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ISSUE NO. 22 MAY 2026 ABOUTTIME.ORG.AU

About Time

Australia's National Prison Newspaper

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



LETTERS

Why Mum Can't Come Home

Stories I tell my children

By Hannah
Hannah writes from a prison in QLD.

I am currently remanded and I have two young children. My son is 8 and my daughter is 6. I have never told them that I'm in jail and instead explain to them that I'm at a facility that helps mummys and daddys get their minds and bodies strong again.

I've struggled to explain to them the lengthy time periods I've spent away from home, so recently I wrote them both a story that tried to explain why I'm not always around.

Read the stories on page 2.

Ike Curtis

NEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Making Prison Visits Better

A prison visits program allowing kids to just be kids might offer the blueprint for making prison visits better for everyone.

By Denham Sadler

Denham is the Chief Reporter at *About Time*.

With Mother's Day this month, prison visits have never been more important.

But for children with a parent in prison, or other loved ones, this process can be scary and intimidating, with a lot of rules and conditions.

Prison visits are often some of the only connections that those in prison have to the outside world and their loved ones, and are particularly important for children.

A recent study led by La Trobe University Law School criminologist Dr Nicole Ryan shows how prison visits can be alienating and difficult for those visiting their loved ones.

The report included a survey of nearly 250 people and 21 interviews.

It found that the current approach to prison visits is leading to "enduring changes to innocent visitors", making them feel anxious, worthless and like they are being punished.

"The way these security measures are implemented has a significant emotional, physical and behavioural impact on those that only wish to support their loved one and maintain relationships that benefit the visitors, the incarcerated, the correctional staff and society as a whole," the report said.

Continued on page 8.

We Need Your Help

We're running a survey to learn more about our readers' thoughts and feelings about the newspaper. This will help us make the paper better, and it will also help us with fundraising so we can continue to publish *About Time*.

We would be so grateful if you can please answer the questions on page 7 and send them to us.

Please share this survey around with as many people as possible. The more insights, the better.

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Letters

Why Mum Can't Come Home



By Hannah

Hannah writes from a prison in QLD.

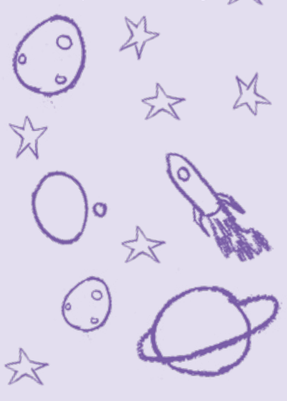
Continued from page 1.

Mars

There once was a boy named Mars and his sister's name is Jupiter. Mum has a very special job – she is an astronaut! Mars has always wanted to go to space. Sometimes his Mummy had to go away on very important space missions and it would make him and his sister Jupiter feel sad because they would miss her and wonder when their Mummy would come home.

Just before their mum left for her last space mission, she told Mars and Jupiter a very special secret. She told them, 'every night before you go to bed, look up to the stars and when you see the stars start to appear in the sky – you will know that mummy is thinking of you as she turns on all of the star lights in the sky'. Now, whenever their mummy is gone on a space mission, they look to the stars and know that their mummy loves them and is thinking of them. One day when they're old enough she has promised that that they will all be together again and she might even take them in her rocket ship to explore space too!

The second story was for my daughter, titled 'Fairy's invisible string'.





Fairy's Invisible String

Once upon a time there lived a very magical fairy. She had incredible magical powers. She wore a beautiful pink dress with a rainbow tutu and whenever a new baby boy or girl was born, the fairy would tie an invisible string around the new baby and the baby's mummy and daddy. So, no matter where any of the family members were, there will always be an invisible string tied around the mummy and daddy and the kids in that family. So whenever you feel lost or alone, put your hand on your heart and know that we too, have an invisible string tied around us by the fairy, and that keeps us always together. Nothing and no one can break the invisible string either.

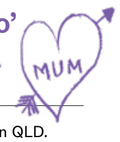
I hope with all of my heart this is the last time I'll spend away from my beautiful babies. Jail isn't a life worth living. We only get one life and it's time to start making mine worthwhile.

The paper is so great. Thank-you About Time!

Hannah



'I Try, I Really Do'



By Lynda

Lynda writes from a prison in QLD.

For My Mum

Mum I wish you knew how much I care
And how much I miss you when you're not there

If only you could see how very hard I try
To be the kind of daughter to never be seen to cry

I try, I try, I really do, to be the best I can
I try, I do, but things don't work out the way I plan

I see in your eyes the way I seem to you
And I know that others see the same thing too

I try to change and become someone new
But I am who I am and you are you.

By Lynda

Special shout out to the mums with kids in jail ❤️❤️

'You Put Some Extra Fuel in Me': Ashley on Keeping Going as a Mother



By Ashley

Ashley writes from a prison in WA.

Dear About Time,

In response to 'I Am Tired' – Anthony VIC, in Issue 20 March

I know the exhausting feeling of being tired! I am a mother of five beautiful children and every word you wrote resonated with me as I am feeling the same.

BUT...

I would like to let you know you have put some extra fuel in me to keep my head up and keep thinking of the positives as they are what will get me through.

Our children will never get tired of us, as long as we keep showing them love and keep connecting with them.

Thank you,
Ashley



From a Mum With Her Son in Jail



By Lorraine

Lorraine writes from VIC.

Living grief, as a mother, is waking each day with the knowledge that your child is still here, yet not truly free.

It is the quiet relief that comes when he is locked up, because at least he is alive, mixed with the heaviness of knowing what he endures inside – feelings and experiences only those who have lived them can understand.

It is carrying love without condition, while also carrying fear, helplessness and loss – not a final loss but an ongoing one. A grief that has no ceremony, no ending – just a constant presence.

It sits in the background of every day, in every thought, in every moment of wondering what could be different. It is loving deeply, hoping endlessly and hurting in ways that are often unseen.

You see, for 10 years now he has been in and out. When he's out he'll couch surf, sleep rough. I'll get a phone call saying he's in hospital, he's not making any sense, he's overdosed, he's been in an accident, he's in custody and in holding cells.

He has spent this time from a teen to now, as a 27-year-old.

My child, my life, my grief.

All these negative emotions may threaten to overwhelm you.

I have seen some inmates becoming obsessed with the idea that their spouse may be having an affair with another person. You may have death in your family and not be able to attend the funeral. Some news may come about difficult situation in your home or your child's school. Family situations can test your relationship but you can always maintain a better relationship with your family without your emotions controlling you. Here are some of the guideline that I used in my situation that might help your situation too because we are on the same boat sailing together.

Write Letters

As we do not have access to phones and AVL visits much, write as many letters to your family and friends. Trust me, your spouse and children want to know that you think about and care for them. Remember birthdays and anniversaries and holidays. There are birthday cards available at the weekly buy up, make them feel special by sending cards. They have been hurt too by our actions, it takes time to heal. Let your actions show them that you are changed.

Ask For Pictures

Ask for pictures from the people you love. Trust me, those photos can comfort you a lot. They are also something you can share with your fellow inmates. Every time you look at the pictures, remember there are people waiting for you outside.

Visits

As often as your family can, ask them to book a visit (AVL or contact). While they visit you, always avoid controversial matters and painful issues. Don't let your emotional pain that you have inside you spill into your visitors. Stay calm when your family is not able to visit you or not willing to visit you, don't show any anger or emotions on phone calls or letters.

If you ever begin to feel anger and other emotions, talk to someone. If you are comfortable with your cell mate, share with them, talk to your pod/wing officer to see a chaplain or a counsellor. Open your heart with them and be honest about your concerns.

Write Things Down

Keep a journal and write about the things going on in your head. List the ways you can show your love to your family while you are in custody. Write about the things you want to do to make them happy once you are released.

May your time in custody be as short as it can and hopefully you will go home to our loving family soon.

Much love, from brother Amos.

Handling Family Issues From Prison



By Amos

Amos writes from a prison in NSW.

My dear brothers and sisters,

It's my first time in custody, been here in the remand for 5 months today.

Family issues trouble you the most while you are in the custody. Maybe you have a spouse or children. Or you may have close relationship with some members of the family. Some of us might have children in different states or overseas.

No matter what situation you are facing, you will definitely experience strong emotions when it comes to your family. You might be angry with yourself or the corrupted system of justice because you cannot see your family often as you would like. Worries about family takes a lot of time and energy. Concerns and doubts about them could be threatening to take over your mind and life. You may feel as though you have lost control of your life.



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 twenty-second edition, distributed to all prisons in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. We hope that the Northern Territory will join us soon.

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

Write to Us

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

About Time
PO BOX 24041
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

contribute@abouttime.org.au

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The High Court Just Rewrote the Rules.

Your Claim May Be Worth Far More Than You Were Told.

A 2026 decision has overturned 20 years of law and reopened the door for thousands of survivors of institutional abuse across Australia. Here is everything you need to know.

If you were abused as a child by someone connected to a church, school, sporting club, youth group or any other institution — and you were told your claim was weak, unlikely to succeed, or was put on hold — the law has just changed significantly in your favour.

Not slightly changed. Completely changed. The High Court of Australia — our nation's highest court — has overturned a rule that had been protecting institutions from accountability for over 20 years.

THE STORY BEHIND THE CASE

The case is called AA v Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, decided in February 2026. AA (his name is protected by the court) was sexually abused by a Catholic priest when there were just 13 years old in 1969. The priest met AA through scripture classes and then abused AA in private.

Decades later, AA took the Diocese – the Catholic organisation responsible for the Catholic priest – to court. The Diocese argued it should not be held responsible for a crime committed by an individual. The High Court rejected that argument completely.

HOW THE LAW GOT HERE — A SHORT HISTORY

To understand why this decision is so significant, you need to know what came before it.

2003 — State of NSW v Lepore
The High Court rules institutions cannot be held liable for deliberate criminal acts under a non-delegable duty. Institutions exploit this for 20+ years to defend abuse claims.

2024 — Bird v DP
Vicarious liability is limited to true employment relationships. Priests and volunteers aren't employees — institutions walk free, and settlement offers crater.

2026 — AA v Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
The High Court overturns Lepore. Institutions now owe a non-delegable duty to protect children — full stop. Employment status is irrelevant. The game has changed.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A "NON-DELEGABLE DUTY OF CARE"?

In plain language: it is a legal responsibility you cannot hand off to someone else.

When a church, school, or scout troop places someone in authority over children, the organisation takes on a duty to protect those children — full stop. It cannot outsource that responsibility.

Crucially, intentional or criminal abuse by that person automatically constitutes a breach of that duty. The institution is liable, no matter what.

WHY THE 2024 BIRD V DP DECISION HURT SURVIVORS

A 2024 High Court ruling held that institutions could only be liable if the abuser was a paid employee. Since priests, coaches, and volunteers rarely are, institutions used this to escape accountability — mediations stalled, offers collapsed.

The 2026 AA decision doesn't reverse Bird v DP, but it opens a separate, powerful path to justice that bypasses the employment question entirely.

WHAT KINDS OF INSTITUTIONS DOES THIS NOW COVER?

Any institution that placed a person in authority over you as a child — including:

- **Catholic and Other Religious Organisations** (Churches, Dioceses, Orders)
- **Schools** (Government or Private)
- **Sporting Clubs and Associations**
- **Scouts, Youth Groups, Community Centres**
- **Foster Care and Out-of-Home Care Providers**
- **Government Bodies and Detention Facilities**
- **Other Institutions** (That placed a person in a position of authority over you as a child)

CRITICAL WARNING — NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME

If you have been offered or are considering a payment from the National Redress Scheme, do NOT sign or accept anything before getting legal advice. Once you accept a Redress award, you are permanently banned from taking further legal action against the institution. A court claim is typically worth many times what Redress pays. This is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Ensure you contact our team at Wyatts Lawyers to ensure you are aware of all your best options.

COULD THIS AFFECT YOUR CASE?

Speak to us if any of these apply to you:

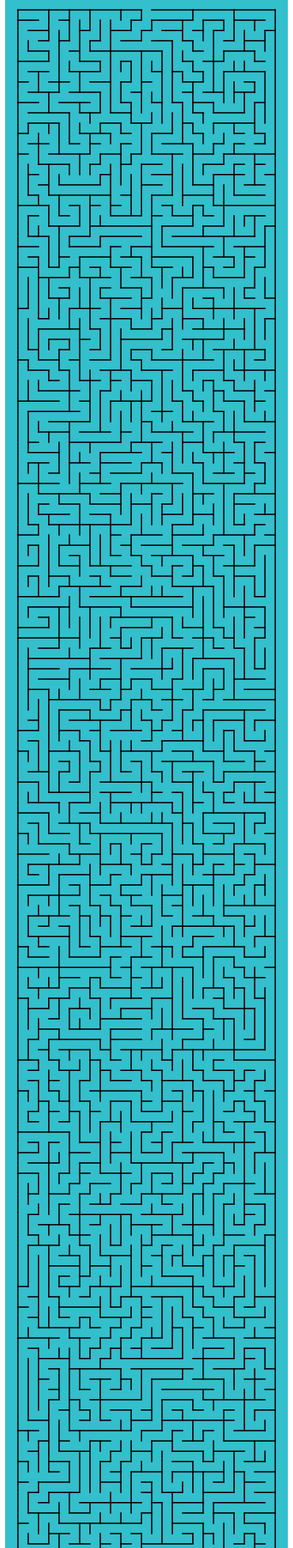
- You were abused as a child by someone connected to an institution
- You made an inquiry or started a claim that was put on hold or went cold
- You were told your claim was weak because the abuser was not technically an employee
- You received a low offer or had mediation stall after the 2024 Bird v DP decision
- You are currently considering or have been offered a Redress Scheme payment
- You have not yet taken any steps to enquire about making a claim, but have been thinking about it

HOW TO GET ADVICE FROM INSIDE

You do not need to navigate this alone, and you do not need money upfront. Our lawyers work on a no win, no fee* basis for institutional abuse claims. Everything you tell us is completely confidential. You can have a trusted person on the outside contact us on your behalf, or write to us directly. We will listen to what happened, explain clearly whether this decision opens up new possibilities for your situation, and tell you honestly what we think your options are. There is no pressure and no obligation.

*Conditions Apply.
This article is general legal information only and is not legal advice. Every person's circumstances are different. Time limits may apply to your claim – seek advice as soon as possible before accepting any offer or signing any agreement. Wyatts Lawyers is a specialist Australian compensation firm.

START



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Letters From the Outside:

In response to *Jail is Home to Me Now* by Kane:
Hi Kane, your story rang a bell with me. Self-reliance is a great thing to have. I used it to build a life. I think you can use your self-reliance to build a better life for yourself too if you think about it. I your situation you need to start from nothing and build up little by little. The first step is to stay clean and sober, then to get a roof over your head. There are people that will help you with that. Best of luck mate. – Tony

Hi Kane, I'm sorry to read your story. I don't have anything to say that would help you except that our system needs to change for those who come out of the prison system. I don't know what that looks like. Thank you for sharing. – Samantha

Hi Kane, so sad to read you have no-one you can trust. I am a mentor to people in prison with an organisation called Crossroads Prison Ministry. If you would like me to write to you, please send a message via "About Time". I hope you do! – Marion

In response to *In Six Months Richard Will Be Free, He Has No Idea Where He'll Go* by Sam:
That is so sad. There really needs to be better supports upon release. I hope Richard finds a nice place with new birds to feed! – Rachel

In response to front cover artwork by Lanie:
Great perspective and colours never stop painting Lanie – Cindy

In response to *We Love Queensland* by Mont Blanc:
I'm from VIC. One of my exes is a QLDer. I knew this issue intimately. When Darren Lockyer retired, he was miffed to read that Lockyer originally grew up playing AFL but after moving inland had to swap to League because no one had heard of AFL :D I also swapped from the Maroons to the Blues because of QLDers. – Samantha

Not Cool: Heat and Overcrowding in TMCC

By Dane

Dane writes from a prison in QLD.

G'day,

My name is Dane. Firstly, great job on the paper. I look forward to it every month and expect I'm not the only Aussie inmate who is appreciative of the effort that goes into producing such a thing and at no cost to the incarcerated. Keep up the good work.

The following is in response to the article by Denham Sadler titled "Sweltering Behind Bars: Stifling Heat in Australian prisons".

I'd like to thank Mr Sadler for raising this serious and long-standing issue in *About Time*. The Townsville (Men's) Correctional Centre (TMCC) houses over 900 inmates, just under 400 of whom reside in air-conditioned secure units. The remainder of TMCC prisoners reside in un-air-conditioned cells, 69 of whom do not even have fans installed. While after reading Mr Sadler's article I certainly feel for those locked up in Alice Springs, Broken Hill and elsewhere, Townsville is arguably one of the hottest and most humid regions of Queensland, yet its prison is the only one in the entire state that does not have air conditioning installed in any of its residential or protection units (that collectively contain just over 300 cells, which hold just over 500 inmates). It seems TMCC contains the majority (if not the entirety) of the 10 per cent of un-air-conditioned cells in Queensland jails mentioned in Mr Sadler's article. And I can assure *About Time* that there is no monitoring of air flow and temperature levels in any of the residential units at TMCC, even though these units are severely overcrowded and in which at least 50 men are forced to sleep on cell or living room floors.

All this is insufferable for inmates. It is contradictory to the idea that the residential units are part of the system of "progression" that supposedly acts as an incentive to encourage inmates to behave in order to move to better living conditions – a system that is ultimately designed to maintain the safety and good order of the prison. Perhaps the "specialised unit" within Queensland Corrective Services mentioned in Mr Sadler's article needs to spend a night or two in the fan-less and air-con-less residential cells at TMCC to experience how bad things get in summer. And, while I understand that the larger public doesn't care particularly if prisoners are comfortable, the tortuously hot, humid and overcrowded conditions in some TMCC units are bordering on cruel and unusual punishment. Something needs to change.

Kind Regards,
Dane

Rights for Foreign Prisoners

By Luiing

Luiing writes from a prison in WA.

To About Time,

My name's Luiing, from WA. I would like to say a big thanks to the publishers of *About Time* newspaper for creating such a good opportunity for inmates have a turn to talk and share. Thanks for shining a light on our darkness.

I am foreign national, and one of the most frustrating parts of my prison time is that I am a foreigner, because it means a lack of attention from everyone and everywhere. I am surrounded by multiple support groups, but none of them for me. I have been told that I am not allowed to join TAFE courses. No education. Today, I have no idea what kind of support or plan is available for long term foreign prisoner's pre-release or reintegration.

If foreign prisoners have been sentenced under same law as Australians, then it's extremely important that they have right to be treat equally in their imprisonment – on humanitarian grounds.

I was touched by learning about Bri Lee who helps donate books to women incarcerated in NSW. If I have anything to say – it is that nothing is more important than finding fulfilment and empowering yourself through learning and creating thanks to people's kindness.

Thanks heaps.

Yours sincerely,
Luiing

Albany Prisoners on Lockdowns

By Prisoners at Albany Prison, WA

I'm writing to you on behalf of myself and fellow prisoners at Albany Regional Prison about our lockdowns and visits/Zooms being cancelled. A lot of us are not from the regional area so getting visits from our loved ones takes time, money and effort for our family to make the trip from Perth to Albany to see us only to get a text msg or email from the prison on the morning of the visit telling them that they are cancelled. A lot of boys are struggling mentally because we are always getting locked in or locked down.

We have no support here! No mental health officers for prisoners to talk to and it's hard to get employment within the jail. It's becoming more and more often that they just lock us down. Then wonder why a lot of positive people with strong mindsets are changing in a negative way!

We are not sure who to write to or who we can talk to about theses matters. We are hoping someone reads our letter and can point us in the right direction to have our voices heard.

Prison is meant to help people become better people but at the moment its breaking us all slowly but surely. The prisons have no support. Courses and AOD programs are full and people are sleeping on the floor. Something needs to change.

Regards,
Prisoners at Albany Regional Prison

Response from About Time
Thank you for your letter and we're sorry it's been such a tough time. Please see the Legal Corner of this edition for a run down on lockdown laws and options for complaints.



Help Us Name a New School and Create a Vision for the Future

Our friends who work in justice and education are setting up a school for young adults who have been justice involved and are ready to reconnect with their education.

This will be the first independent school in Australia dedicated to offering a pathway to university for young adults who have disengaged from school because of their experience with the criminal justice system.

And we need your help to choose a name!

What would you call the college? What would appeal to you? Share your ideas and be a part of this new and important vision for what comes next.

If your name is chosen for the college, you will become part of its story and be recognised.

Please send your suggestion to About Time as soon as possible after reading this. Feel free to share your ideas on why the name is the right one.

About Time
Reply Paid 94762
Melbourne VIC 3001

About Time Needs Your Help!

We're running a survey to learn more about our readers' thoughts and feelings about the newspaper. This will help us make the paper better, and it will also help us with fundraising so we can continue to publish *About Time*.

We would be so grateful if you can please answer the questions to the right. If you're reading this on a physical paper, you can cut/rip the survey out, fill it in with a pen or pencil and send it back in an envelope with free postage via our reply paid post (see across).

If you're reading this on a tablet, you can copy the questions onto a piece of paper and fill it out there and then send it back the same way.

You can answer as many or as few questions as you wish.

Please share this around with as many people as possible. The more insights, the better.

Thank you so much, from the entire About Time team.

About Time
Reply Paid 94762
Melbourne VIC 3001



1. I read *About Time* to (choose as many options as you like):

- ☐ Be entertained
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Connect with people who have experienced incarceration
- ☐ Seek reliable news / information about the criminal legal system
- ☐ Other:

2. When I read *About Time*, I feel more connected to other people.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree



Can you tell us why you answered this way?

3. When I read *About Time*, I feel less isolated.



- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree



Can you tell us why you answered this way?

4. I think *About Time* provides an accurate reflection of the experience of being incarcerated.

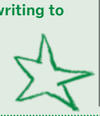
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree



Can you tell us why you answered this way?

5. Have you ever sent a letter or submitted some writing to *About Time*?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



6. Why did you choose to contribute to *About Time*?

Submitting writing to *About Time* made me feel valued.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree



Can you tell us why you answered this way?

Submitting writing to *About Time* made me feel more confident about my writing skills.



- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Can you tell us why you answered this way?

7. In your own words, what impact (if any) has *About Time* had on your life?

8. Have you submitted your writing anywhere else since submitting to *About Time*?

9. Is there anything else that you'd like to share?

Lessons from Bees

By Muhamed

Muhamed writes from a prison in VIC.

Prison teaches people to hold back.

To keep to themselves.

To give as little as possible.

To protect what little energy or hope they have left.

When everything feels limited – time, freedom, trust – it makes sense to think that giving more will leave you with less.

But the bee lives by a different rule.

A bee gives – all the time. It works, gathers, builds and cares for the hive. And, instead of running out, the hive grows stronger. The more the bee puts in, the more there is for everyone. The bee always gives more than it receives.

The bee's life is like a well that refills itself.

Prison doesn't feel like a place where this should be true. It feels like a place where helping others costs you. Where kindness can be risky. Where keeping your head down feels safer.

And sometimes that's true.

But many people slowly learn something important: giving in the right ways doesn't drain you. It steadies you.

Helping someone understand a task.

Keeping shared spaces calm, safe and clean.

Doing your job properly, even when no one is watching.

Listening instead of reacting.

These small actions don't fix everything. But they change the day. They reduce tension. They give you a sense a purpose.

The more you build good, positive routines, the stronger you feel.

The more responsibility you take, the more trust you earn.

The more you contribute, the more you feel like you matter.

That's the well filling up.

The bee doesn't keep score. It doesn't ask what it gets in return. It just does what keeps the hive going. And, by doing that, it becomes part of something bigger than itself.

In prison, feeling connected can make the difference between coping and breaking down. Giving – in small, careful ways – helps build that connection.

This lesson matters even more when you think about life after prison.

People who only take don't get far for long. Trust disappears quickly. Opportunities close.

Relationships erode. Life becomes unstable.

But people who give steadily – their time, effort, reliability – slowly build lives that hold together.

Work becomes meaningful. Relations grow. Doors open.

The bee's well never runs dry, because it is connected to others. It always gives more than it receives.

Prison can teach this in a hard but powerful way. It strips life down and asks: "What do you do when you have very little to give?"

Those who learn to give anyway often leave with more than they expected.

Because, the more they draw from that well, the more it fills.

And that kind of strength lasts well beyond the walls.

News and Investigations

Making Prison Visits Better

By Denham Sadler

Continued from page 1.

There are a wide range of rules when it comes to prison visits, including what people can wear, where they are able to sit, what level of contact they are allowed with their loved one and even if they are able to use a bathroom.

Participants in the study described this system as "draconian" and "dehumanising".

People entering a prison to visit a loved one, including children, often have to undergo full body and retina scans, pat-downs and sniffer dog inspections.

They also have to obey strict dress codes.

One person described visiting someone in prison as like "being processed like sheep" and feeling like "a number being processed in a machine".

"The whole process is purposefully intimidating, and I felt very uncomfortable," they said.

"There's no 'hello, how are you?'. It's just, 'stand there, raise your arms, do this, do that, now sit there and don't move'."

Most prisons in Australia do not allow visitors to use the toilet once a visit has begun, with many saying that toilets should be used before a visit begins.

Those who do need to use the bathroom during a visit will often have this visit terminated if they do.

Prison visits can sometimes go for several hours, and people told the study that they experienced significant discomfort due to an inability to use the bathroom.

Hugs are usually only allowed at the start and end of a visit, with rules about sitting apart and no physical contact for the rest of the time.

"No matter how much you want to just hold hands or cuddle, you just can't," one person said.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

There are programs for children that are trying to change this and make prison visits a more welcoming experience.

From 2-4pm on Sundays the Fun With Mum program, run by the Prison Network at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria, provides a range of child-friendly activities and other more normal ways for children and mothers to connect.

This includes activities like arts and crafts, card making, drawing and games, with a focus on making the environment a bit more relaxed. There are also larger events around times such as Easter, Mother's Day and Christmas.

Kiki Gill has seen from both sides how important this program is.

She has lived experience of incarceration as a mother, and now works as a Family Support Peer at the Prison Network, helping to run the Fun With Mum program.

"I know what it feels like to wait on the inside, hoping for connection, and I also see what children carry as they come through the system," Gill told *About Time*.

She said that during those two hours, the children can just be children.

"If visits are one of the only chances children have to maintain a relationship with their parent, then every part of that experience needs to support that connection," Gill said.

Many visit rooms also only have vending machines, without any fresh or child-friendly foods. "It might seem small, but it shapes the visit," Gill said.

The Prisons Network's approach of making prison visits more comfortable and natural is one that could make a difference around the country, and for all visitors, not just children, Gill said.



And it's one that needs small, practical changes rather than big reforms.

These include changes to rules around bathroom breaks, searches, dress codes, the language used about people in custody and the types of food available.

Changes in language, especially how people in prison are referred to by staff, would also make a big difference, Gill said.

"Small changes in tone and language can make a significant difference in how that experience feels," she said.

Providing fresh and child-friendly food would also make it more positive. "It might seem small but it shapes the visit," Gill said.

These changes to balance safety concerns with humanity and the interests of children would make a big difference, both Gill and the research report said.

Along with the Fun With Mum program in Victoria, there are other programs in place to help make prison visits better, especially for children.

In Victoria, VACRO's Family Visits program involves a family worker meeting with the person in prison and their loved one beforehand, and then facilitating a video call between them if required.

It aims to help a parent in prison continue to play a meaningful role in their family's lives.

Visits for this program are done via video rather than in person, and the prison background can be changed to something else.

One woman told *About Time* that VACRO's program helped her partner, who is incarcerated in Victoria, reconnect with his teenage son, who was previously not speaking with him.

"If you can get into the program, definitely do it," she said. "VACRO staff are amazing, passionate and empathetic."

Shine For Kids also runs a number of programs in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT helping to arrange family visits and navigate this process. Trained staff from the organisation can also provide age-appropriate activities and toys to make the visit experience more positive for a child.

The organisation also helps with Child & Parents Days, where they can help a child have quality bonding time with their incarcerated parent, without their caregiver needing to be present.

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ACT

Prison Population Grows

The number of people in prison in the ACT has grown by a lot in the last four years.

According to government numbers, there was an average of just under 500 people in Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) in March this year.

This is a big increase from March 2023, when there was an average of 393 people in the prison.

The ACT government is now publicly posting the number of people in prison and number of people released each month.

AMC can hold about 540 people in total.



NSW

Old Prisons to Be Closed

Old sections of Silverwater women's prison and Goulburn prison will be shut down by September this year.

The New South Wales government has announced that most of Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre, including the Mental Health Screening Unit and Mum Shirl Unit, which were built in 1969, will be shut down.

The prison will continue to run as an intake and reception centre only.

The maximum-security section of Goulburn Correctional Centre, which was first opened in 1884, will also be shut down by September.

The Inspector of Custodial Services NSW has recommended that this happen, and the NSW government said it had received other feedback about Silverwater.

The changes at Goulburn will not impact the High Risk Management Correctional Units and the minimum security areas.

Those placed in the maximum security unit currently will be taken to other prisons.

Inquest Into Death at Clarence Prison Concludes

A coronial inquest into the death of a 29-year-old man at Clarence Correctional Centre has come to an end.

Dictor Dongrin, a 29-year-old man, died the day he entered the privately-run prison in June 2022 after he was arrested for a drunk fight with his brother.

When he entered the prison, Dongrin was assessed as showing moderate alcohol withdrawal, and was seen as a high-risk patient.

Despite this, the coronial inquest heard that he was left unattended at the prison for 21 hours before his death.

The lawyer assisting the coroner said there was an "accumulation of deficiencies" and that Dongrin "died of causes which were preventable if medical intervention had occurred".

Serco, which operates the Clarence prison, said it had made a number of changes following the death, including structured medical shift handovers and daily briefings between prison health officials.

Further Monitoring of Phone Calls Rejected

A state government move to allow more monitoring of phone calls between lawyers and people in prison has been rejected by NSW Parliament.

Phone calls from prisons in NSW are usually monitoring and recorded, unless it is with a politician or lawyer.

The NSW government in January introduced a new regulation narrowing the exemption to only phone calls and letters with lawyers currently representing an inmate, providing advice to them or in the process of becoming their representative.

The state government said this was fixing a "potential loophole" allowing lawyers not representing someone in prison to engage in, promote or aid criminal activity while not being surveilled.

But members of Parliament were worried there was no evidence of this happening, and the Greens, backed by the Opposition, moved a motion to disallow the regulation.



VIC

Drug Bust During Prison Visit

Victoria Police have conducted a drug bust during visits to Metropolitan Remand Centre, with one man charged with allegedly trying to bring drugs into the prison.

During the crackdown, one person visiting someone in the prison tested positive for cocaine.

Sniffer dogs also detected traces of drugs on a visitor, leading to a search of their car where cocaine, steroid vials, valium, syringes and illegal tobacco were allegedly found.

A 39-year-old man has been charged with attempting to bring drugs into the prison.

According to authorities, prison staff have stopped more than 100 attempts at bring drugs into Victorian prisons since July last year.

Beechworth Escapee Returned to Custody

A man who escaped from Beechworth Correctional Centre has been returned to custody after a search overnight.

The 52-year-old man was reported missing before being found and taken back into custody without incident.



SA

Lawsuit Launched Over Abuse in Youth Detention

A class action lawsuit has been launched on behalf of people who were abused in South Australia's youth detention system.

The case relates to alleged abuse at the Magill and Cavan Youth Training Centres from 1970 to December 2015.

The lawsuit has been filed in the Supreme Court and means that other people who have experienced abuse in these centres during that time.



QLD

Man Located After Escaping From Palen

A man has been returned from custody after escaping from Palen Creek Low Security Correctional Centre in late March.

The 35-year-old man was taken into police custody and then moved to a high-security facility.

The following information is provided by Prisoner Legal Service QLD. This is not legal advice:

Daniels Law Now Live in Queensland

The *Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Act 2025* is now law in Queensland.

Under 'Daniels Law' members of the public can access information about people who are on Queensland's Child Protection Register.

The information is available through a government website.

The website lets any member of the public check if there are people on the register who are missing.

The website also lets eligible members of the public apply to access:

- Whether any people on the register live in their local area; or
- Whether a specific person who is in contact with their child is on the register.

Information about where people on the register live or if a specific person is on the register, can only be accessed after an application is made and approved. There are also eligibility criteria for who can make these applications.

Only information about people who are currently on Queensland's Child Protection Register can be released.

Only reportable offenders are on the Register.

A reportable offender is defined in section 5 of the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004*.

A reportable offender must be given written notice of their reporting obligations and the consequences that may arise if they fail to comply with those obligations.



WA

High-Tech Microscope Comes to Prison

People at Bandyup Women's Prison have had the chance to use a "super microscope".

As part of Curtin University's Science Meets Art program, people at the prison were able to try out the cutting-edge technology.

They used the microscope to examine samples 50 times smaller than the width of a human hair.

Hakea Inmates Sue State Government

Six men are taking the Western Australian government to court over the conditions they faced at Hakea Prison.

The men have claimed that they experienced "inhumane living conditions" at the prison from March 2023 to April this year.

The case has been lodged with the Supreme Court of WA by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA.

The men are claiming loss and damage after they say they were kept in their cells and had "severely reduced access to essential entitlements and services".

Death at Bandyup Prison

There has been a death in custody at Bandyup Women's Prison.

A 40-year-old First Nations woman was found unresponsive in her bed on 18 April.

A report will now be prepared for the state coroner.

It's the second death in custody at the prison in the last five weeks.



NT

Officer Strike Called Off

Prison officers have cancelled a planned strike after a man died at Darwin Correctional Centre in late March.

A 26-year-old First Nations man died at the prison on the morning of 28 March after he was found unresponsive in his cell.

Prison officers in the Territory had planned to walk off the job for 24 hours in early April, but scrapped this plan after the death.

The strike would have seen people in prison in the NT put into long lockdowns.

The planned strike came after a 12-hour strike by prison officers in Alice Springs.

Court Changes Aim to Make Things Faster

A number of changes have been made to fast-track court cases.

The use of video-links instead of someone appearing in court in person will now be encourage, and indictable matters will be fast-tracked to the Supreme Court, under the NT government changes.

The type of matters that can be heard in local court will also be increased, and related domestic violence charges will be included together.

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Who's Watching the Prisons? Introducing 'Inspector's Corner'

Your monthly review of prison oversight

We're excited to launch Inspector's Corner!

There are a number of groups around the country that inspect prisons and provide feedback and recommendations to governments. These often involve visiting prisons and talking directly to people in custody.

For example, in September 2022, the Queensland Government passed a new law that established an Inspector of Detention Services (the Inspector).

Purpose and role of the Inspector

The main purpose of the Inspector is to improve places of detention, with a focus on:

- promoting and upholding the humane treatment of detainees, including human conditions of their detention; and
- preventing detainees from being subjected to harm, including torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The position of the Inspector is held by the Queensland Ombudsman but has its own resourcing, with functions and powers separate from the Ombudsman.

The main role of the Inspector is to inspect places of detention in Queensland including prisons, youth-detention centers and watch-houses, and report on these inspections. The inspections aim to identify and prevent potential sources of harm for people in places of detention rather than responding to complaints when harm occurs.

The Inspector has prepared and published standards that are used to conduct inspections. PLS provided feedback to the Inspector when these standards were being drafted to help ensure that Inspections were being conducted in the most effective and meaningful way.

The Inspector must inspect each adult prison in Queensland at least once every 5 years and release a report about the inspection.

Example from Queensland: Inspection of Southern Queensland Correctional Centre

On 24 March 2025, the Inspector released their first adult prison inspection report about Southern Queensland Correctional Centre (SQCC).

The report makes 37 recommendations for areas of improvement at SQCC.

An area of concern identified by the Inspector was the insufficient consideration of human rights when placing women in conditions of solitary confinement. This includes placement in the safety unit, detention unit and when being locked down in individual cells.

The Inspector made recommendations about the need for individual risk assessments that consider the harmful effects of isolation and the limitations on a woman's human rights when placing her in conditions of solitary confinement. The Inspector also made recommendations about the need for improved management of hygiene and menstruation products for women who are placed in conditions of solitary confinement in the Safety Unit.

Other areas for improvement at SQCC identified by the Inspector included long waitlists to see health professionals and for programs, and lack of female and First Nations staff.

The Inspector also observed some positive practices at SQCC including the operation of the separate Parental Support Unit for pregnant women, mothers and residential children.

Keep an eye out!

Each month, we will be providing a summary of reports released around the country, and where the inspection bodies will be visiting soon. Read back here for more information!

We Need You: Maximum Security Unit Review Consultation

People in Queensland prisons can contribute to Inspectorate report.

By Prisoners' Legal Service Queensland

Prisoners' Legal Service (PLS) is a not-for-profit community legal centre providing legal assistance to people in Queensland prisons on issues arising from imprisonment. Due to high demand and limited resources, PLS can only assist a small number of people in Queensland prisons. Eligibility criteria is applied when selecting clients to receive our assistance. The information provided by PLS in About Time is for information only and should not be relied on as legal advice. You should seek legal advice about your own particular circumstances.

The Inspector of Detention Services Queensland is undertaking a review of Maximum Security Units (MSUs) at Arthur Gorrie, Brisbane and Woodford Correctional Centres.

The Detention Services Inspection Unit would like to hear from you if you have experience of MSUs in Queensland. They are a team of people who look at what is happening in prisons because they want to make prisons better. They are independent and do not work for the prison. Their role is to look at the systems, and the lived experience of people who are detained. It is not part of the role of the Inspector of Detention Services to look at individual complaints.

What Type of Information to Provide

You can write to the Detention Services Inspection Unit and tell them what it is like in the MSU. They also have some questions to help you tell them your views. You do not have to answer all the questions.

They would like you to tell them about:

Fair Decisions

- What did staff tell you about why you were placed in the MSU?
- If you were in the MSU for more than 6 months, how did staff explain the reasons to keep you there?

Information and Help Given to Prisoners

- Who helped you to understand decisions that were made about you? How helpful were they?
- What happened when staff reviewed (looked at again) the reasons you were placed in the MSU?
- What were you told about how to make a complaint?
- What help were you given to speak to your lawyer?
- If you met with the Official Visitor, how helpful were they?
- What else could the prison have done to help you understand decisions made about you?

Daily Life in the MSU

- What was a normal day like for you?
- What was your cell like? What were you allowed to have in your cell?
- How did you wash your bedding and clothes?
- How were you given your meals? What was the food like?
- How often did you go to the exercise yard? What did you do there?
- What courses or programs could you do?
- How often did you see a doctor or a nurse? How helpful were they?
- How did you contact your family?
- What contact did you have with other prisoners?
- What was your relationship with staff like? How often did they speak to you?
- How did staff help you with your spiritual or cultural needs?
- How safe did you feel in the unit?
- How did staff manage prisoners when they got angry or upset
- Did staff use force (their hands or weapons) on you while you were in the unit? If yes, what happened?
- When did staff use handcuffs? How did staff treat you when using handcuffs?

How Prisoners Progress in the MSU

- What did you have to do to progress in the MSU?
- How did staff help you to progress out of the MSU?
- If you moved out of the MSU to another part of the prison, what was this change like for you?
- What else do you think staff could do to help prisoners in the MSU progress?

Staff and How MSUs Work

- How often does the General Manager visit the unit?
- How often does the MSU Manager or supervisor visit you in the MSU?
- If you have spent time in more than one MSU, how are they different? How are they the same?

How to Provide Information

If you are in prison, you can write to the Inspector of Detention Services using the following contact address:

Inspector of Detention Services
Queensland Ombudsman
GPO Box 3314
Brisbane, QLD 4001

If you have access to email, you can email them to:

inspector@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

If you have access to a phone, you can call them on:

(07) 3005 7000

Please send them ASAP – they need feedback by Friday 22 May 2026.

Australia's Oldest Prison Vegetable Garden?

A vegetable garden built by convict labour in the 1890s became a rare site of rehabilitation at Fremantle Prison, providing more than 10,000kg of food each year.

By Hayley McKee

Hayley McKee is a writer and cookbook author. She currently works at Australia's leading food education charity to empower children and communities to grow and cook with fresh produce.



Fremantle Prison Parade Ground Gardens, 1970, Courtesy Fremantle Prison



The earliest photograph of the vegetable gardens, circa 1912. Courtesy Fremantle Prison

Visitors to the decommissioned Fremantle Prison, now a major tourist attraction in Western Australia on Whadjuk Noongar Country, enter through a forecourt in front of the bleak Main Cell Block.

If they turned right and looked toward the south end of the site, beyond the lawn and paved pathways, they would spy the remains of a 100-year-old terraced vegetable garden.

Perched on a hill beneath a towering perimeter wall are retaining beds built in 1896, still filled with dirt, roots and a few plants hell-bent on growing. Rosemary bushes leer over the side, stumps with young green shoots reach upwards and a series of wire frames – that perhaps supported tomato vines or pole beans – are still hanging in the wind.

Built by convict labour during the 1850s, Fremantle Prison operated for 136 years until it closed in 1991. Their once-thriving vegetable garden took shape after a 1911 reform that allowed people in prison to earn shorter sentences through good behaviour. Fremantle Prison introduced new activities focused on welfare and rehabilitation, including a leisure program, access to education and the establishment of a veggie patch.

The men at Fremantle Prison learnt how to grow fresh food by planting concentrated rows of sturdy cabbage, corn, carrots, spring onions and other edible plants that could withstand the harsh WA sun. At its peak, the garden supplied the prison kitchen with more than 10,000 kilograms of fruit and vegetables each year.

A 1913 prison report noted: "The immense courtyard before the cells, once a sickening expanse of glaringly white limestone, is now covered with neatly kept lawns bordered in places with flowers, and on the terraced banks to the right as one enters are vegetable gardens, at once refreshingly green to the eye and utilitarian in their purpose."

Records from the 1920s show the gardens "were a highly successful innovation" that provided meaningful tasks and recreation for the prison population. There was a pause in gardening during the 1940s, most likely due to the war, but the gardens continued to thrive in the 1950s and 1960s.

During this era, creativity was permitted and the gardens were embellished with decorative brick edgings and an ornamental goldfish pond. Roses, chrysanthemums, gladioli, petunias and carnations were grown in flowerpots and entered in the Perth Royal Show.

A 1955 newspaper article interviewed a man serving a life sentence at Fremantle Prison who gained a new outlook on life after nurturing a colourful array of prize-winning flowers. He said: "I like the open air. I had been working in the prison tailoring shop, but I never seemed to see anything for my work. I had no sense of achievement." Given the chance to work in the garden, he found contentment and pride in the blooms he grew.

Despite providing a rewarding and therapeutic outlet for over 60 years, by the late 1970s the vegetable garden had shrunk to make way for a clothes-drying area, lawns, a tennis court and a concrete cricket pitch. These new facilities were enclosed by a tall metal cyclone fence.

Although there are no records of how this vegetable garden improved the health and wellbeing of the men who grew fresh, healthy food, these days the evidence is well-documented. Research from 2024 shows prison gardening provides a wide range of benefits, from opportunities to de-stress and increase physical activity to improved self-esteem and the development of skills that support employability, reintegration and healthier living.

Growing food reflects family and cultural traditions, which can improve social understanding and relationships between people in prison and prison staff. Plus, linking garden-grown food to the kitchen improves the nutritional quality and flavour of prison meals.

Prison gardens are low-cost, activate barren spaces and increase access to nature. Gardening provides a sense of purpose and even a chance to give back to the community, with some Australian prison gardening programs donating seeds and food to schools and homeless shelters.

Today, only traces of Fremantle Prison's terraced beds remain, but it's a quiet reminder that, even in the most controlled environments, growth is possible for prison grounds and the people who tend to them.



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New Civil Law Service for Women in NSW Prisons

Free civil law help now visits Dillwynia and Silverwater weekly, supporting housing, family law, NDIS and more.

By About Time

A new legal service is visiting Dillwynia and Silverwater prison each week to provide civil law advice and representation to women.

The Women's Advocacy Service is a partnership between Legal Aid NSW and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), providing face-to-face appointments with both a lawyer and a social worker. The service is free and confidential and allows for various issues to be addressed at once, hopefully ensuring that nothing falls through the cracks. Importantly, an Aboriginal social worker is part of the ALS team, creating a space that's as culturally safe and supportive as possible.

The service was created following an inquiry into the offending of former corrections officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia. The NSW Government investigated what happened and what can be done to prevent similar offending in the future. The inquiry found failures in the complaints system, including women not feeling safe or supported to speak up. One of the 31 recommendations was for an independent advocacy service to be established to support women to make complaints.

The service, however, is not only about complaints; it can help with a range of civil law matters. Civil means that lawyers *cannot* assist with criminal matters such as bail and parole but *can* help with issues such as housing, domestic violence, debts and fines, NDIS, child protection, family law, victim support and preparing for release. If the service cannot help with an issue, they will do their best to find a service that can. As civil law matters can be long, the service can also support people once they're released into the community. It's currently funded until June 2028.

A message the service hopes to convey to women inside is that it's better to ask questions and seek legal advice earlier rather than later, even if there's hesitation.

"Engaging with our service doesn't mean that you need to take action," Eleanor Holden, a lawyer with the ALS, shared. "It's a space where you can confidentially share your issues or what's going on and hear what your options might be. You don't have to act, but, if you do, you'll be adequately supported."

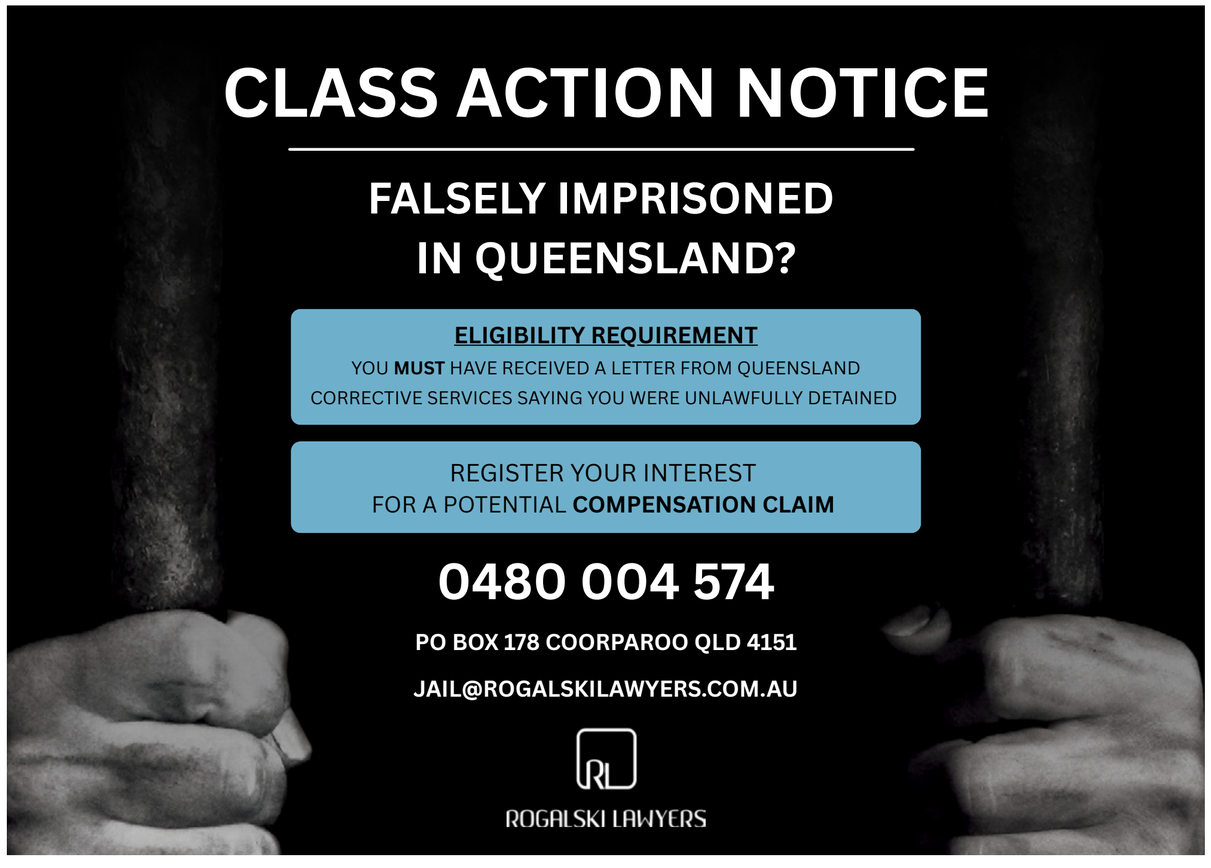
The ALS told *About Time* that women have come to them with a variety of issues – some they've never disclosed before and others they didn't realise were addressable. Women have been connected to services they didn't know existed, such as the National Redress Scheme and other victim supports.

The importance of the service cannot be understated, with women flocking to receive support they might otherwise be unable to get. Jessica Schulman, a lawyer with Legal Aid, told *About Time* that around 200 women have used the service in less than four months. "Women have come to see us about one issue at first before returning to share other issues with us. Women are also referring their friends in custody who are unable for whatever reason to refer themselves."

Alongside individual appointments, the service runs monthly "Legal Talks" on topics women care about, such as NDIS, housing and rights in custody. The service is taking suggestions, so make sure to reach out if there's an area of law you want to learn more about!

If you are in Dillwynia or Silverwater and want to speak with the Women's Advocacy Service, you can put in a referral form at either prison or call #12 for ALS or #2 for Legal Aid on the prison phone system.

Legal Aid is at Dillwynia on Tuesdays and at Silverwater on Fridays. The ALS is at Dillwynia on Thursdays and at Silverwater on Wednesdays. If women cannot attend due to work or other commitments, remote appointments can be made.



● Experiences

A Letter to Parents Inside



By Yung Prodigy

Yung Prodigy is a youth-led organisation focused on mobilising young people impacted by parental and kinship incarceration, an invisible issue and policy gap in Australian service provision.

Hi again, it's your children on the outside. Your kin.

We wrote a letter in About Time last year, a letter of love and understanding. A lot has happened in since then. We took your cries all the way to federal parliament. We spoke to politicians and shared your stories. We spoke the truth in places of power, in rooms that usually refuse to see us.

Life kept moving too. You know who finally broke up with that guy we've been telling her to? It took long enough! And sissy has just had a baby, a little girl. We call her "the prodigy" (get it?!). She's perfect and already running the show.

There have been birthdays, small wins and, as always, big feelings. The usual mix of everything.

Last time we wrote to you, we spoke about your strength and the way you hold everything together in a system designed to pull it apart. We spoke about the quiet ways you show up every day that don't get headlines, and the pressure of providing care across distance, time limits and restrictions, as if you're three people in one body.

When we said we would do what we could to ease that pressure, even just a little, we meant it. We still do.

But if we're being real with you, we haven't written in so long because it feels like we're coming back with empty promises. And honestly, that's been hard to sit with.

We know it's not our fault, and that the weight of this system isn't ours to carry. But here on the outside, it still feels like our responsibility to push, and to push harder. But lately, it feels like we're hitting the same wall over and over again.

It's closed doors, silence from Ministers' offices, and those familiar scripted responses from Commissioners that says a lot without saying anything at all. You know the drill. That feeling when something is being pushed aside, and the lack of communication makes it harder to know where to move next.

One of the biggest things we've been fighting for is simple. So simple it almost feels ridiculous that it's a fight at all. We want to make phone calls free inside. That's it. No complicated policy overhaul or abstract reform, just the ability for you to speak to us, and us to you. Everyone agrees with it, at least on paper.

We've sat in meetings where people nod along and say, "of course, connection is important." They talk about how it contributes to rehabilitation, to family ties and breaking cycles. They use all the right words. But when it comes time to move beyond principle, it stalls.

It suddenly becomes complicated. A contract issue. A process issue. It's perplexing how a $40 million contract with Telstra can carry so much weight, while more than $6 billion in annual taxpayer funding doesn't seem to hold the same urgency.

To be fair, they haven't done nothing. Towards the end of last year, they reduced the cost of landline calls by around 30 cents.

We sat with that for a while, trying to figure out how to feel. Because yes, it is technically movement, but it's also hard not to see it for what it is: a partial fix to a much bigger problem. I mean, do people even use landlines like that anymore? Maybe that's very Gen Z of me to say...

It still feels like the people making these decisions don't fully get it. A call is never just a call. It's a hug carried through words. More than anything, it's a mother hearing her child's voice and knowing they're still there, and a child holding onto something steady in the middle of everything that isn't. When that call comes with a cost, it becomes something you have to think about. Something you limit and sometimes, something you go without.

We've heard and lived the stories. From calls being cut short when the credit runs out, to kids waiting by the phone, not knowing if today is the day it will ring. No one should have to make those choices.

So we kept going.

We built something bigger than just us, a coalition of organisations, advocates, community members, people who have lived this and people who refuse to accept it. There are now over 20 organisations involved, alongside hundreds of supporters from the broader community, all standing behind the same demand.

It's called the 'Freedom on the Line' campaign.

It's been more than just media releases and meetings. We've consistently reached out to the Minister and the Commissioner, sharing letters from community and making sure there is space for storytelling. We keep showing up, again and again, even when the response is slow or non-existent. At its core, it's about keeping that line open.

We've taken it into so many rooms, policy discussions, inquiries, and national conferences, making sure connection is no longer treated as something that can be commodified. We've said your names in different ways, so they can't pretend they don't know.

And still, we find ourselves in this in-between space. We won't pretend otherwise, because you deserve honesty. But what we can say, with certainty, is that we haven't stopped. We're more organised than we were, and we keep reminding ourselves that that matters.

So this Mother's Day, please know we're still here, and still holding you in mind. Always. You are always in our thoughts and in our hearts. We bring you with us into every meeting, every call, and every late-night moment where we're trying to figure out what comes next.

We wish we were writing with bigger news. But until then, we'll keep going. And maybe next time we speak, there won't be a price tag attached to it.

Chat soon! In love, in fight and in kinship,

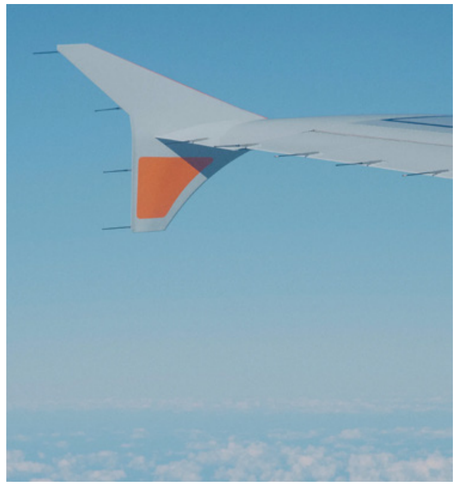
Yung Prodigy

Freed, Then Taken: When My Love Was Deported

A personal account of the impact of deportations after being released from prison.

By Marianna Jans

Marianna Jans is a writer, actress and criminology student at Deakin University.



Willy Pleasance

I remember the phone call like it was yesterday.

My heart stopped the moment I heard his voice, the panic already rising before he even said a word.

"They're deporting me," he whispered.

I couldn't breathe. My world tilted sideways. The person I loved, the one I'd been holding onto through months of lockdowns, court cases, and endless waiting — they were taking him away from me. And I could do nothing about it.

I tried to keep it together, tried to speak, but my voice cracked and tears ran down my cheeks. He told me he'd be on a plane in two days, sent to a country that wasn't home, where he didn't know anyone, where our life together wouldn't exist.

I wanted to scream at the unfairness and the cruelty, but all I could do was listen and cry in silence.

Every day after that was torture. I waited for calls, texts, messages — anything to hear his voice. But even when I did, it wasn't enough. I couldn't hold him, couldn't comfort him, couldn't stop the system from treating him like a file number instead of a human being.

Then one morning, I got the news. He was being released.

My stomach flipped. I couldn't believe it — after months locked away, after all the uncertainty, he would be free. I ran to meet him, and when I saw him waiting at the exit, my heart exploded. I grabbed him, held him tight, and for a moment, the world made sense again.

We cried, laughed, clung to each other, and for a few precious months, we believed we had a future.

I thought we could breathe, that maybe the nightmare had passed. But it hadn't.

Three months later, without warning, it all fell apart. The High Court reversed the decision. The freedom we had tasted was ripped away.

One morning we were walking, talking, thinking we were safe, and suddenly PSOs were ordering us off the train. Officers appeared, surrounding him, ignoring my desperate pleas. I watched helplessly as they took him. Just like that. Gone.

I called him from the detention centre the next day. He was on the next flight to France. I couldn't stop crying. Everything we had just started to rebuild — our dreams, our hope, our life together — was gone. And for what? He hadn't broken any laws. He hadn't done anything wrong. Yet the system treated him like a criminal, and I was left to pick up the pieces, powerless, devastated.

Those three months of freedom were a cruel joke. They let him hug me, hold me, feel what we had, and then snatched him back. I still can't wrap my head around it. I still wake up wondering how something so unjust could happen to someone so innocent.

I couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat properly. I couldn't stop thinking about him, about what he was going through, about the helplessness of loving someone and watching them be ripped from your life for no reason.

I felt the grief in every cell of my body, the weight of loss pressing down, suffocating.

He's in a country that isn't home, living a life that isn't ours. And I'm left here, carrying the heartbreak, carrying the knowledge that the system doesn't see the people behind the numbers, doesn't care who gets hurt as long as the rules are followed.

I loved him. I still do. And that love is now threaded with pain, injustice, and the memory of what was stolen from us.

Freed, then taken.



Share Your Story

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 (it's free!):

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Reply Paid 94762
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Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

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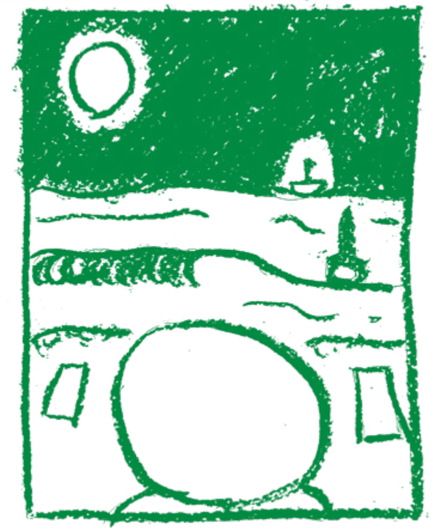
Day Release: Freedom Whiplash

On the joy and pain of living free for a day, then going back to prison.

By Jonathan

Jonathan writes from a prison in NSW.



I've been inside nearly four years. Just as my lawyer predicted, the first two weeks were the hardest, and when I reached my sentence jail at two months in, it was easier again. Once I started work the days passed much more quickly, and it has only sped up since. Months slip by like weeks. Christmas swings around again before I know it.

That was, until I started monthly day leave. Now the weeks stretch out interminably until my next day out. I'd been looking forward to it, but I hadn't realised just how much it would affect me. For one reason and another, my first day out was delayed a couple of weeks. In this place, a two week delay is nothing, they take that long just to read a form. But this hit me like a kick in the guts. That's when I got an inkling of what this really means to me.

In here, I get used to the daily indignities, being locked up each night, denied access to the gardens and the oval, searched each day, asking permission for anything beyond scratching my arse. Being disrespected by officers and inmates alike, taking a deep breath, walking away. I practise mindfulness, others pray, we keep ourselves occupied, distracted. "How are you mate?" "Going OK, same as yesterday." Another day done.

And then the possibility of release presents itself, even for just a day, and all that suppressed hurt, all the longing for life, for freedom, wells up inside me. My eyes water as I write these words and feel this ache afresh.

My first day out was surreal. Just walking out the gate, I felt the weight slip from my shoulders. I told Mum with a smile, "I'm a free man, for today." We spent the day, per the approved itinerary, at her apartment. She poured coffee. "Let's have it on the balcony. It's quiet on Sunday." I puzzled, "What day is it? It was Sunday inside. Does that make it Sunday here?" That's how dissociated I felt. Almost out-of-body.

Last Sunday, I swam at Coogee Beach! How I've missed the ocean. Till now I've only seen it from my friend's cell window upstairs, sighing as I watch the waves crashing against Mistral Point.

But on Sunday I swam, with a mask and snorkel. So many fish, blue groper, whiting, rock cod, amongst the rocks and seaweed. I was buffeted by the waves breaking into my rock-pool. I ran along the beach. I dived under the shore break and paused motionless beneath the water. I've dreamt of that moment for years. I floated on my back as the waves rocked me like a cradle.

All these sensations I'd missed so badly. More than sensations, spiritual connections.

Then a cold shower in the change rooms, donning casual shorts and a T-shirt (not green!). Walking barefoot along the causeway, my towel slung over my shoulder, revelling in the beach scene, both social and natural.

The big breakfast at a nearby café, bustling with beachgoers. Bacon! Fried eggs! Mushrooms! Avocado! So many firsts since forever.

I spoke to one or two strangers on the beach, perhaps from a need to affirm my humanity. The lifeguard asked if I was a local. I took a punt and pointed to my ankle bracelet. "Local to Long Bay. This is my first swim in four years." It paid off. She didn't judge me, but empathised with how that must feel for a fellow ocean-lover.

Then snap! I'm back inside. On the surface I'm fine, but in my soul the shock jerks me like whiplash. To live free for a day, then back to this. A week later I'm feeling hollow, rattled to the point of questioning my own sanity. Then I remember why I feel this way: I was free for a day.

Out there is reality. This place is a madhouse. But it's temporary. Take a deep breath and repeat: this too shall pass.

Now I'm planning my next day leave, three long weeks away.



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C No More: Peter's Story



My story, my community, my work

By Peter

Peter is a Peer Worker at C No More.

A bit about me

I've always had a creative streak. I'm actually a graffiti artist. Melbourne is known for its graffiti culture, and I'm part of that scene. Art has been an important outlet for me over the years. I've even promised to dig out some pictures to show you all.

But, for most of my life, I honestly thought I was unemployable. I hadn't worked in decades. One day, I said to a mate, "I reckon I'm ready." Harm Reduction Victoria gave me a chance, and I've thrived ever since.

In the fight to eliminate hepatitis C, the C No More project is doing something different, and it's working. I'm proud to be part of it. C No More is a partnership between Harm Reduction Victoria, St Vincent's Hospital and the Burnet Institute – funded by Gilead Sciences – and together we're bringing hep C testing and treatment straight to people involved with the justice system, especially those who fall through the cracks.

Instead of waiting for people to come to a clinic, we take the service to them. We park our van outside the community corrections offices and offer point-of-care hep C testing and treatment on the spot. Most of the people I see are on probation, parole or linked to the courts, and plenty haven't had access to healthcare in years.

A Van, a Vision and a Lot of Heart

I work alongside two brilliant nurses from St Vincent's. Together, we run a mobile nurse and peer-led testing and treatment service at four community corrections sites across metro Melbourne.

We park near community corrections offices and yarn with people as they're coming out. I tell people, "We'll test anyone in the community who might be at risk."

Testing is simple, a fast finger-prick test. And, if someone tests positive, we help organise treatment quickly in a way that fits into their life, whether through a methadone clinic, a local pharmacy or the hospital.

But the van isn't just a testing site. It's a small hub of harm reduction. We have a needle and syringe program, naloxone kits, clothes from Thread Together, toiletries and snacks, and we help people with housing and health referrals whenever we can. Soon we'll also be offering hep B and flu vaccinations, along with more blood borne virus and sexually transmitted infections screening. I'm really looking forward to learning those new skills.

Peer Power – It Takes One to Know One

I'm peer based, and people can tell straight away I'm one of them. I speak the same language because I've lived it. I've used drugs and I had hepatitis C. In that short walk from the corrections office to the van, they know I'm not an outsider. The ice breaks immediately, and people open up because the trust is already there.

I went into prison in 1999. At Melbourne Assessment Prison they tested me for hepatitis C before sending me to Fulham prison, and that was it. There was no treatment offered to me, no information, and no one really cared. I was worried enough to keep my own syringe, but I still rented it out. By the time I left, the cut-down needle was half its original length from sharpening it. That's why people trust me now. I don't speak from theory. I speak from lived experience.

What keeps me going

At the start, I'll be honest, the money I earned as a peer worker helped. It got me off the streets and gave me stability. But what keeps me going now is the impact the job has had on my mental health. I've lived with clinical depression for years. This work has lifted my confidence and my self-worth more than I ever expected. Helping people who have walked a similar path makes me feel like I'm part of something bigger, something that matters.

Treatment Has Changed in a Big Way

I've done both the old interferon-based treatment and the current hepatitis C treatment. For me, they were like chalk and cheese. For me, the current treatment was easy. But a lot of people don't know it exists yet.

I also talk a lot about reinfection. "Just because you're on treatment doesn't mean you can't get hep C again," I remind people. "Blood doesn't have to be visible. A tiny drop is enough."

Why This Work Is Critical

People involved in the justice system are up to eight times more likely to have hepatitis C than the general population. Prisons in Victoria and in other states do offer testing and treatment, but people on community correction orders, a group even larger than the prison population, often slip through the cracks.

Nearly half of the people on community correction orders have never been in prison but still share similar risks. C No More is helping to close that gap.

A Team Effort

C No More works because it's collaborative. Burnet Institute drives the research and funding. St Vincent's Hospital provides the nurses. Harm Reduction Victoria brings in peer workers like me.

I like to joke that we're like Voltron. Each part is strong, but together we're unstoppable.

In phase one, we tested nearly 900 people, even though we only ran two days a week. Around 60 people went on to start treatment. That's massive.

The Hard Stuff

Some of the stories people share are heavy. At first, I struggled. I had to learn not to internalise everything. Now I get regular debriefs, and my manager at Harm Reduction Victoria is incredibly supportive. A lot of people we see haven't been near a doctor in years, because of stigma. When they see I'm one of them, they feel safe enough to try again.

A Message for Anyone Reading This Inside Prison

If you're reading this from inside, here's what I want you to know.

If you're like me and you've been using it for years and you think you're an unemployable piece of rubbish, there's hope. I used to think that too. But, if I can get employed, anyone can.

Get tested and get treated, if you and your doctor decide that's right for you. Tell your mates. There's real support out here for you.

Looking Ahead

I'm excited about what's next, including vaccines, sexual health training and new harm reduction skills. Every new skill means another way to help my community.

Developed by AIVL, the peer-led peak organisation advancing the wellbeing, health and human rights of people who use drugs in Australia and representing our network of peer-based harm reduction and Drug User Organisations.

You can call 1800-MYAIVL(692485) for information and peer support – it is free, confidential, and no Medicare is required – or visit www.aivl.org.au.

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.

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

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Ask the Doctor: Nutrition

Your health questions answered!

By Harley

Harley is a doctor from VIC.

Hello! I'm Harley, a doctor working in Victoria. Welcome back to Ask the Doctor!

We received some questions regarding artificial sweeteners and the grocery buy-up list, so today we are talking about nutrition.

What Are Artificial Sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners are chemicals that our mouths perceive as sweet, but when they enter our digestive tract they release little or no energy. Energy in the body is generally referred to as calories. For example, 1 gram of sugar produces 4 calories, while 1 gram of stevia (a common sweetener) produces 0 calories.

This is because stevia is not able to be broken down by our digestive tract – it just passes straight through. This is why sometimes when you eat too much artificial sweetener it can have a diarrhoeal effect.



Artificial Sweeteners – Splenda & Equal by Bukowsky18

There are some artificial sweeteners (i.e. aspartame) which can be broken down in our bodies and therefore do produce energy. However, these sweeteners are 200–300x sweeter than sugar, so only a very very small amount is needed. And this very, very small amount basically has no calories.

Wait, Did You Say "Chemicals"? Aren't Chemicals Always Bad for Me?

Great question, Harley. Why thank you!

This is a classic advertising industry trick that has made us all scared of "chemicals". But, really, everything we drink and eat is made of chemicals. Our body is made of chemicals, the air we breath, the water we drink, an apple, a banana – all of these things are chemicals, put together in different ways.

So, if someone asks you if chemicals are bad, the answer is always that it depends which chemicals.

Are Artificial Sweeteners Harmful?

To date, there is NO concrete evidence that artificial sweeteners are harmful to humans.

There have been many research studies, and, while some of them have suggested a link to cancer, the general consensus at present is that consuming artificial sweeteners in moderation is NOT harmful to human health. This of course may change in the future.

An important thing to think about is what the alternative is if you choose to avoid artificial sweeteners. If you drink refined sugar beverages instead, this can lead to obesity, and obesity IS strongly linked with cancer. Stick to water, tea or coffee is my advice.

What Are the Food Items to Avoid on the Grocery Buy-Up List?

I have been provided the list for NSW. This may differ between states.

As a general rule when thinking about our diets, I really like the advice of US food journalist Michael Pollan. He says, "Don't eat anything with more than five ingredients or ingredients you can't pronounce."

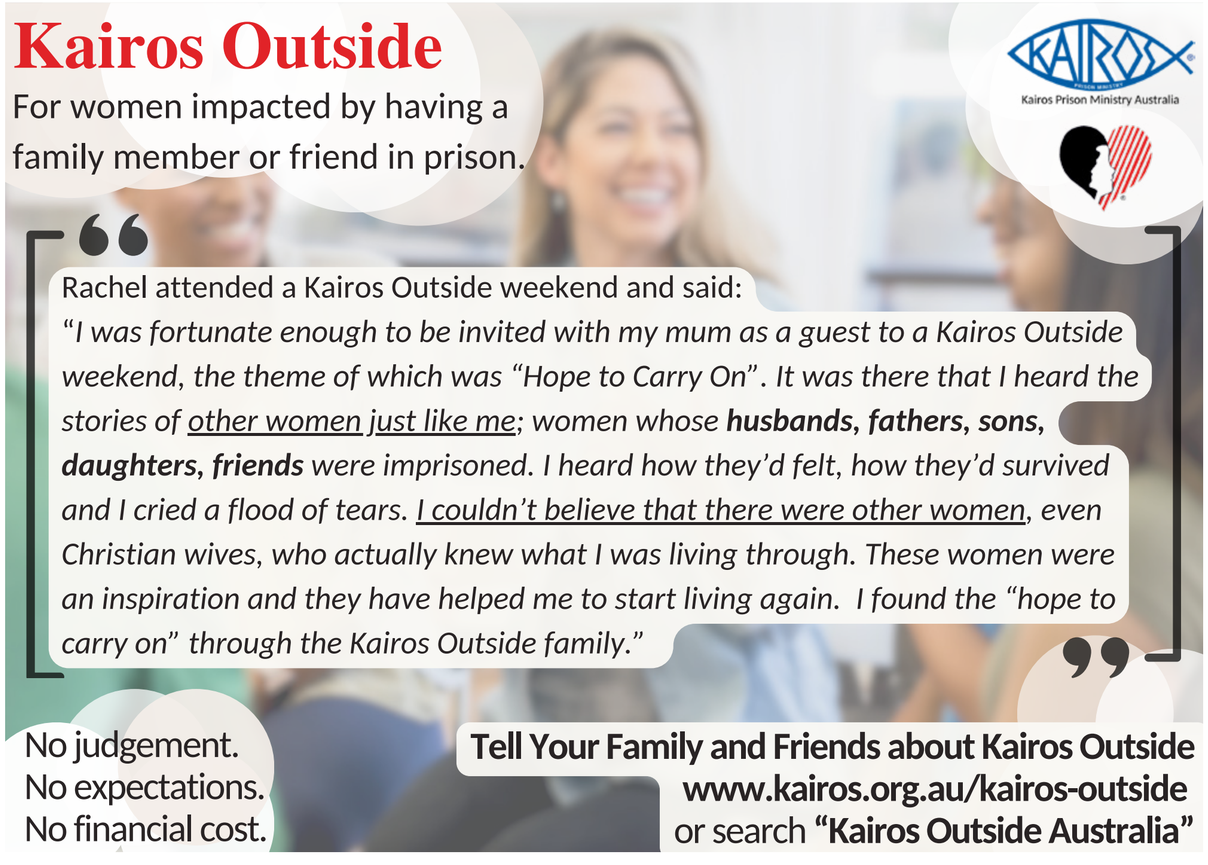
Of course, this is a bit difficult to apply straight off the buy-up list but something you can work on over time.

Here's another annoying take for you. Looking at this list, I generally don't think there's anything you must avoid altogether. The things I would try limit to once a week are chocolates, biscuits, chips and sugary drinks – this includes fruit juice. Any highly processed foods are not things you should be having every day. But, hey, we're all human. If a scotch finger (or two) a day makes you happy then go for it! I would just try to have smaller portions of your main meals to balance out the high calorie snacks.

Thanks for reading this month's article!

Join us next month for a discussion of the BIG C – Cancer.

Please write to *About Time* with any questions you have or suggestions for future topics. Trust me, nothing is off limits – most of my day is spent asking whether people have opened their bowels or farted.



• Reintegration

Ask Stacey – Your Questions Answered!



Stacey answers readers' questions on electronic monitoring, curfews, mates, loneliness, and staying steady on the outside.

By Stacey Stokes

Stacey Stokes is a transgender girl who had a 10 and a half year sentence in a men's prison. She is now an advocate, published writer and advice giver!

You had questions, we listened!

These answers are from my life (and are supposed to make you smile a bit!).

This is NOT legal advice – ALWAYS ask a lawyer and/ or your parole officer if you have any questions at the time! On all things, ask your parole officer prior to doing anything, consult your lawyer if you are still unclear. Do this via email and texts to show in writing that you raised it. And if they don't answer you, don't do it!!!

I've been in for a big whack. What's the biggest changes I have missed while in jail?

Out here, there are delivery drones dropping off pizza and dropping packages onto doorsteps. And the hover boards and flying cars! Actually, nothing in Back to the Future came true. It was all lies! And I rarely see drones. Its basically the 90s but with everything online and everyone staring at their phones with air pods in their ears. Airpods are little headphones. Everything else is the same. Social cohesion is really low though, my advice on that is to just listen and get an idea of the social vibe before saying anything that will get you in trouble at the dinner table.

What do I do if my electric monitory battery is going flat and I'm not at home?

The GPS has a extension cord on it that you wrap around your leg, so just go into a random shop and plug it in. Noooo! I joke! It actually has a detachable battery like a power drill. That battery plugs in to the wall. You put the battery on your GPS for maybe two hours a day to charge it. My advice is to charge it at a certain time each day. Then take the battery with you if you are away all day so you don't have to run home. The GPS will vibrate when it's almost flat. If you don't have the battery, head home immediately. If they see you are going home, it will help your case if you don't make it. Electronic monitoring will call you and your CCS officer if you don't make it, and they will want an explanation. The alcohol bracelet however, has a super battery that lasts months. You just have it swapped out an appointment. Which makes me wonder why they both don't just have a super battery...

Can I have visitors after curfew?

Your order will say if you can't have a visitor after curfew. If it doesn't say you can't, then have a party for all they care! Well, a non-alcoholic, drug free, board game party with your music at a reasonable and respectful volume, for all they care. Because...they do.

Can I hang out with my cellies when we get out on parole?

Short answer is, maybe, but don't count on it. Aside from there being different laws in different states, the parole board can also decide you can't hang out with anyone who has similar crimes as you. Co-offenders, or just there being intelligence you guys are up to no good. In short, ask your parole officer if you're unsure!!! Also, there is the question of, do you want to reintegrate? Do they want to reintegrate? Maybe you guys need to start seeing other people is all...

What was something reintegration services did not prepare you for when you got out?

The unexpected loneliness. I described it to a few people as a deafening silence. I would tell people that I feel so alone that I worry the only reason people will notice my absence is the horrible stink coming from my apartment. People kept telling me to buy a cat. But that seemed like surrendering to fate.

I spoke to a lot of people leaving prison and loneliness is common. In prison, you go through hell together. You open up and share things with your brothers and sisters you never thought you'd share with anyone. And they are always there to talk to, every single day.

People out here talk about trivial junk and it does my head in. People have gotten mad with me because I didn't appreciate how horrible their life was. Their life sounded lovely to me, they just sounded bored.

Saying that, I have also noticed it wasn't hard to make friends. Everyone knows I've been to jail and have taken me at face value (and my face is adorable and innocent looking!). So I have lots of friends out here and now I'm never lonely!

How do I make my mother proud?

In my experience, there are two types of mothers. One who was proud of you from the day you were born. And the other who will never be happy no matter what.

I lived my life following other people's dreams. Trying to make other people proud. And that led me to jail. Just focus on being the sort of person you can be proud of. Unless you're like Moe from Simpsons, who said "I've done things I'm not proud of, and the things I am proud of, are disgusting" – if this is you, focus on your programs first. We all go to jail for a reason. Therapy, programs, counselling. One day, you can be the person you can be proud of.

• Legal Corner

Open Air in Prison: Your Rights Explained

By Human Rights Law Centre lawyers Monique Hurley and Sohini Mehta, with assistance from Connor Shaw and with Queensland-specific contributions from the Prisoners' Legal Service Queensland.

The Human Rights Law Centre is a community legal centre focused on driving systemic change, including ensuring that people in prison are treated in dignity.

Disclaimer:
This article is general information only and is not legal advice.

Prisons are inherently brutal places where cruel and degrading practices are rife. With people in prisons across the country being subjected to an "epidemic of prison lockdowns", it is important to note that bare minimum safeguards exist in law, in most jurisdictions, that purport to guarantee at least some time 'in the open air' each day for people behind bars. A high level summary of the relevant laws are as follows:

Western Australia
There is no statutory entitlement to open air access pursuant to the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) or the *Prisons Regulations 1982* (WA). *The Prisons Act 1981* (WA) does, however, authorise the CEO of the Department of Justice to administer *Prison Rules* and the *Operating Policies and Procedures*.

Prison Rule 10 provides a minimum entitlement to "access to open air for a minimum of three hours each day", weather permitting. Where a person is, however, subject to a restrictive regime pursuant to the law, the Operating Policy and Procedure provides that a person's entitlement is reduced to "access to open air for a minimum of 1 hour each day" should the weather permit.

Victoria
Section 47(1)(a) of the *Corrections Act 1986* (Vic) provides that every person in prison has "if not ordinarily engaged in outdoor work, the right to be in the open air for at least an hour each day, if the weather permits".

Queensland
There is no statutory entitlement to open air access pursuant to the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (Qld) or the *Corrective Services Regulation* 2017 (Qld).

The Inspection Standards for Queensland Prisons do, however, provide at standard 53 an expectation that "all prisoners can spend two hours recreating in open and fresh air every day". While these standards are not binding, they do operate as a benchmark for the Inspector of Detention Services' reporting on prison conditions. Where a person is, however, subject to separate confinement, they are guaranteed "the opportunity to exercise, in the fresh air, for at least 2 daylight hours a day, unless a health practitioner advises that it would not be in the interests of the prisoner's health to exercise for a stated period or indefinitely" pursuant to regulation 4(1)(d) of the *Corrective Services Regulation 2017* (Qld).

New South Wales
Section 53 of the Crimes *(Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* (NSW) provides that people are "to be allowed at least 2 hours each day for exercise in the open air".

Exceptions exist for people confined to a cell pursuant to sections 53 or 56 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (NSW) – which refer to penalties that may be imposed by the governor or visiting magistrate – who are "to be allowed at least 1 hour each day for exercise in the open air".

South Australia
There is no statutory entitlement to open air access pursuant to the *Correctional Services Act 1982* (SA) or the *Correctional Services Regulation 2016* (SA).

While not publicly available, the Department of Correctional Services also applies a range of *Standard Operating Procedures* which may include a minimum entitlement to open air access.

Tasmania
Section 29(1)(a) of the *Corrections Act 1997* (Tas) provides that "if not ordinarily engaged in outdoor work, the right to be in the open air for at least an hour each day if the facilities of the prison are suitable for allowing the prisoner or detainee to be in the open air".

Australian Capital Territory
Section 45(1) of the Corrections *Management Act 2007* (ACT) requires that the Director-General must ensure, as far as practicable, that people in prison "have access to the open air for at least one hour each day" and "can exercise for at least one hour each day".

Northern Territory
There is no statutory entitlement to open air access pursuant to the *Correctional Services Act 2014* (NT) or the *Correctional Services Regulations 2014* (NT).

Section 205 of the *Correctional Services Act 2014* (NT) vests broad authority in the Commissioner to issue directions which may include a minimum entitlement to open air access.

While all states and territories subscribe to the national, non-binding *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia* which provide for a minimum of one-hour of open air access a day, minimum entitlements vary in the law as set out above.

Whether a lockdown or other restrictive prison practice unlawfully reduces outdoor time depends on the facts of each case, including the nature of the outdoor space to which access is offered or provided, and how much outdoor time is provided.

In jurisdictions where there are human rights laws – Victoria, the ACT and Queensland – prison authorities must properly consider and act compatibly with those laws, including the right to be treated with dignity when deprived of liberty. The laws will, so far as possible to do so consistently with their purpose, be interpreted in a way that is compatible with the rights protected under the human rights laws.

New Case

The recent Victorian case of *Marrogi v Secretary, Department of Justice and Community Safety & Ors (No 1)* [2026] VSC 4] shows how restrictive conditions of confinement can be tested against statutory rights to open air. In that case, Mr Marrogi brought judicial review proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria challenging his inadequate access to open air by reference to section 47(1)(a) of the *Corrections Act 1986* (VIC), as well as his right to humane treatment in prison pursuant to the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (VIC).

As part of the case, the Judge conducted a 'view', or inspection, of certain cells and went on to find that some of the yards that Mr Marrogi was offered or provided access to – for example, some which were closed by concrete walls, mesh or steel coverings, limited sunlight and/or fluorescent lighting – did not constitute being 'in the open air'. In closely considering the text of section 47(1)(a) of the *Corrections Act 1986* (VIC), the Judge found there was no "bright line" as to whether particular conditions comply with the right, but it instead required "an evaluative exercise".

The Supreme Court of Victoria declared that, on relevant days and in relation to specific yards, prison authorities acted unlawfully by denying Mr Marrogi his right to be 'in the open air' and by acting incompatibly with his right to humane treatment.

What to Do if Subjected to Lockdowns? Keeping Records and Making Complaints

When people in prison are being subjected to lockdowns or other restrictive prison conditions, they should keep records of their experiences. For lockdowns, this could include the frequency and length of lockdowns (for example, any in excess of 24 hours); time out of cell and time interacting with others; unscheduled lockdowns in addition to the rolling schedule; experience of lockdowns with reference to the type of unit they are housed in; interference with appointments; interference with ability to connect with children, family and other supports; interference with programs (for example, offence-specific programs required for parole eligibility); interference with access to cultural spaces and supports; and psychological and wellbeing impacts.

Complaint pathways differ in each jurisdiction, but people in prison can generally complain to the Ombudsman and could also consider raising their concerns with any independent visiting services that attend their prison. The treatment outlined above can also potentially be relevant to submissions a criminal lawyer might make about bail and/or sentencing and will also be relevant if a person in prison seeks legal advice about the lawfulness of being subjected to lockdowns, including sentence remissions, judicial review and civil claims.

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Mob

Important:
This article contains the names of First Nations people who have died.

‘Justice For Jeffrey’: Family Pushes For Answers at Coronial Inquest

The coronial inquest into the death of the First Nations man has concluded

By Denham Sadler



A coronial inquest into the death in custody of proud Noongar man Jeffrey Winmar has ended after two weeks of hearings.

Jeffrey was 28-years-old when he was arrested by Victoria Police detectives on 9 November 2023 following a pursuit which involved the canine unit and a drone.

He fell unconscious upon being arrested, but an ambulance was cancelled on two occasions by police after he came to.

Jeffrey was then taken to hospital with serious injuries and never recovered, passing away two days later on 11 November, 2023.

The inquest into Jeffrey’s death began in early April and ran for two weeks. It heard from a number of police officers involved with Jeffrey’s arrest, medical professionals and Jeffrey’s family.

It looked into the tactics used in the police pursuit of Jeffrey and his arrest, the use of a police dog, what happened after his arrest and the healthcare provided to him.

Jeffrey’s family traveled to Victoria from Western Australia to attend each day of the inquest.

Jeffrey’s mother, Ursulla Winmar, said she was looking for justice for her son.

“We should not have had to come this far to seek the truth,” Winmar said in a statement.

“Until this country properly accounts for First Nations deaths in custody – and until those responsible for their care are genuinely held to account – there will be more Jeffreys. More mothers like me. More broken homes like ours.”

Jeffrey’s family addressed the Coroner’s Court on the final day of the hearings.

“I haven’t felt like this inquest understands how police treat Aboriginal people and our and Jeff’s history with police,” Jeffrey’s father, Jeffrey ‘Pep’ Anderson said.

“My whole life I’ve seen the cops target Aboriginal people.”

Pep’s brother’s son, Jordan Anderson, died at Hakea prison in WA, and in 2022 his cousin’s son Ricky-Lee Cound died at the same prison.

“The police and prisons are killing us,” Pep said. “And no one seems to be taking it seriously.”

Jeffrey’s family described him as loveable, “happy-go-lucky” with an infectious smile that lit up the room.

“He was a beacon of positivity,” Jeffrey’s father said in a statement.

“Jeff would bring the family together in a way that no-one else could.”

Jeffrey’s mother said that he would also be checking up on his family.

“He had so much love to give,” Ursulla Winmar said.

“For his younger siblings, he was a protector and a guide, helping shape them to be better people, to be ready to face the world.”

Jeffrey’s father Pep said he hopes the truth comes out in the coroner’s final report.

“We’ll rest easier and I know he’ll rest easier knowing the truth about what happened,” Pep said.

“Just knowing can prevent Aboriginal people from being hurt in the future. We need people to stand with us. Change is what we’re talking about.”



Woven Together – Stitched Over
By BO
Nari Nari people
2025

This painting is to honour all the wise and wonderful people I’ve met while in prison. I have learnt so much from you all. We all have a story, and in every story there is a lesson. Some are easy to learn, others take more time to process, but all are important if we choose to listen.



Palawa Songlines
By B.Charles
Palawa people
2025

This story represents the Songlines and stories of my people on the land of our Ancestors. While the men of my mob are protecting our sacred waterhole and waterways.

Learn



Sir Winston Churchill by BiblioArchives LibraryArchives

All About Churchill

By T

T writes from a prison in VIC.

If I could interview someone dead or alive, I would like to interview Winston Churchill, Britain’s wartime (WWII) leader. On the the face of it, this would be seen as a very curious choice for an Australian, as Churchill was the architect of the Gallipoli campaign in the First World War, a catastrophe costing many allied lives.

Despite the cost of many Australian lives in the Dardanelles campaign, I view Churchill in a much broader light. He, more than any other leader, saved the world from what would have been a dark age which Adolf Hitler and the Nazis threatened in the 1930s and 1940s. Following Hitler’s ascendance to power in 1933, Churchill was the lone voice warning of the dire consequences for not only Europe but for the world of the emerging evil that Nazism represented. He was dismissed as an aging war monger not only in Britain but throughout the world. The world was paralysed with appeasement.

His capacity for prescient world predictions was uncanny. As a 17-year-old student at Harrow in 1891, he predicted: “I can see vast changes coming over a now peaceful world: great upheavals, terrible struggles, wars such as one cannot imagine; and I tell you London will be in danger – London will be attacked, and I shall be very prominent in the defence of London ... I see further ahead than you do. I see into the future. The country will be subjected somehow to a tremendous invasion ... but I tell you I shall be in command of the defences of London and I shall save London and England from disaster.” It would be almost 50 years later, in 1940, when he indeed would lead Britain in its survival in the Battle of Britain. Britain and the Commonwealth, which includes Australia, stood alone against the Nazis in 1940.

Shortly after World War Two, having led his nation through its darkest moments, Churchill on a speaking tour of the USA was warning the world of the Iron Curtain that was falling across eastern Europe, where another evil empire threatened – Joseph Stalin’s Soviet Union. Yet again he was dismissed as an old war monger, but he was ahead of a naive world to the emerging threat, the Cold War.

He understood people better than most, and I think this was due to him being a student of history all his life. I think he believed history offered insights which are not governed by scientific rules – they require a human instinct in reconstructing experiences of the past, in providing illumination on events and people, that can be related to contemporary situations.

We have a leader of the West today (Trump) who wants to make deals with the devil (Putin). Churchill would turn in his grave at such weakness and folly!

Eleven Things I Learned From Reading Last Month

By Jeff

Jeff writes from a prison in QLD.

Here are eleven things I learned from reading last month.



Feral Arts via Flickr

1. **I read in the newspaper that three-times Melbourne Cup winning mare Makybe Diva died, aged 27. Spookily, the same age as Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Jimmie Hendrix, Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse when they died. The Diva however was the only one of the six to have died of colic.**



Wikimedia Commons

2. **More from Don Quixote: “Nothing is so reasonable and cheap as good manners”.**



Wayne Gretzky New York Rangers by Håkan Dahlström

3. **Champion ice hockey player Wayne Gretzky: “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take”.**



Aakash Dhage via Unsplash

4. **The surface area of an adult human lung is about 100 square metres.**



Aswin Karuvally via Unsplash

5. **“It is the job that’s never started that takes longest to finish” – Tolkien.**



leonie wise via Unsplash

6. **Stand in the middle of a flat paddock. If you drop a bullet from your hand at shoulder height at the same instant the someone alongside you fires a rifle, which of the two bullets hits the ground first? The answer is they do so at the same time. The bullet’s rate of fall (ie force of gravity) is independent of its horizontal motion.**



John Cardamone via Unsplash

7. **“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent” – Eleanor Roosevelt.**



Pavlo Semeniuk via Unsplash

8. **“Remember to dig the well long before you get thirsty” – Chinese proverb.**



Miguel Bruna via Unsplash

9. **Thucidides paraphrased: “Of all the manifestations of power, the most admired is restraint.”**



Nicolas Hoizey via Unsplash

10. **What we commonly refer to as a “spiral staircase” is not a spiral. It is a cylindrical helix. A true spiral has radius of curvature with every revolution. Eg. A snail shell and many sea shells.**



Nick Hillier via Unsplash

11. **What is the only number, when written in English, has all its letters in alphabetical order? As an incorrect example, THREE is not because T comes after H. Write to About Time to find out the answer...**

Culture

Sports Round Up!

By Goal Mouth

Your resident sports editor.



Braden Collum

Athletics: Gout and Kennedy Race Into the Record Books

Rival Queensland sprinters Gout Gout and Lachlan Kennedy underlined the high-end talent in Australian athletics with boom performances in the national titles in Sydney.

The 18-year-old Gout took out the 200m final in 19.67 seconds, breaking the previous world under 20 record, and smashing the time of 19.93 seconds set by the legendary Usain Bolt in 2004.

In doing so, Gout broke his own national record of 20.02 and became the first Australian to clock less than 20 seconds for 200m legally. But he still has a way to go to beat Bolt's overall world record of 19.19, set 17 years ago in Berlin.

Kennedy became the first Australian athlete to break 10 seconds on home soil – and he did it twice in two days as he claimed his first national 100m title in Sydney.

Kennedy, 22, ran 9.96 secs in the heats and repeated that time with an easy win in the final.

Now he is eyeing Patrick Johnson's national record of 9.93 secs that has stood for 23 years. "I still feel like I haven't put together the perfect race, so I think I've definitely got more in the tank," Kennedy said.

Apart from his rare ability over the 100m trip, Kennedy is well known for his rivalry with Gout. Their clashes over 200m at successive Maurie Plant meetings in Melbourne have ended the same way, with narrow wins to the fast-starting Kennedy.



FIA F1 Imola 2025 No. 81 Piastri (3) by Jen_ross83

F1: Piastri Tops Australian Sport's Rich List

Melbourne-raised Formula 1 driver Oscar Piastri is Australian sport's top earner, according to a special report in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. The report found that Piastri earned $57 million to $59 million last year, well clear of golfer Cam Smith ($44m-$46m), and basketballers Josh Giddey ($38m-$40m) and Dyson Daniels ($37m-$39m).

Piastri's earnings consisted of his salary and bonuses from the McLaren team, and lucrative advertising and sponsorship deals with Google Pixel, Quad Lock, Monster Energy and Grill'd.

According to veteran F1 reporter Geoff Harris, Piastri cost his family millions of dollars when he began climbing the rungs of international motorsport.

First there was a move to England and boarding school fees, then funding his top-level karting, then racing cars – first Formula 4, then Formula 3 and Formula 2 – and travel all over Europe.

Just as well his father Chris had already made a fortune in his automotive tuning business.

Oscar Piastri, 25, led the Formula 1 world championship for much of last season but wound up third. If he eventually becomes world champion, even greater riches await.



Getty Images

Soccer: Spurs and Italy on Struggle Street

Tottenham Hotspur may be regretting parting with Australian Ange Postecoglou, who led the famous north London club to a Europa League title in 2025 shortly before being sacked.

This season, Spurs have just appointed their third manager. The second, Croatian Igor Tudor, was booted out after just 44 days.

Spurs sit in the relegation zone with six games left. The club is winless in its past 14 league matches.

Italian soccer is also in disarray as the national team failed to qualify for the upcoming World Cup again. The four-time champions last won the title in 2006, knocking out the Socceroos after a controversial penalty in the round of 16. Since then, they have been bundled out at the group stage twice and failed to qualify three times in a row.

Sauces to Transform Your Prison Meals

White sauce, cheese sauce, tartare and more.

By Mark

Mark writes from a prison in VIC.

BASIC WHITE SAUCE

Ingredients:
- 30g butter
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tbs flour (sifted)

Method:
1. Melt the butter, add flour, stir over low heat for 1 minute to give slight colour.
2. Remove from heat, add milk slowly and stirring continuously (if it starts to go lumpy stop milk and stir hard till dissolved).
3. Return to heat, add milk till finished. Stir till thickened and starts to boil.
4. Boil for 3 mins and serve.

CHEESE SAUCE

For vegetables, chicken, beef.

Ingredients:
- 1 cup white sauce
- ½ cup tasty cheese
- 1 tbs parmesan cheese
- pinch nutmeg

Method:
1. Place all ingredients in saucepan, mix on low heat and serve.

TARTARE SAUCE

For fish!

Ingredients:
- 1 cup of mayonnaise
- 30g capers if available (chopped)
- 60g gherkins (fine diced)
- Parsley (chopped)

Method:
1. Mix all ingredients together and serve.
2. Store in sealed jar for 1 month.

MORNAY SAUCE

For pasta and vegetables.

Ingredients:
- 1 cup white sauce
- 1 egg (beaten)
- 3 tbs grated cheese

Method:
1. Blend 1 Tbs of white sauce into egg with wooden spoon
2. Mix remaining sauce with cheese, stir till smooth
3. Heat on low – do not boil, serve

SAUCE VELOUTÉ

Ingredients:
- 60g butter
- ½ cup flour (sifted)
- 2½ cups chicken stock

Method:
1. Melt butter in saucepan, add flour, stir over medium heat
2. Remove from heat, add stock, stirring until smooth
3. Return to heat and stir till thickened
4. Allow to boil then reduce the heat. Simmer for 10–15 min.



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Creative

Nostalgia

By Dennis

Dennis writes from a prison in VIC.

Nostalgia is a gentle haze,
A soft and fading, golden maze,
Where time itself begins to blur,
And memory's touch is sweet and pure.

It whispers through the autumn leaves,
In every laugh and every breeze,
A glimpse of youth, a fleeting smile,
A world that seemed to last a while.

The streets we walked, the songs we sang,
The echoes of the joy they bring,
Each moment held in fragile glass,
A treasure that we cannot pass.
The faces of those long gone by,
Their voices still beneath the sky,
They live in shadows, soft and deep,
In dreams we chase but cannot keep.

Oh, how the heart longs to return,
To places where the candles burn,
Where laughter bloomed and love was new,
Where everything was pure and true.

But time moves on, and days decay,
The past is dust, and yet we stay,
Tangled in those days gone by,
Chasing what we cannot buy.

Nostalgia, like a gentle friend,
Reminds us that we must transcend,
For though we yearn for what's behind,
The present holds what's yet to find.

Methfairytale

By Karie

Karie writes from a prison in QLD.

I'm not Cinderella, though I've been up cleaning most the night,
I love my Prince Charming, even though we always fight.
I haven't lost my glass slipper, I wear them on the pole,
all for the packet, I'd sell my very soul.
I am no Snow White, although my skin is very pale,
my evil stepmum called the cops on me, now I'm on a bus to jail.
The apple doesn't fall very far from the tree,
give it a couple of weeks, and she'll be right in here with me.

I am no Sleeping Beauty, I get no beauty rest,
parole RIP'd me, I didn't pass the damn drug test.
My spinning needle comes in a brown paper bag,
I used to be so beautiful, now I look like an old hag.

I'm not belle of the ball, not the very least,
but we have something in common, I'm in love with a beast.
But the beast is not a person but a drug that I call meth,
I've been talking to myself for hours, I'm running out of breath.

There are no happy endings, no true love's first kiss,
happiness eludes me, real love is what I miss.
There is no Prince Charming, there is no horse and cart,
I wish that I had just said no before I'd ever start.

'Love is Rebuilding My Life'

By Phillip

Phillip writes from a prison in NSW.

There's irony, hypocrisy, fallacy,
a vast ocean of distance to cross.
The "saint", the "sinner", it's lunacy,
that the ignorant could save the lost.
They try, experiment, extrapolate theory
of behaviour and deterrents unending.
But too often it seems to conclusions dreary
they turn, and decide on confining.
Ignore commonsense! Disregard love and life!
Focus only on minutia of law!
Wash your hands, turn your back, and create more strife!
Slam your gavel and propagate flaw!
This does not solve, filling boxes with men,
out of sight, out of mind, out of thought.
The likely result? Anger festers and then it flares up and out like you've taught.
"Why do they repeat?" "Why come back in at all?"
I'll bet you don't understand
that a spirit not healed but crushed by the fall
will come out more broken at hand.
There are some, of course, too flawed and broken
to allow contact far and wide.
But those guys are rare, a fraction, a token
of all those you've cast aside.
Many of us who you've locked up within needed punishments mingled with grace,
not punitive efforts that multiply sin,
not a cell door slammed in our face.
Rather than seek out the maximum time when a CCO is possible fore,
take in the context surrounding the crime
and make your judgements with care.
This time you missed it when taking your shot,
hurt victims more than me.
Instead of emotions making you hot,
think carefully next time, Bree.
As for me, I will rise, return from this hell
due to God, my family and wife.
In spite of the damage done in this cell
their love is rebuilding my life.



Send Us Your Art

We're looking to print more artwork from people in prison. If you have any sketches, paintings or other creative pursuits – please send them to us! We'd love to see them.

Staff members at your prison may be able to scan and send them to us via email.

Please send your letters to the following postal details, or to the email address if you have access.

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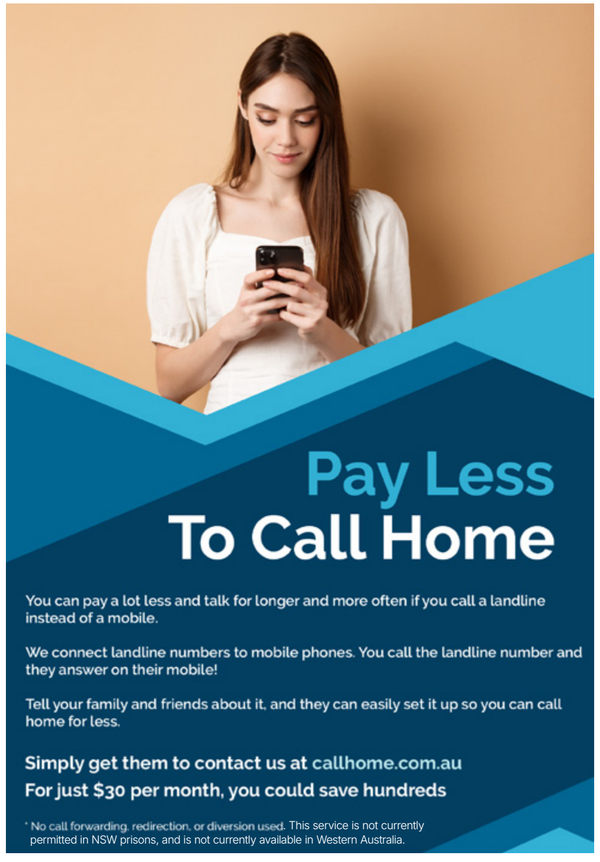


Play

Quiz

Test your general knowledge on our monthly quiz!

1. In which continent will be the 2026 FIFA World Cup be held in June?
2. Who is Australia's highest paid sportsperson?
3. What is the highest title in chess?
4. What is Australia's third most populous state?
5. Which two countries share a land border with the USA?
6. What song begins with the lyrics: "Working hard to make a living, bringing shelter from the rain"?
7. What is the chemical symbol for gold?
8. In terms of the internet, what does www stand for?
9. What three colours are on the flag of Italy?
10. Hash browns are usually made with what vegetable?

Sudoku

Fill the grid so every row, column and box contains the numbers 1-9 once.

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



Write in a journal	Watch the sunrise/sunset	Draw or Paint	Cook a meal	Visit a friend
Read a book	Do Yoga	Exercise	Go for a walk	Meditate
Play Cards	Write a poem	Write a song	Rearrange your cell notice board	Call a friend
Visit neighbours	Go to the library	Play a sport	Watch a movie	Play an instrument
Listen to the radio	Bake a dessert	Play a board game	Make Origami	Visit the oval
Watch sport on the oval	Write a letter	Bounce a ball	Dance to a song	Read the bible
Study the canteen list	Check out the hobby catalogue	Do arts and crafts	Make leather items	Study the shoe catalogue
Paint a canvas	Go to the multifaith centre	Book a visit	Do laundry	Write a plan for your release
Order photo ID	Order a Medicare card	Investigate potential housing	Write a weekly budget	Study the watch catalogue
Do a program	Do potential homework	Clean your cell	Read the paper	Make needed appointments
Investigate employment options	Have a chat to industries	Write down all potential programs to do	Investigate services upon release	Exchange damaged clothing
Order some socks and jocks	Buy a birthday card	Order a drivers licence	Play pool/snooker	Play table tennis
Have a shave	Brush your teeth	Help out a friend	Ask someone how they're going	Vacuum the carpet
Empty the bin	Tell a joke	Ask someone a joke	See what's for lunch/dinner	Draw a picture
Colour in	Design a tattoo	Do a word search	Write a bucket list	Clean your linen
Make your bed	Check out the special spend catalogue			

Bored in Jail Activity List

Dear About Time,

My name is Steven, and I'm doing time in VIC. I have to say I am really digging the paper, its a great read.

I was in a program the other day and the teacher handed us out an activity/bored list. I noticed it didn't really work well being locked up as it was one for home. I loved the idea so I thought I would tweak it and re-do it. So far its been a hit here anyway. I would love to get it out to every prisoner in jail. Maybe you guys can?

Thank you kindly
Steven, VIC



Meme of the Month

By Meicho

Meicho writes from a prison in QLD.

Quiz Answers

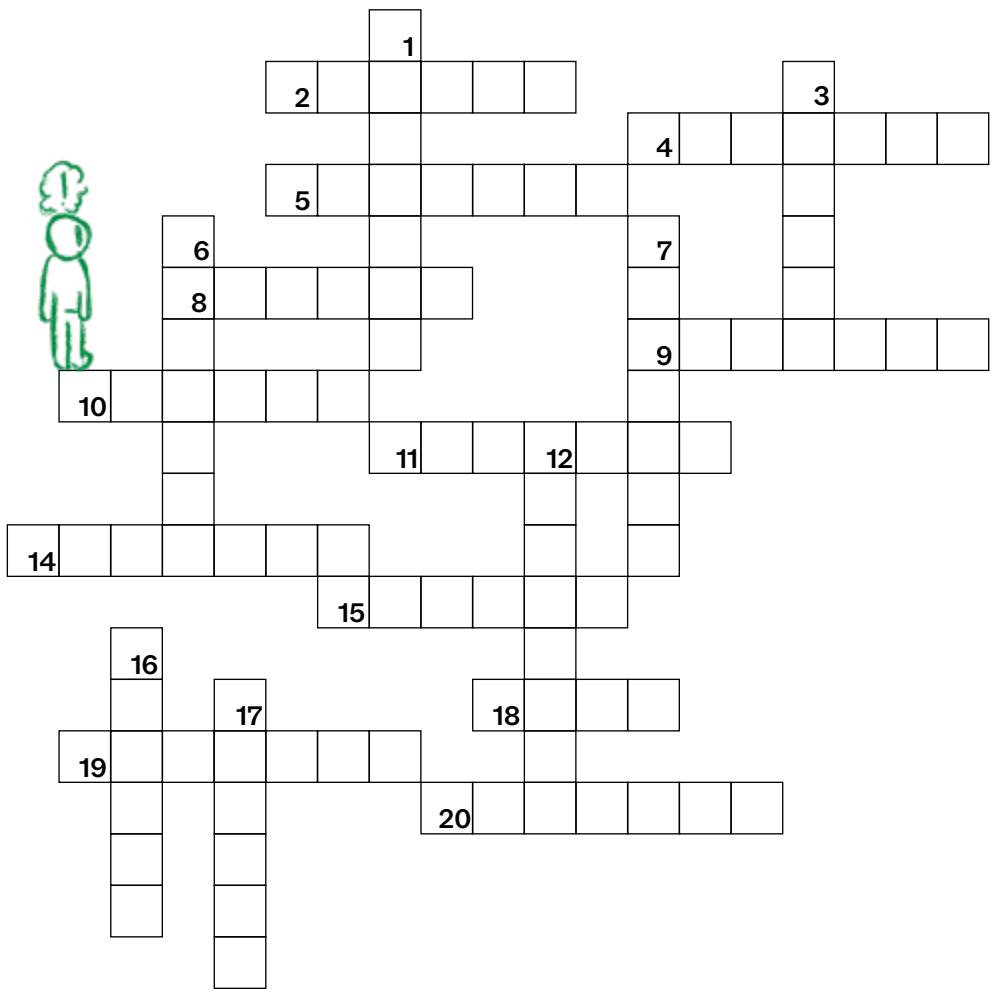
1. North America
2. Oscar Piastri
3. Grandmaster
4. Queensland
5. Canada and Mexico
6. *Working Class Man* by Jimmy Barnes
7. Au
8. World Wide Web
9. Green, white and red
10. Potato

Crossword Answers

Across:
2. Sponge
4. Pyramid
5. Whisper
8. Canyon
9. Bicycle
10. Quartz
11. Acrobat
14. Tornado
15. Marble
18. Stem
19. Eclipse
20. Thermos

Down:
1. Horizon
3. Galaxy
6. Octagon
7. Library
12. Omelette
16. Anchor
17. Riddle

Crossword



ACROSS

2. It's used to clean up and soak up liquids (6)
4. An ancient tomb shape in Egypt (7)
5. Speak very quietly (7)
8. A deep, steep-sided valley (6)
9. Two-wheeled mode of transport (7)
10. A common crystal in rocks (6)
11. A circus performer (7)
14. A type of storm also known as a twister (7)
15. Stone used for some statues (6)
18. The part of a plant that supports leaves and connects with the roots (4)
19. When the moon blocks the sun (7)
20. A flask for hot or cold drinks (7)

DOWN

1. The line where the sky meets the land or sea (7)
3. Ours is called the Milky Way (6)
6. An eight-sided shape (7)
7. Where you can borrow books (7)
12. An egg dish folded in a pan (8)
16. Something that stops a boat from drifting (6)
17. A tricky question (6)

