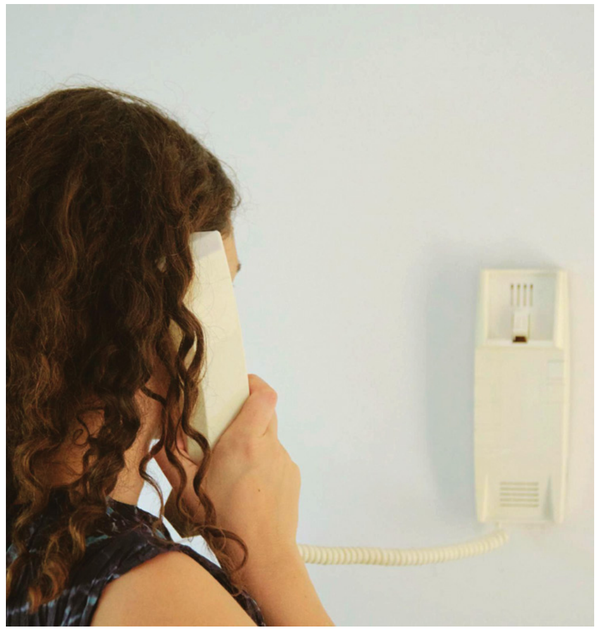
By the way, there appears to be no time constraint on immigration officials to investigate applications, so I don't know how long I will be in detention. The only way I can avoid remaining in detention is to return to New Zealand and be free in the community whilst my application is under investigation. I was warned by RAILS not to take this option as, once I am out of the country, the chances of a favourable outcome and re-entry to Australia are minimal and the appeal process to the tribunal and the minister virtually impossible from abroad.

Thank you, About Time – the printed voice of the prisons.

Leslie



Seeing My Mother



Willy Pleasance

"Once I'd made sense of everything I felt, I was finally able to see her, not just as my mother but as the layered, imperfect, extraordinary person she was."

By Maria Dudko

Maria Dudko is an award-winning filmmaker and writer based on Gadigal land (Sydney). Her work explores the relationship between memory and violence, focusing on how personal and collective histories are constructed, distorted or erased over time. She was recently awarded a Faber Writing Scholarship to develop her debut work of non-fiction.

I was 12 when Mum went to prison. Instead of crying, I threw myself into planning everything we'd do once she came back. The plan looked something like this: shopping for cute dresses at Westfield, getting sushi afterwards, discussing the latest episodes of *McLeod's Daughters* ... times a hundred. We'd never really had that many opportunities to do those things before – too much bad stuff had happened in the lead-up to her going to jail – but I told myself we'd make up for lost time once this chapter ended.

Mum walked free shortly after my 18th birthday. Our first meeting took place at a beach in Sydney.

"We should get a photo together," was the first thing she said.

We got two. In both of them, we stood shoulder to shoulder but didn't touch, like two strangers politely sharing a frame. Then we briefly talked about coffee prices, what my degree at the University of Melbourne was about and how she would get back home that evening. An hour later, the reunion was over. That's when I cried. In fact, by the time my plane landed at Tullamarine, I had no more tears left inside of me.

How could the woman on the beach be my mother if I didn't recognise her at all? And, to make matters worse, I couldn't shake the feeling that she hadn't been all that happy to see me. Where was the cinematic, tear-jerking reunion I'd replayed in my head so many times?

A few months later, Mum took the bus down to visit. Apparently, just booking the ticket had taken her weeks of planning. She seemed nervous. My heart swelled with hope – was this the moment when everything would finally feel okay? The next day, we went to Westfield, just like I'd dreamed we would. When Mum suggested we go look at some dresses, I put my arm around her waist like I'd seen other daughters do. In the store, she picked out a pink, ankle-length dress with a floral print for me.

"That's not really my style," I said.

"You used to like pink," she responded, burying her nose in her phone, cheeks flushing.

A few minutes passed. "Can't you just ask me what I like?" I finally snapped.

She flinched, but I pretended not to notice. It all went downhill from there.

It took me years to understand what had really scared Mum about coming to Melbourne. Turns out, we were both waiting for a version of each other that didn't exist.

When a parent goes to prison, the love you feel for them doesn't go anywhere. At the same time, incarceration is a weird in-between: you're both alive, but showing up for life's big moments takes a lot of extra effort. As a child, it's hard to understand that there is a limited amount of phone calls an inmate is allowed to make per week or that, sometimes, people get so deeply sad in prison they can't bring themselves to call at all. Inevitably, you wait to be compensated for all those lost moments.

You think that, after they're released, your parent will be the same as before. Except now their whole life will revolve around you.

The truth is, after Mum's release, I couldn't let go of the version of her I'd created in my head. And, when she failed to live up to that version, I punished her for it.

Years later, once I'd made sense of everything I felt, I was finally able to see her, not just as my mother but as the layered, imperfect, extraordinary person she was.

I understood just how much she had been learning to do again and how much she was doing for the very first time. I understood how incredible it was that she rebuilt her life after prison, with no one and nothing to fall back on.

And I also accepted that my own reactions, however ugly, were also deeply human: none of us are given manuals on how to deal with stuff like this. Unfortunately, it's very easy to fall into the trap of thinking the trauma you carry around as the child of an incarcerated parent will go away on its own the moment the parent is released. The best thing you can do for yourself is start the work of healing on your own terms.

Despite all our attempts at having a relationship, Mum and I don't speak anymore. Maybe one day we'll find our way back to each other. And, if that day ever comes, I hope we can offer each other just one thing: the mercy of no expectations.



Write to Us

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

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

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

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

contribute@abouttime.org.au

• Health

Demystifying Hepatitis C

Aiming for a hep C cure in prison can offer hope for the future

By John

John has experience in the prison system. He has since become a hepatitis C peer helping to support people towards hep C testing and care.

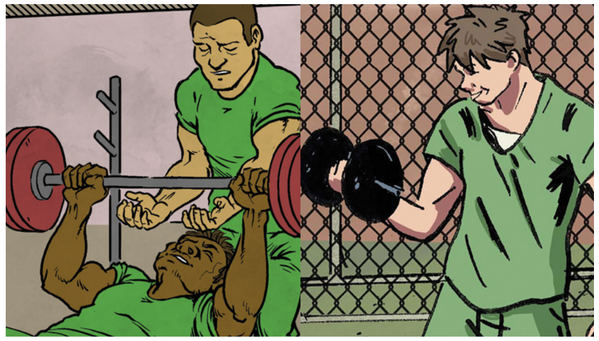
Hep C and I have a long history: In 1999, I was quite young and on remand and they must have given me a hep C test. I didn't even know what they were testing for at the time.

As a teenager, I'd heard a bit about hep C, knew it was part of injecting drug use culture but not much else. When I was released, I received a letter from the prison telling me I had hep C. All I got was that letter, no follow-up – just them saying, "Here you go, have this."

While not surprised to find out I had hep C, I was worried. I believed hep C was quite bad, something serious and incurable, and I was ashamed to be talking to people about it. Apart from not sharing injecting equipment, I decided to forget about it for the longest time.

There came a point though where I couldn't ignore the effects of hep C any longer. It had begun to accumulate physically and really impact my mental health. The only treatment available then was interferon based, so I endured a very difficult 12 months where, yes, I managed to be cured of my hep C but not without going through painful and dark times.

It was later, when I'd been locked up for a second, longer time that I started hearing interferon was a thing of the past and there were new treatments – direct acting antivirals (DAAs). The changes these treatments brought were a game changer. I found out people didn't have to go through what I did to get cured. When I first heard about the DAA treatments, the prison I was in had great Justice Health nurses. They got out to the wings and were educating us on how much was changing for the better. Some prisoners still associated the old treatment with DAA treatments, but that's changing as well, especially among younger people. For me, I'll admit I had some envy for the guys that were able to go through these easier treatments.



Developed by Hepatitis NSW

Living with hep C in prison was, and is, a personal journey. Some people aren't ready to tell others about their hep C status. This can be due to self-stigma or not having great health literacy, a lack of social support or sometimes cultural reasons – but mostly the concern is someone is going to make it an issue. People are wary and don't want to be "put on show" because that affects every part of your waking day inside. Meaning people kept it to themselves, and some still do, as a form of self-protection.

Once the DAA treatments came in, however, some people became increasingly open about their hep C status. They're like, "Yeah, I've got it. I'll get treated. It's all good." Other people were still devastated and could feel very alone after an initial diagnosis. However, as the DAA treatments rolled out, especially where nurses were able to be proactive, you could see things changing for the better.

Posters about how easy it was to access hep C treatment were everywhere in my prison. Many prisons had testing campaigns where you were encouraged, regardless of any previous treatment or potential hepatitis C risk factors, to get tested.

People were tested and retested over a 6-month span. When I did it, I got a water bottle or some buy up money and beanies and other stuff. Incentives for getting tested really got my attention, and more people started to see this was for real ... and worth a go.

The messages from nurses and other places like Hepatitis NSW, about how you could be cured in prison with a course of pills over a few months, became clear. And, even if you're reinfected, you can get treated again. It's up to you and your nurse or doctor to decide what's right for you.

The information's become better, something aided by people's awareness of how to access external services available through the free phone-based services. Hepatitis NSW's Infoline is well known in every NSW prison.

A lot of people follow up and rely on the advocacy the Infoline can provide. This is especially important in remand centres, where it's harder to get access to health staff because of the constantly changing populations and tougher conditions compared to most post-sentence prisons.

When more people started accessing treatment and were sharing their good experiences about the process and outcome, it helped Justice Health encourage others into testing and treatment.

I think it really bolsters a lot of people's hopes for the future and themselves.

While the DAA treatments revolutionised the care for hep C, they also slowly helped people with different levels of health literacy in prison. This not only helps people being treated; it also introduces organic peer education on the treatments and how effective they are.

It's prisoners often educating prisoners, not through intentional advocacy but just through everyday conversation. It comes up, and there'll be people sitting around talking.

Those conversations go right throughout a prison. Information is a fast-moving commodity in every prison. Things might take a while to stick and perhaps end up with some alternative facts attached, but it keeps on going around. Repeated information becomes accepted knowledge for the wider community.

Most people, once they've settled into a prison, create a peer network. You hang with people you get along with and who are generally accepting of you. Again, it can come down to cultural stuff, to people's preconceived ideas and how they view themselves. Mostly though, these social networks support each other and don't care if someone's got hep C as long as there's loyalty and respect.

I reckon Justice Health staff have done a lot to demystify hep C. Being able to provide supporting information is helpful, and then people can go back to a wing where a lot of their peers can reinforce the information Justice Health staff are providing. This creates balanced support to help people more easily come to terms with having hep C.

It can also extend support from the prison settings to community corrections, often the next step post-release. When I speak to people in those settings, their hep C knowledge is sound, and that's from being treated and receiving good information while inside.

Going from prison to the outside world, you're seeing those people going back to their communities with some vital, factually based knowledge on treatment, on testing, on what hep C is, and they are imparting their knowledge to people in their networks.

Hopefully that's helping communities who are harder to reach or perhaps don't have access to decent services. Some newly released people are, without even realising it, becoming ambassadors, advocating for hep C treatment. This is a great outcome for those people while they're in custody but then creates beneficial effects for people in their community as well.

All the parts are in place, whether coming from inside or outside the prisons. Being able to receive good information and effective treatment is a massive win for people in custody. The DAA treatments can offer a solution; people can access treatment with an optimistic sense that, even with everything else that's going on, hep C treatment is doable.

Developed by Hepatitis NSW, a community organisation providing support and information for people and communities at risk of viral hepatitis. They provide a free call service for anyone in a NSW prison through the Common Auto Dial List (CADL): Enter MIN; Enter PIN; Dial 2 (CADL); Dial 3 (HEPNSW)

Call HepLink (1800 437 222) for hepatitis information and support. HepLink is a free and confidential service and does not require a Medicare card. Normal call rates apply.

You can also call AIVL, the peer-led peak organisation advancing the wellbeing, health and human rights of people who use drugs, on 1800-MYAIVL(692485) for information and peer support. It is free, confidential, and no Medicare is required.

The appropriate treatment for an individual patient is for the healthcare professional to decide, in consultation with the patient.

Funded by Gilead Sciences Pty Ltd. Level 28, 385 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. ABN 71 072 611 708. Date of preparation: August 2025, AU-UNB-0999

Learning From Guilt (the Emotion, Not the Plea!)

Using guilt as a guide towards personal growth

By Annalise de Groot

The author is a forensic psychologist at PsychOrium Forensic and Clinical Psychology Services.

I want to be clear from the outset here – I am not talking about guilt as a legal term. We all know that pleas in court are not necessarily an indication of guilt but, rather, a specific terminology that serves its purpose within the blunt institution of the law.

Guilt as an emotional state is a far more complex experience. Guilt is something called a self-conscious emotion: it involves reflecting on actions and taking responsibility for the harm caused. Guilt is intended to be a motivational emotion, allowing us to change behaviour that might cause us to be excluded or persecuted by others in our social groups. Its core function is to prompt us to seek forgiveness and to right our wrongs, thus serving an important function within our relationships with others, as it can encourage us to repair harms within a relationship. Because guilt is an uncomfortable feeling, it also motivates us to apologise for or correct a negative behaviour.

Guilt is not the same as shame, though they are related to one another and can coexist.

Where shame is focused on a deep sense of being fundamentally flawed, guilt is more behaviourally focused. Essentially, shame says, "I am bad," while guilt says, "I did something bad." Shame is an ego-dystonic emotion, meaning that the way it feels conflicts with how we want to see ourselves. On the other hand, guilt is an ego-syntonic emotion, meaning that it aligns with our values and identity.

When we feel guilty about something, it is typically because we know we have acted in a way that goes against our standards of morality and what we consider to be "right" within our community or culture. Guilt can also manifest when we fail to meet standards that we have set for ourselves.

Self-appraisal also plays an important role in understanding the differences between guilt and shame – for example, shame involves a self-evaluation of being inadequate, while guilt involves a self-evaluation of being harmful.

Learning to separate a sense of guilt from a feeling of shame is a key step in healing. If guilt is left unchecked, it can develop into shame. This is because our internal thought processes can begin to attribute our actions to our sense of identity by internalising a sense of "wrongness".

The secret to dealing with feelings of guilt in a healthy way is to first acknowledge that you feel guilty. This seems deceptively simple, though it is much harder than it sounds.

When we feel guilty, it often manifests as a deep sense of discomfort, and this can result in the urge to suppress or mask that discomfort. Instead of avoiding the emotion of guilt, it can help to ask yourself some questions to further understand where the feeling is coming from:

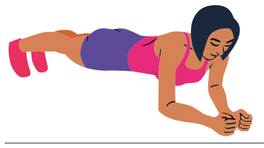
- What happened to cause this guilty feeling?
- What part of this do I feel guilty about?
- Am I responsible for the situation that caused me to feel guilty?
- What values do I hold that are not aligned with my behaviour?
- Is it in my control to fix the situation?

Once you have a clearer understanding of why you feel guilty, you can address the guilt using the following steps:

1. **Own it:** Take responsibility for your actions and face the situation head on.
2. **Make amends:** Apologise, ask for forgiveness and repair the situation.
3. **Commit to change:** Reflect on the situation to learn what you can do differently next time.

For example, imagine that you feel guilty because you forgot to call a family member on their birthday. Guilt is an unpleasant emotion, so your first instinct is to pretend that the phones weren't working. However, by using the reflective questions above, you determine that you feel guilty because family is important to you (as a value) and you could have made more effort to remember to make the call. Therefore, you know that you are responsible for the situation that caused you to feel guilty, and it is within your control to make amends. So, instead of hiding away from the problem (and tempting shame to take hold of you), you choose to call the family member, tell them you forgot, apologise and reassure them that you will take steps in the future to make sure you remember to call them. This ultimately leaves both you and your family member feeling positive.

Owning up to the things we feel guilty about can be extremely difficult, particularly when we know that the consequences might be serious. Despite this, the best thing that you can do for yourself and your relationships with others is to take accountability and work towards making amends. While this might feel uncomfortable, sometimes it is necessary in order to heal.



Planking ... Let's Make it a Bit More Challenging!

By Gary Bultitude

First, how to get into the plank position:

1. Start by laying face-down on the floor.
2. Place your elbows and forearms on the ground. Your elbows should be directly below your shoulders. Lift your body off the floor. Elbows and toes should be the only thing touching the floor.
3. Align your body in a straight line from head to heels.
4. Engage your core muscles by tightening your abdominal muscles. Imagine pulling your navel toward your spine.
5. Position your feet hipwidth apart. Your weight should be distributed evenly between your elbows and your toes.

Once you've mastered the basic plank, how about some variations?

Plank risers

1. Start in a plank, elbows under shoulders, body long and knees lifted.
2. Lift your right elbow up and place your right hand on the floor, repeat with the left side.
3. Reverse and come back down into a plank.

Note: Try to keep your bum down and your back as flat as you can.

Complete: 5 starting with a right client and 5 with the left.

Plank side taps

1. Start in the normal plank position.
2. Walk your right leg out to the side and back again, repeat on the left.
3. Move the legs away from the body – this will help to further engage the abs and obliques.

Note: For more of a challenge, jump both feet out and in at the same (Plank Jacks).

Complete: 20 singles or 10 jacks.

Plank flies

1. Start in the normal plank position, this time on your hands.
2. Reach your right arm straight out in front of you, keeping your arm in line with your shoulder.
3. Place your hand back under your shoulder and repeat on the left.

Note: For more of a challenge, when lifting your right arm lift your leg foot up slightly (repeat on the other side).

Complete: 20 reps.

Reverse plank

1. Sit tall on the floor with your legs out in front of you. Place your hands behind with your fingertips pointed towards your feet.
2. Lift your bum off of the floor, forming a straight line from heels to shoulders.

Note: Try to avoid dipping your back.

Complete: Hold this for 15-30 seconds and repeat for 5 rounds.

Plank rotators

1. Start in the normal plank position, feet a few inches apart, and dip the body from side to side, allowing your hips to drop but maintaining a long spine.

Complete: 20 singles or 10 jacks.

With each of these exercises try not to hold your breath – keep your chin tucked and your neck natural to your spine.

All exercises reprinted with permission from *Inside Time*.

Legal Corner

New Virtual Bail Courts in NSW



An explainer from the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited

The way the NSW court system deals with bail hearings on weekdays has changed. This currently applies to adults in regional NSW but will soon apply to all "first appearance" bail applications in NSW. Read on below to find out what this might mean for you.

What's changed?

When an adult in NSW is charged with a new offence and refused bail by police, they are taken to court where they can choose to apply for bail from a magistrate. This is called a "first appearance" bail application.

Since 7 July 2025, all first appearance bail applications for people in regional NSW are now made before a new online-only virtual court. This is called the Bail Division. Defendants appear in the Bail Division by video link from custody. The magistrate, prosecutor and defence lawyer all also appear by video link. There is no physical courtroom.

One of the key changes to the bail process is a new 12 pm daily deadline for bail applications. This means that, if you are charged with a fresh offence and have to go to court to apply for bail for that offence, you may not get to apply for bail on the same day you are arrested.

Legal representation for your first bail hearing

If you are an adult applying for bail in the Bail Division, you will have access to free legal help from a duty lawyer with Legal Aid NSW. If you normally engage a private lawyer, they can appear for you as usual, or you can self-represent.

At this time, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) has not received funding to be able to service the new virtual bail court. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who need free legal support can seek help and representation from Legal Aid NSW.

After your bail hearing

After the hearing, your case returns to the regular local court in your area and goes through the normal court process. If you are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, you can ask the Legal Aid duty lawyer to transfer your file to the Aboriginal Legal Service.

Even if you haven't requested a transfer, you can call the Aboriginal Legal Service by dialing #12 on the CADL prison phone system and we can discuss your situation.

Family and support persons attending your virtual bail hearing

Family, friends and support people can still attend court to support you while you're applying for bail, but they cannot attend in person as there is no physical courtroom. They will have to have access to the internet and a computer, smartphone or other device to attend the virtual bail court.

For instructions about how to dial in to the hearing, they will need to either speak to their local court registry or contact the Bail Division registry via the below email:

baildivisionregistry@justice.nsw.gov.au

DNA Testing in Queensland Under Review

By Prisoners Legal Service

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

In criminal law proceedings throughout Australia, DNA evidence can sometimes be relied on to make a case against a defendant. DNA evidence is generally obtained by collecting samples of bodily fluids and tissues. These samples are then tested to assess if a person has matching DNA.

In Queensland, there have been concerns raised about the way DNA evidence is processed and examined in forensic laboratories.

In response to these concerns, the Queensland Government requested an independent review of Forensic Services Queensland (FSQ). FSQ is the provider of DNA testing services for police investigations and legal proceedings within the Queensland justice system.

On 4 August 2025, a report about the outcomes of the review was provided to the Queensland Government.

Report findings and recommendations

During the review of FSQ, several issues were identified in relation to their DNA testing procedures. These included case backlogs, long turnaround times, quality of DNA samples, gaps in scientific knowledge and a lack of workplace communication.

The main area of concern was backlogs and delays in testing. For example, it was found that, because of the backlogs and issues with testing procedures, cases in the Magistrates Court which rely on DNA evidence were being delayed by up to 3 years.



Willy Pleasance

The report made recommendations about how the issues with DNA testing in Queensland could be resolved and suggested three main strategies:

1. appointing an independent adviser with a scientific background to oversee the work of FSQ
2. encouraging the staff at FSQ to work together to address the delays
3. pausing the operations of FSQ for 2–4 weeks to address the backlog, retrain staff and implement measures to limit any future issues with testing.

The report noted there had already been several positive changes made by FSQ.

Impacts of the report

In response to the report, the Queensland Government announced the formation of a new expert team to address the issues with DNA testing in Queensland. The government has advised that it will assess the recommendations of the report over the coming months.

PLS does not practise in criminal law. If you have questions or concerns about DNA evidence and/or how this review may impact your criminal law proceedings, you should talk to your criminal lawyer.



Tell Us Your Thoughts on the Paper!

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

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

Please send us a letter to let us know if there are any issues, and we can help fix them.

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000



Legal Q&A

"If prisoners break the law in prison, does it get taken to the police and the courts?"

Anonymous

The author writes from a prison in VIC.

Answer by Volunteer Barristers for About Time

Yes. If it is alleged that you have committed an offence in custody, you may be charged by police and the matter could go through the courts like any other offence.

If you are accused of committing an offence while you are in prison, it may be dealt with through an internal disciplinary process in the prison or it may go through the courts like an alleged offence in the community would.

This will likely depend on the seriousness of the alleged offence.

If this happens, it is important for you to get legal advice.

If you are charged with breaking a rule in prison, this can result in disciplinary action, in addition to potential criminal charges.

You have the right to a fair disciplinary hearing. In this hearing, a hearing officer will tell you about the procedure in the hearing, read the charge out to you and give you an opportunity to plead guilty or not guilty.

How the rest of the hearing will play out depends on whether you plead guilty or not guilty.

If you plead guilty, you will then be able to make a plea about what penalty you should receive, something that is called "submissions". In submissions, you can talk about why the offence happened, what was happening to you at the time it happened and whether it's the first time you have been in trouble for something like this.

If you plead not guilty, the hearing officer will likely then hear from witnesses, look at relevant information and listen to arguments on both sides. They will then make a decision about whether the prison offence occurred or not.

If you attend this hearing, you will have a chance to respond and present your own evidence.



Legal Q&A

Do you have a legal query that you want answered? Is there an area of law that you think people inside should know more about?

Send us your question and we might publish an answer in the paper. So far we've written about bail, parole, remand, freedom of information, making complaints, disability support, financial stress, and more.

Let us know what you want to know! We are looking for questions of a general nature, rather than personal situations.

All information that we publish is of a general nature, and is not a substitute for professional legal advice.

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

Injury & Compensation Lawyers (NSW Claims only)

- Childhood Abuse & National Redress Scheme
- Abuse in Custody & Detention
- Sexual Assault
- Police Misconduct
- Workplace Injuries
- Road Accidents
- Medical negligence
- Public Place Injuries (Slip, Trip or Fall)

No Win, No Fee

Email: aadil@injurycarecompensationlawyers.com.au

Web: www.injurycarecompensationlawyers.com.au

Mail: PO BOX 2093 Berala NSW 2141

INJURY CARE COMPENSATION LAWYERS



Speak directly to

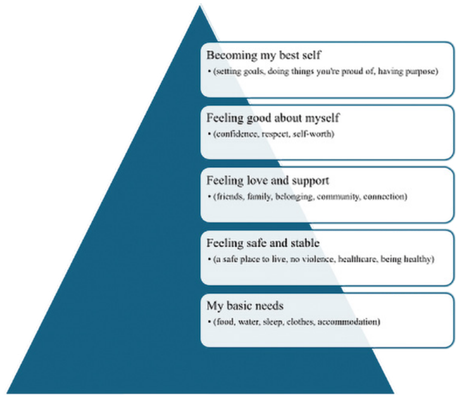
Aadil Ahmed

Accredited Specialist in Personal Injury Law NSW, Law Society of NSW Accredited Mediator

Call: 02 9158 9650

● Reintegration

The Road Back



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Understanding reintegration and re-entry

By Dr Carollyne Youssef

Dr Carollyne Youssef is a Psychologist at PsychOrium.

Release can feel like a distant flicker – filled with both hope and uncertainty. But, when the gates open, freedom isn't just liberating; it can be overwhelming. That moment marks the practical start of "re-entry" and the long-term journey known as "reintegration".

Re-entry refers to the time when you are released from prison and return to the community. More than just walking out the gate, it is about (re)building your life after being away. That includes finding housing, reconnecting with family and other supports, getting work, staying healthy and avoiding situations that could lead to reoffending.

Re-entry starts before you leave prison. It is the planning, courses, skills and the mental prep. Taking steps now, while inside, can give you a stronger foundation when the time comes to get out and start the process of reintegration.

Reintegration is the longer process of becoming part of society (again), not just physically but emotionally, socially and economically. It's learning how to live free and regaining a sense of self-worth, belonging and stability. It means dealing with the challenges of stigma and mistrust and navigating a world that may have changed a lot while you were gone.

Some of the hardest parts of reintegration are invisible: rebuilding trust with loved ones, fighting the fear that you might mess up or learning to make your own decisions. Reintegration is a journey that takes time, and, yes, you do need patience and lots of it.

When you are coming out after a period of structure, routine, predictability and choices largely being made for you, the thought of being out for some is overwhelming, and there are those who may dread release.

If that is something you can relate to, you are not alone, and that is not unusual. You need to be kind to yourself and have the mindset that this is a process, a journey. It's not instant and will require time, commitment, hope and perseverance.

Some people in custody feel like they were never part of the community to begin with. So rejoining society again may not even be about returning. It could be your first attempt at connecting with the community, which is no small feat.

Coming home isn't always easy. Some people are released without stable housing, job options or support. Others are battling addiction, trauma or mental health issues. Relationships may be strained, and it might feel like the system is working against you. But you are more than your past, and your future is still yours to build.

Successful re-entry often depends on meeting basic needs first: a place to live, food and clothing, healthcare, identification and documents, income or employment and emotional and social support. These are basic and fundamental needs that need to be addressed for long-term success before other goals are sought. I've worked with many people who had been in custody for lengthy periods, only to come out, establish these basic needs (not without some stress) and, many years later, live parole free in the community.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow explained that basic needs like food, shelter and safety must be met before a person can focus on higher goals like self-esteem or personal growth.

For someone re-entering the community without stable housing, healthcare or income, it's hard to focus on relationships, finding purpose or staying on track. Reintegration starts at the bottom of that pyramid and works its way up.

Depending on where you're released, there are usually services to help you transition. Ask your case manager, welfare or therapy staff about programs in your area. Knowledge is power and planning is survival.

If your release is near or even just a hope for now, remember this: you are not alone. Every day, people return to the community and make it work. I work with those people daily. They are people who have been in and felt like they lost so much, only to re-enter and make inspirational strides towards their reintegration and goals – not perfectly, not easily, but with patience, support and persistence – one day at a time, until those days become years.

Reintegration is hard but not impossible. The same courage you have in prison is the courage that carries you forward. You are not just returning. You are rebuilding or, for some, building. You deserve a life that means something. Start now, today, and keep preparing. No doubt, you have survived things that have been difficult. That strength does not disappear when you walk out. It comes with you, because it is within you. No one can take that away from you.



● Curious for More?

Want to learn more about a certain topic? If there's anything you want to learn about, please write to us!

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

● Culture

Longest Running TV Shows in Australia – That You Can Still Watch Today!

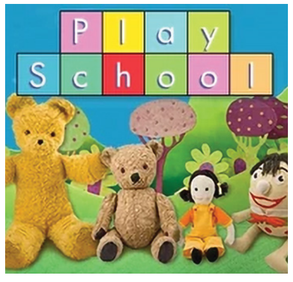
By About Time



Landline (ABC)
When did it start? 1991.

What is it? Rural current affairs. Landline is a show about farming, the country and the future of agriculture. Hosted by Pip Courtney, the show interviews farmers, workers, scientists, townspeople and others about challenges and changes in agriculture. It's an important show as it helps people understand the life-sustaining work done in rural Australia and how agriculture is the backbone of our economy.

Watch: Sundays at 12:30 pm on ABC.



Play School
When did it start? 1966.

What is it? Children's entertainment. Play School is one of Australia's most beloved shows. While aimed at children, a re-watch hits the nostalgia spot – although it's more modern and flashier than it ever was when we were growing up! Despite the different sets and better graphics, the toys remain the same – Big Ted, Maurice, Jemima – and the presenters are as energetic and enthusiastic as ever.

Watch: weekdays on ABC Kids at 9:00am, 11:30am and 3:30pm and weekends on ABC Kids at 9:00am and 3:30pm.



Home and Away
When did it start? 1988.

What is it? Soap opera. Set in a fictional coastal town called Summer Bay, Home and Away follows the lives, loves and scandals of its residents. The dramatic storylines, while often over the top, are always entertaining – and the beach scenery is gorgeous! It's also popular – with a strong and dedicated viewership at home and also in the UK and Ireland. This year's Gold Logie for Most Popular Personality on Australian Television went to Lynne McGranger, who played Irene Roberts for 33 years. She has now left the show to pursue other interests – and the character has left with her!

Watch: Monday to Thursday at 7pm on Channel 7.



Gardening Australia
When did it start? 1990.

What is it? Gardening show. Gardening Australia is an iconic ABC show, hosted by the charismatic Costa Georgiadis. It follows beautiful and interesting gardens around the country, from small households to schools and community gardens. The show provides tips for healthy and sustainable gardening, no matter the climate or challenges. It also gives simple, useful tips on a range of topics, including growing edible plants, saving water, composting and looking after soil. Prison gardens have featured in a few Gardening Australia episodes – including a 2013 investigation into the gardening program at Port Phillip Prison, in Victoria, and a 2017 episode set at Risdon Prison, in Tasmania. Even if you don't like gardening or have much experience with it, the show is calming to watch and can feel like an escape into nature.

Watch: Fridays at 7:30 pm on ABC.



Four Corners
When did it start? 1961! This show is 64 years old and Australia's longest running show.

What is it? Calling itself "the home of Australian investigative journalism", Four Corners is Australia's longest running TV show. Many episodes have led to national inquiries, royal commissions and political change. For example, an investigation that aired on 25 July 2016 called "Australia's shame" exposed the mistreatment of youth at Don Dale Youth Detention centre in Darwin. There was national outcry, which led to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. Other episodes on the justice system include "Trapped: Inside the hidden system of locking people up indefinitely" – a 2023 investigation into the mistreatment of people with disability and mental illness detained in the forensic system – and "Who Killed Mr Ward?" – a 2009 investigation into the death of an Aboriginal man in Western Australia, after he had been locked in a metal van in the desert heat.

Watch: Mondays at 8:30pm, repeated on Tuesdays at 1:00pm and Wednesdays at 11:00pm.



• Mob

Yarning With People in Prison to Create a Training for Lawyers

By Georgie Halse

Georgie is a Senior Project Officer at the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.

Justice should be upheld for all of those who seek legal support, particularly those from First Nations communities.

Access to justice means not only getting a good outcome but also getting safe and appropriate legal support when and where you need it.

VALS, alongside Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) and the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV), want to strengthen the skills of Victorian lawyers so that they can provide culturally capable legal support to First Nations peoples who need it.

The training package, which will be rolled out to Victorian lawyers soon, will look to build:

- knowledge of history of First Nations people, ongoing impacts of colonisation and the role of the law in Indigenous dispossession
- skills like how to support clients to build their understanding of their matter, how to address non-legal needs (like housing) and how to create culturally safe environments
- enabling attitudes like respect and recognition of First Nations peoples, humility, empathy and care, and commitment to client empowerment.

We hope that, by completing this training, Victorian lawyers will be better equipped to offer culturally capable and respectful legal support and therefore will better uphold justice for First Nations communities.

This project is an Australia-first initiative to outline the key knowledge, skills and attitudes that lawyers need to do a better job for our mob. As VALS is leading the project, the work is First Nations led too.

The need for this framework and training arose from the coronial inquest into the tragic and preventable death of Veronica Marie Nelson, a proud Gunditjmara, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta woman, at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in 2020. Coroner Simon McGregor found that Ms Nelson's legal representation was inadequate and recommended that cultural awareness education and training become mandatory for Victorian lawyers.

In February and April this year, the team at VALS were excited to yarn with mob in Ravenhall and Dame Phyllis Frost about their experiences with legal support and to hear more about what First Nations people in prison want from their lawyers.

The 56 First Nations women and men in prison that we spoke with wanted lawyers who:

- prioritise cultural safety, such as through understanding how a client relates to their culture or having meetings in culturally safe spaces
- are empathetic and respectful
- value their clients' experiences, understand their clients' stories and strengths
- speak clearly, tell clients what to expect
- provide consistent and timely support
- know about other helpful services to refer their clients on to
- explain legal options to the client and support them to make an informed decision
- don't make assumptions about clients or their culture
- understand that clients' families are affected in their matter too.

We also heard that the people we spoke to wanted to feel trusted, cared for, understood, respected and like they could be themselves without judgement.

The generosity of these First Nations men and women who have been through the criminal legal system was invaluable in helping us design our framework and the training that flows from it. The framework is on the VALS website, free for anyone to access.

If you are concerned about the legal representation and advice you have received, please contact VALS.

VALS expresses its deep gratitude to those lived experience experts at Ravenhall and the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre who participated in the yarns for this project.

Injury & Compensation Lawyers

- Childhood abuse & National Redress Scheme
- Workplace Injury
- Road Accidents
- Sexual Assault
- Police Misconduct
- Public place injury (Slip, Trip or Fall)

No Win, No Fee

Email: info@yarnlegal.com.au
Web: www.yarnlegal.com.au
Mail: P.O. Box 3231, Broadmeadows VIC 3047

Yarn Legal



Speak directly to our Principal Lawyer Hanina Rind

Call 0478 861 131

Jilbi Coming Together

Encouraging us old men to support each other

By Geoff, Scott, Dave and Ned

The authors write from a prison in VIC.

The Jilbi – meaning Old Man – is an initiative of Aboriginal prisoners from all parts of our country, including Tasmania. Our goal is to encourage Aboriginal men over 55 to get together regularly. We are fortunate to have octogenarians who represent true strength and dignity. They often have dealt with hopeless conditions and impossible circumstances.
The purpose of group meetings is to increase mental strength, empower self-help and self-determination and encourage our older brothers to reach out to each other for support. We never forget the tremendous burden that many are dealing with, including lengthy sentences and potentially never getting out.

Initially, we shared breakfast together, that being the best-loved and classic eggs and bacon. This was all funded by us. Before long, we developed our yarning circle as well. We have utilised the time and space for passionate discussions around relevant issues inside and outside – for instance, welfare, wellbeing and our younger Aboriginal brothers here in this facility and their situations.

Some outside considerations focused on our identity issues and connection to country and kin. Our big concern has centralised largely on better cultural connections that will increase our skills necessary to cope with life here and on release.

Jilbi have lived experience and deep awareness regarding systemic neglect. As well as that, we symbolise the largest incarcerated culture in Australia and potentially the world. Our fundamental health issue here arises from the lack of nutritionally rich foods and far too much confectionery as a poor substitute. The other major failing is family support and connection to mob, particularly for the older fellas who have endured many years of incarceration and lost all their relations.

This is an exciting initiative, and, as older Aboriginal men, we are genuinely committed to this. We understand suffering and great loss.

With our experience, we anticipate our misfortune and newly learnt strengths will empower, encourage and transform Aboriginal men in new directions towards better lives inside and support better release outcomes.



"Spiritual Healing Spiritual Calling" by Isaac, available to purchase from Boom Gate Gallery





Reconnect
By Putecharung
Kamu people
2024

Myself, represented by one of the circles, trying to find my way back to family.

The Lands of the Namoi River People
By Hippai Francis
Kamilaroi people
2025

Looking down on the lands of the Namoi River people from the Guinbrai clan, the stylised river flows across the land.

Along the river are the meeting places of the Guinbrai families, shown as fireplaces with people sitting around them. Since time immemorial, the families have gathered, living in their gunyahs and cooking in earth ovens.

They are born, grow, live, hunt and gather around the river and wetlands and the surrounding mountains, hills, and plains.

Here children played; here people died and are buried.

Along the river, events over the generations are remembered in the clan's Songlines. It is a great tapestry of human life and of the world around them.

The surrounding country, with its plains, woodlands, forests, hills, and mountains is represented.

The pictorial inserts show common trees such as the cypress pine, red gum, wilga, and wattles. Important totem animals are also shown, such as the red kangaroo, emu and red cockatoo, and the sky with its own life.

The seasons are seen top to bottom.

Learn

Grandpa's Secret Street Machines: The 90s Japanese Sedans That Accidentally Ripped



He just wanted a quiet ride to the bowls club – instead, he bought a whip with enough grunt to dust a Commodore. Learn about the secret power of these seemingly sleepy cars!

By Dan Nathan

Dan Nathan is a writer and amateur car tinkerer living on Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne.

Not familiar with car lingo? Specs explainer:
Engine: A common unit for measuring engine size is litres (L). This figure describes the total volume of space within the cylinders of the engine. The cylinders are where air misted with fuel is compressed and exploded, driving the pistons and eventually the wheels, so a larger total cylinder volume equals a larger and more powerful explosive force. The "V" in a V6 describes the arrangement of the cylinders – they form the shape of a V. The number 6 describes the number of cylinders.
Power and torque: Torque is the rotational force of the engine, measured in newton-metres (nm). You create torque when you open a stubborn jar lid. Power is the rate at which an engine can do work – a function of torque and RPM (revolutions per minute). As a car accelerates, its torque will peak at a certain RPM, but its power will keep increasing because it's producing the torque at a faster rate (until power also peaks). Power is measured in kilowatts (kW) and horsepower (hp).
0–100 km/h: The time it takes to accelerate to 100 km/h.

For grandpas in the 90s, a mid-sized Japanese sedan seemed like a sensible choice. Their hothead days were behind them. Good safety ratings were firmly in their sights. These cars had enough room to take the grandkids around and weren't too flashy or heavy on the fuel. What some of the less spec-conscious among these aging men didn't realise is they ended up with cars that were faster than the Commodores and Falcons they sensibly walked past in the car yard and packed considerably more power than their twilight years required.

While we may hope that some of these grandpas secretly (re)discovered a taste for some mild thrill-seeking, more likely these sleeping beasts had to wait until they became hand-me-downs to be unleashed.

1995 MITSUBISHI MAGNA



Engine: 3.0L V6 6G72
Peak power: 121 kW (162 hp)
Torque: 255 nm @ 3000 rpm
0–100 km/h: 8.65 seconds

The quintessential grandpa mobile, the Mitsubishi Magna. Safe, cheap, reliable and about as non-threatening as automotive design gets. But under this humble exterior is a surprising amount of go. Straight off the factory floor it did 0–100 km/h faster than the Commodore of its day and was only a few points behind on peak power.

Just like the Commodore, the Magna was designed and built on home soil, at the Tonsley Park plant, in South Australia, from '85 to '05. Unlike the Commodore, the front-wheel drive made burnouts a little harder and less pretty (as hand-me-down recipients might have discovered). But plenty of low-end torque still meant the Magna was always up for some harmless fun around town and was more than capable on the highway.

If grandpa is still going, his Magna may well be too – these cars are survivors and can still be spotted in the wild 30 years on.

1995 NISSAN MAXIMA



Engine: 3.0L V6 VG30E
Power: 119 kW (160 hp)
Torque: 243 nm @ 3000 rpm
0–100km/h: 8.9 seconds

For the grandpa that thought his decades of hard work had earned him something a little more special than a Magna, the Nissan Maxima might have appealed. Silky smooth power delivery got it to 100km/h in under 9 seconds. Solid build quality catered to a quiet and comfortable ride, and the six-speaker Clarion sound system would have done justice to the classics.

If grandpa had stumbled across the rare Maxima import with a VQ30DE engine and a manual transmission, he would have had 142 kW (190 hp) of power at his fingertips and been able to do 0–100km/h in 6.6 seconds. The Falcons and Commodores would have been distant specs in his rearview mirror, theoretically speaking. The VQ30DE equipped Maxima was the fastest Japanese sedan of its day. And all for the same displacement of just 3.0L!

1995 SUBARU LIBERTY



Engine: 2.2L EJ22
Power: 94 kW (126 hp)
Torque: 160 Nm @ 3,000 rpm
0–100km/h: 10.2 seconds

The runt of the litter. For what the Subaru Liberty lacked in comparative power and acceleration, it made up for in steez – and grandpa knew it, consciously or not. These Libertys had the bones of a rally car – the RS Turbos (sold in Aus '91–'94) packed 147 kW and fathered the WRX. All Libertys were full-time AWD, way ahead of their time. Combined with the low centre of gravity afforded by Subaru's signature horizontally opposed boxer engines, the Liberty took corners with class, giving grandpa peace of mind in the wet or on the gravel.

Creative

Life's Not a Party

By Aidan

Aidan writes from a prison in VIC.

Note from the author:
Hi to About Time, and a thank you for all that you do.

I am Aidan, and this is an unsent poem to my ex. Thought it might help some of you boys at PPP and MRC.

Life's not a party my dearest darling
For we partied, now must you party alone
I fear your drinking may carry you to a place that smells of roses
And a lingering stench of sorrow and seeder
Must I fear that nothing good will come from an empty glass
So may I whisper a loving prayer
to shadow your sorrow with good intention
And a soft place to land may you fall for another.

Life of a Prisoner

By Anonymous

Anonymous writes from a prison in VIC.

'Tis just another day behind the wall.
With musters here and musters there
It surely wearies, one and all.

I sit with friends and chew the fat,
Be it in the pod or in the yard,
It's our daily lives, and that's a fact.

We meet good blokes with stories to tell,
Guilty or innocent, it makes no diff.
At the end of the day, we are all in cells.

Morning comes with muster and unlock,
A bite of breaky.
As we all take stock.

Friends depart with occasional tears.
Some head home and some do not,
As some like me, are here for years.

The Crux

By Belly

Belly writes from a prison in QLD.

What keeps me going
What is it
It's seeing my Mob
On a one hour visit

Givin' my mum a hug
Even for just a second
That's worth a lot
Worth the world I reckon

Seeing their face
When they see mine
Like being in the Matrix
Or slo-mo time

I've taken their love
And life for granted
I bottled up a lot
The bottles decanted

These words were formed
From pen to paper
It's almost a year
But I'll see you later

Nowhere to Go?

By Bukks

Bukks writes from a prison in VIC.

A new day is rising, from over the hill,
The first rays of sun fall, on my window sill.
The light is releasing, the dreams from my head,
As I find myself laying, upon my bed.
I am now awake, but have nowhere to go?
It's such a feeling, that you couldn't know?
The day has now started, still here I do lay,
I'm wishing, I'm wishing, the dreams would please stay?
I have nowhere to go, I have nothing to do?
I find myself laying here, thinking of you.
A new day is rising, but here I remain?
Another link for, this limitless chain.
The sun it is shining, it lights everything,
I can now hear, all the noise beginning.
Birds they are singing, I no longer can sleep,
I miss them, I miss them, my dreams make me weep.

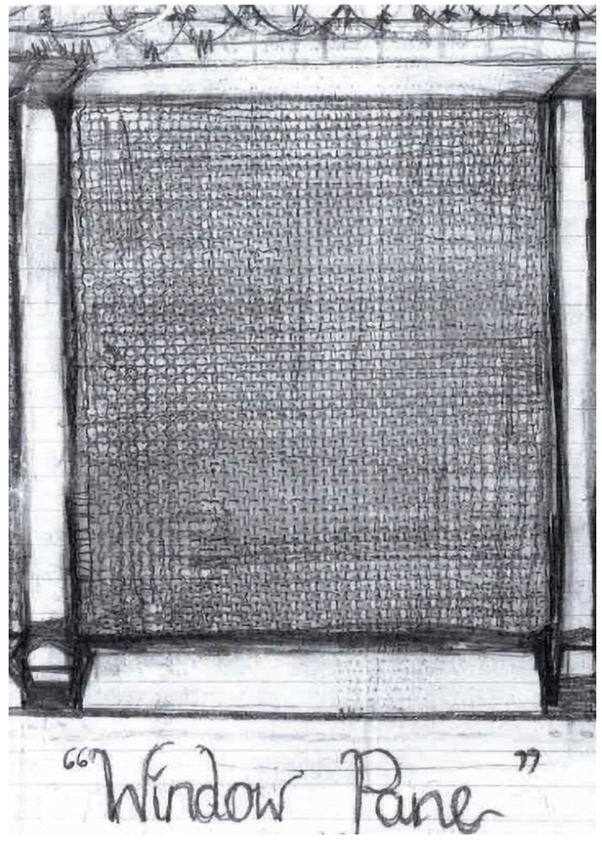
Nowhere to go, as the new day is here?
Holding on as the last threads, of my dreams disappear.
I am awake, and there's no turning back,
The sun in my window, won't cut me no slack?
A new day is here, as I stand on my feet,
No longer into my dreams, can I retreat.
Let it be, let it be, please let my dreams be real?
I have nowhere to go, you can't know how I feel?
A new day is here, now my dreams they have gone?
Nothing else to do, I turn my TV on?
I have nowhere to go, it is here I am stuck,
As for all else, I am shit out of luck?
The sun it is shining, I can no longer dream,
I must continue, my burdensome regime.
Take me back, take me back, "oh" I want to return,
To the dreams of a lady, I so keenly yearn.
I have nowhere to go, in this warmth of the sun,
I am now saddened, my dreams they are done.
Come back now, come back now, please let me see?
I have nowhere to go, and I dreamt I was free!

Window Pane

By Kelly

Kelly writes from a prison in NSW.

Window Pane is a reflection of childhood memories, looking outside of my bedroom, locked away. Same feeling I felt looking outside my window from my cell. It's also the Eminem lyric: "I guess that's why they call it window pain" – looking out of window panes and the sadness that leads to inner pain. That's how it resonates for me anyhow.





Send Your Work

We'd love to see your creative pursuits! Please send any of your work 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



Precious

By Kaiya

Kaiya writes from a prison in NSW.

Do not cry by the window,
Gazing out to the sky
For I've not only left you,
I'll never say goodbye
Let my memory be a comfort,
Not sorrow
For I'll be there today, tonight
And every tomorrow
My paws pad softly beside you,
Though you may not see
In every shadow, dream and sunbeam,
There I will be
—koo boo boo

Heroin

By Natasha and Mikayla

Natasha and Mikayla write from a prison in QLD.

Behold my friend, I am heroin
Known by all as the destroyer of men
From where I came no one knows
A far away place where the poppies grow
I came to this country without getting caught
Since that day I have been hunted and sought
Whole nations have gathered to plot my destruction
They call me the breeder crime and corruption
I am more potent then whisky, more deadly then wine
Yes I am the Scourge of all mankind
My little white grains are nothing but waste
I am soft and fluffy and bitter to taste
I am white, I am brown but deadly to use

Once you're addicted I really abuse
I am known in Thailand, Iraq and Iran
I am welcome in Turkey and have been to Japan
In cellophane bags I make my way to men in offices
And children at play
From heads of state to the lowest bum from richest estate
To the lowest of scum
I take a rich man and make him poor
I take a maiden and make her a whore
Make a beautiful woman forget her looks
And make a student forget his books
I can make you steal, lie, borrow and beg
Then search for a vein in your arm or your leg
I am known to be selfish and can fill you with greed
Still faceless, regardless of religion or creed

My gift is illusion my blessing is fake
Death and destruction follow my wake
The kiss of death to all whom I touch
I start as a gift and remain as a crutch
My friends are many but I am loyal to none
To destroy my work will be done
Some think of me merely a toy
But wise men know I aim to destroy
Run from me if you wish
I will never give up for sooner or later
You will return for a taste
Once in your bloodstream you'll think I'm not mean
You will praise me as master then nod in a dream

You have heard my warning
But will take no heed
Put your foot in the stirrup, mount this great seed
Get right in the saddle and hold on real well
For the white horse heroin will take you to hell

The Struggle

By Travis

Travis writes from a prison in VIC.

I fall, twisting and spinning in duress
A darkness complete, vast and eternal
An emptiness felt, thick as molasses
Noises and sounds rend my mind infernal
Ghostly claws tear into vain awareness
Focus wavers, dissension internal
Strength refires the forge, breath now hath purpose
Wild oceans calm, turbulent storms now stall

Swelling forests grow, leaves green and luscious
Fresh stream giggles by, a river made small
The breeze sweet smelling, with warm soft caress
Face now relaxing, passed the painful crawl
Beating heart slows, body can now arrest
Harmony and peace, permeating all.



By Diesel, from a prison in NSW

Getting Closer

By Lanie

Lanie writes from a prison in VIC.

It's been almost 10 years now
Since my life has changed.
For better or worse
Nothing will ever be the same.

So much is different today
Both parents now gone.
Never able to say goodbye
Sometimes sorry that I was born.

My father gone seven years
My mother gone six.
Never hear their voices again
Thank goodness I have my pics.

I've missed out on so much
I'm now a grandmother of three.
Wishing I could be there in person
Hoping they know how much they mean to me.

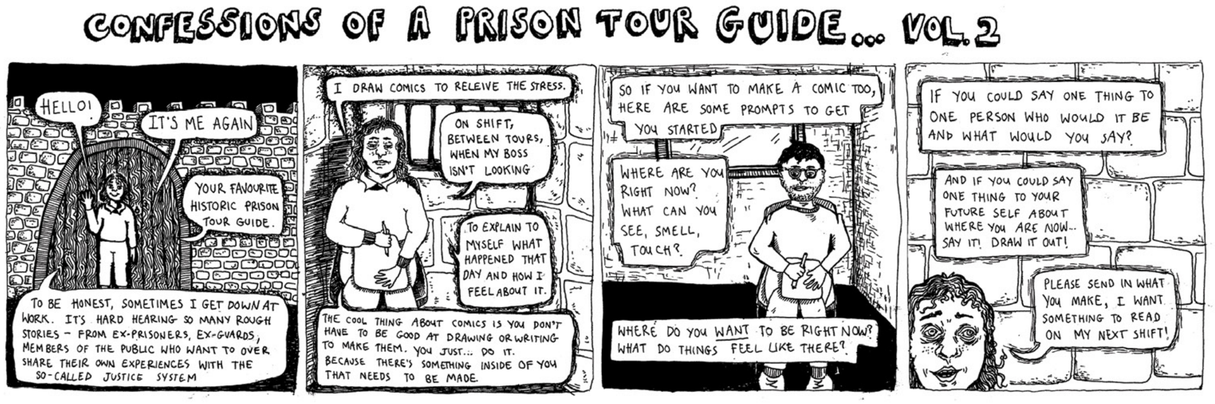
My grandson is almost six years old.
My first granddaughter almost four.
My newest granddaughter born on Mother's Day
There is only one thing I want more.

That is to get the hell out of here
To leave this place behind me.
To be the best mother and grandmother
The best person that I can be.

Just over five years to go
Until my earliest release date.
Hoping I get close to this
My life left up to fate.

Whatever will be will be
Do whatever I need to do.
To get out as soon as possible
Release never up to you.

Play



Sports of All Sorts

By Goal Mouth

Today About Time launches a regular sports column. Please let us know what you'd like to see covered. Send your opinions to our sports editor, Goal Mouth.



Willy Pleasance

NRL/AFL: 'Outsiders' threaten the homes of football

The natural homes of football – Sydney for the NRL and Melbourne for the AFL – are under threat from 'outsiders'.

With the finals fast approaching, Canberra Raiders, Melbourne Storm and NZ Warriors occupy three of the top four spots on the NRL ladder.

In the AFL, Adelaide, Brisbane, Greater Western Sydney, Fremantle and even Gold Coast are breathing down the necks of Melbourne-based power teams Collingwood (4th) and Hawthorn (8th), with Geelong (2nd) well in the premiership race as usual.

This reminds me of an old friend, an ex-Melburnian living in Sydney. He supports the Storm in the NRL because he knows how much that annoys Sydneysiders and Sydney in the AFL because he knows how much that annoys Melburnians. No wonder he's a friend.



Unsplash

Cricket: Ugly England loses its moral compass

Are the English turning into ugly Aussies on the cricket field? The players seem to have listened to their coach, New Zealander Brendon McCullum, who urged them to be less friendly to opponents. McCullum's comments came during England's gripping series against India, which ended 2-2 after England collapsed in the fifth and final test to lose by just six runs.

In the drawn fourth test, captain Ben Stokes became bad tempered when Indian batters Ravi Jadeja and Washington Sundar wanted to keep batting until they reached their centuries rather than call the game off early.

Stokes and his teammates – regarded by many English fans as the 'moral guardians' of cricket – turned nasty when they realised they couldn't win. They barely acknowledged their opponents' milestones, made spiteful remarks and half-heartedly chased the ball to the boundary.

It seems that the England players' commitment to entertaining cricket works only if they're on top. They're becoming hard to like – and, if Stokes and co try it on when they come to Australia this summer, they're bound to feel plenty of heat from local fans.



Unsplash

Athletics: Run like the wind

Australian teenage sprinting sensation Gout Gout has a new rival. Gout, who is 17, has a fastest legal time of 10.17 seconds for the 100 metres (he has broken 10 seconds twice, but they were wind assisted).

Japan's Sorato Shimizu, who is just 16, broke the under-18 world record at a recent high school meet, clocking 10 seconds flat. That's flying, but it's still a fair way short of Usain Bolt's world record of 9.58 seconds, set in 2009.

Gout and Shimizu could clash in Tokyo at the World Athletics Championships which start on 13 September.

Meanwhile, Australia's other sprint star, Lachie Kennedy – who has a legal time of 9.98 for the 100 metres – has pulled out of the championships with a stress fracture in his back.



F1: Racing towards a world title

Boy, that is some driving. In little more than a year, Oscar Piastri, 24, from Melbourne, has won eight Formula One races and is on course to become world champion, emulating Sir Jack Brabham and Alan Jones.

For the record, it took other Aussie drivers Daniel Ricciardo 14 years to win eight races and Mark Webber 12 years to win nine.



Hansan Lu via Unsplash

Rugby union: A tour to remember

Once in 12 years, the British & Irish Lions rugby union team and their hordes of fans tour Australia. More than 40,000 Lions fans made the tour this winter and revelled in their team's 2-1 series victory over the Wallabies. At the same time, they provided a welcome boost to the Australian economy.

According to NAB, the Melbourne leg of the tour alone generated more than $20 million at accommodation, food, retail and entertainment outlets.

The highlight was a dramatic finish in the second Test at the MCG, watched by a world record crowd for a rugby union match.

A senior English medico, Neil Tolley, joined the Lions throng with two old friends. This is what he said about his time Down Under:

"We received a fantastic welcome in Australia, explored wonderful cities and countryside and visited iconic venues, with the highlight being over 90,000 rugby fans at a packed MCG to watch a closely contested and exciting game.

"The series is now over and our collective experience of meeting fans, enjoying the rugby and the wonderful Australian people and the country will sit forever in our memories. Thank you, Australia, for putting on the very best of shows and giving us the time of our lives!"



Brad Switzer via Unsplash

Oreo Cake in the Secure Unit

By Garth

Garth writes from a prison in QLD.

Ingredients:

- 2 packs of Oreos
- 1 packet pancake mix
- ¼ can of vanilla Coke (optional for sweetness)
- ¼ cup of milk (use ½ cup if not using Coke)
- Butter

Utensils:

- 2 clean lunch trays
- Mixing bowl
- Knife and spoon
- Plate

Method:

1. Separate the Oreos and set aside the cream filling.
2. Crush the Oreo cookies to a fine dust and mix with the pancake mix.
3. Stir in the liquids (milk and Coke or milk alone) until a thick batter forms.
4. Butter the bottoms and sides of the lunch trays.
5. Split the mixture evenly between the two trays.
6. Butter two pieces of paper and use them to cover the trays.
7. Place trays on the bottom of the grill for 45 minutes to 1 hour.
8. Once cooked, allow to cool.
9. Spread the reserved Oreo cream on top of one cake.
10. Place the second cake on top to create a giant Oreo-style treat.

Serving suggestion:
Best served with a cup of cold milk!

Note:
The batter for this cake should be slightly thicker than normal.

Quiz Answers

1. The bible	4. Table Tennis
2. Seven books and eight movies	5. Three
3. May 4th (May the Fourth be with you!)	6. Cheetah
	7. Honey
	8. France
	9. Pyramids
	10. Australia

Quiz

Test your general knowledge on our monthly quiz!

1. What is the best-selling book of all time?
2. How many Harry Potter books and movies are there? (They are not the same number).
3. What day is known as Star Wars Day?
4. Ping Pong is the alternative name for which sport?
5. How many hearts does an octopus have?
6. Which animal is the fastest on land?
7. What is the only edible food that never expires?
8. Who gifted the Statue of Liberty to the United States?
9. The ancient Egyptians are known for the making of what monuments?
10. What is the only continent without an active volcano?

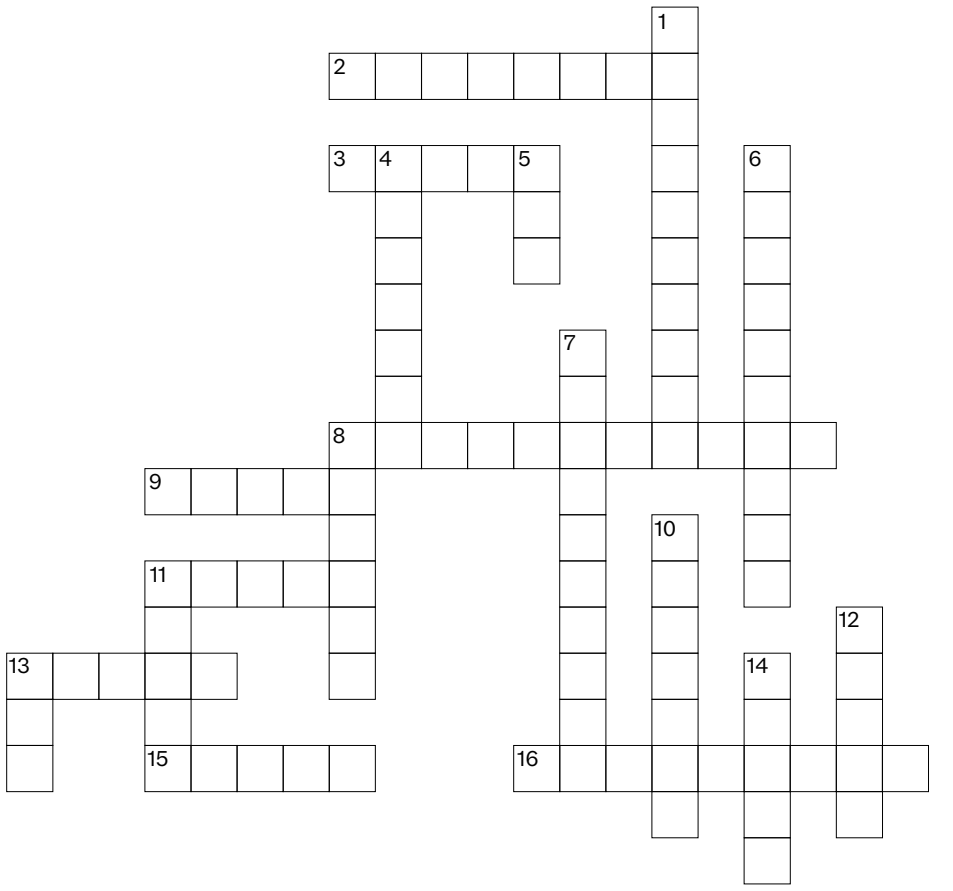
Sudoku

Fill in the box with numbers from 1-9 with no repeated numbers in each line, horizontally or vertically.

3	9					2	5	7
		7	3	5	2		9	
	5	2						
5			8			9		
2		4		1		7		
9	1	8	2			3	6	
				8	7		2	
1	2	5	9		4		7	
7	8				6		4	9



Crossword



ACROSS

2. You might write ideas in this (8)
3. It covers more than 70 percent of the world's surface (5)
8. Show how to do something (11)
9. Exchange something with another person (5)
11. A dish with various toppings on a base of dough (5)
13. Something you do when you're happy (5)
15. The other option at Halloween if you don't want a treat (5)
16. A design for something (9)

DOWN

1. A very tall building (10)
4. A vegetable that has green and red varieties (7)
5. A bit of shut eye (3)
6. Someone who works in finance (10)
7. The sport that the New York Knicks play (10)
8. Argue about a topic (6)
10. At ease (7)
11. The person who flies a plane (5)
12. A common type of pants made from denim (5)
13. Nervous or quiet when around other people (3)
14. I was in a _____ because I was running late (5)

Crossword Answers (ACROSS)

2. Notebook	11. Pizza
3. Ocean	13. Smile
8. Demonstrate	15. Trick
9. Trade	16. Blueprint

Crossword Answers (DOWN)

1. Skyscraper	10. Relaxed
4. Cabbage	11. Pilot
5. Nap	12. Jeans
6. Accountant	13. Shy
7. Basketball	14. Hurry
8. Debate	



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

How do you organise a space-themed party?
You planet.

Why couldn't the sailor learn the alphabet?
He kept getting lost at C.

Did you hear about the fire at the circus?
It was in tents.

What kind of music do bubbles hate?
Pop.

How does the ocean say hi?
It waves.