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ISSUE NO. 24 JULY 2026 ABOUTTIME.ORG.AU

About Time

Australia’s National Prison Newspaper

Write to Us:
Share your thoughts and stories. Tell us what’s going on inside. Ask us a question. It’s free!

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Reply Paid 94762
Melbourne VIC 3001



Campaign to Change Healthcare in Custody

By VACCHO

People in prisons continue to face preventable harm due to poor healthcare.

Despite decades of evidence, prison healthcare continues to be outsourced to private companies with a profit-driven model that does not meet people’s needs.

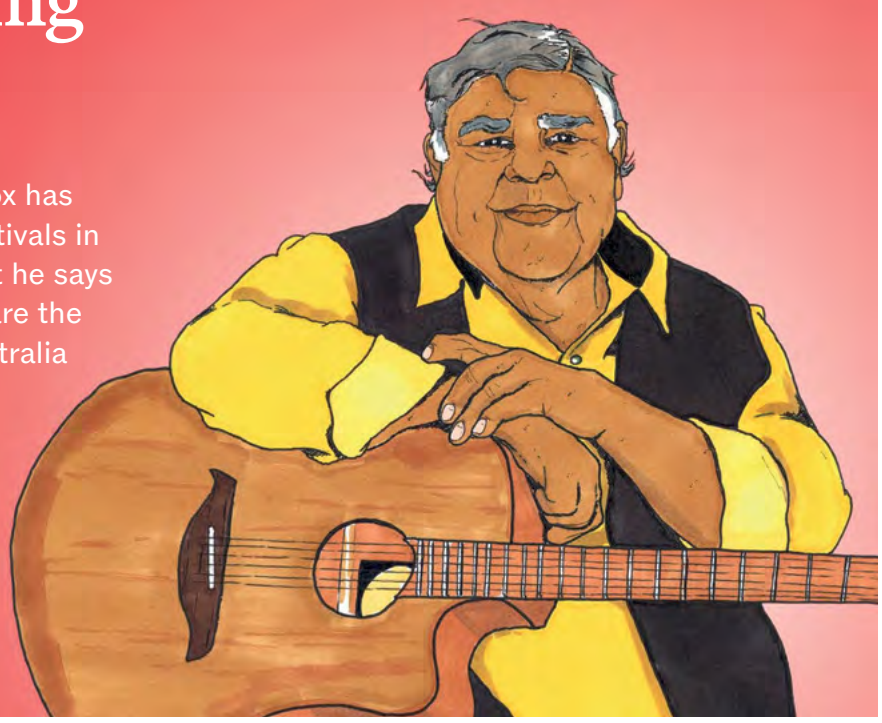
Continued on page 10.

MOB

The Koori King of Country on Playing in Prison

First Nations music legend Roger Knox has played everywhere from huge music festivals in the USA to the Sydney Opera House. But he says the shows that mean the most to him are the ones he played in prisons around Australia

By Denham Sadler
Read on page 19.



Ike Curtis



Sergeant at South Melbourne Police Station
By Thelma
Palawa people

“My painting carries the weight of my ancestors. And through it, I speak loud and clear. My painting is truth.”

See more from Thelma and other First Nations artists on page 16.

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Letters

Remand is Stressful

By by S.

S. writes from a prison in NSW.

Dear Editor of *About Time*,

I'm in month 20 with my trial another 12 months away. Remand is a particularly stressful period mainly due to a number of factors:

1. Uncertainty of the future
2. Risk of random bad placement
3. Risks of violent offenders

Therefore, I find the lack of access to nature, particularly trees and open grass lands is mentally and physically detrimental especially for 1st timers and older (>60) folk like myself.

The majority of prison staff try their best and you feel some actually care. Given 'remand' is the entry point, how can the NSW remand system be changed to mitigate the anxiety and concerns associated with the points above?

Thank you.

Prison Means Business

By Freshie

Freshie writes from a prison in NSW.

Prison doesn't rehabilitate people. People rehabilitate people.

If prison rehabilitated people, people wouldn't come back to prison.

I saw, as soon as I walked in, how broken and greedy this system is.

I am on remand at a private prison. Everybody has a dollar sign on their head.

Calls cost $2.00 for ten minutes. Now imagine there are 1,000 prisoners here making one call each per day (minimum, definitely more). That is $14,000 per week, just preying on our need to stay connected.

Then there is food. We get given 300ml of #LITE milk in the morning, a wrap with a handful of chicken, a sandwich with one slice of "meat" or two tiny sausage rolls for lunch, and a dinner like you would get on an aeroplane, plus two pieces of fruit (sometimes four) per day, and a children's pack of cereal.

This must be the legal bare minimum, and most of it is cheap or inedible, leaving you feeling hungrier. Not to mention, they give it to us at 2:30pm for dinner and lock us in at 3:30pm.

This makes it necessary to pay for groceries every week, which is another hand-in-your-pocket technique to make us pay.

One thousand prisoners x $50 buy-up weekly (on average, usually more) makes another $50,000 per week.

Everyone has a dollar sign on their head.

Prison is a business.

Remember, prison doesn't rehabilitate you.

Only you can do that.

Money Can't Buy Love

By Elyana

Elyana writes from a prison in QLD.

My name is Elyana but people here call me Frenchie – it's my little nickname here in Australia.

I've been in 10 months already and everyday it's a different fighting combat with myself because it's not my country, you know what I mean? I try to kill time so I got a job and I like it, I learn more of the language (English), I make good friends , I look after myself – I just try to do my time cause I got a lot to do before I go back to my home in France.

It's very hard to be locked up far away from family and friends. I really feel selfish at this point, I put money before the true love from them and now I can't talk, laugh or spend some time or grow up with all the people I stand for – I miss you mum, my brothers, friends and family.

Here in jail we are allowed to have a 10 minute phone call with family or friends from overseas but they cost us $8 each. Air mail takes months to get a letter from them. I'm grateful about virtual visits, two in a week, but after every single visit, when I go back to my unit, I feel my heartbroken.

So, for my mind I got some photos of them on my board and I listen to music 24/7: Tupac, Bruno Mars, Michael J, Rihanna, Akon, Eminem, The Weeknd and others. Music is so important, I don't know how to explain these feelings but I know you get what I trynna say.

Every day I learn more. Some days are good and some days are very bad and hard emotionally but I'm still learning it's just life, you know.

I committed a crime and I deserve to be here. I take that like an experience and hopefully I can see my mum before she passes. I lost my grandma the first months I got locked up and my heart was broken. Rest in Peace Jedda.

Stay strong and patient – this is my key for opening the door of my freedom.

Just remember: Money can't buy love and I want to say to all the women in the world locked up for a big or short sentence: We got this girl, it's not forever!

How to Handle It When a Pen Pal Goes Quiet

By Turbo

Turbo writes from a prison in QLD.

I would like to remind people that even if your loved one or pen pal is legit across the road, it can still take weeks for letters to go back and forth.

One person could be waiting for buy-up so they have more envelopes, transferred jails or is just naughty and in the D.U unable to reply just yet. It can be hard on partners if you've been denied inter-facility calls or are still waiting approval, which also takes quite a long time.

And that pen pal who just vanished after they got out. The outside is a busy life and most promises of continuing communication are not kept for long and fizzle out.

Shout out! My love to the girls at BWCC, and mates at MCCC.

Thank you.

Finding 'About Time' and Finding My Voice Again

By Vanessa

Vanessa writes from a prison in WA.

To *About Time*,

I only just discovered the prison newspaper last month in April 2026.

I spent all day reading and sharing the newspaper here at Melaleuca Women's Prison.

I had only just begun writing again since getting incarcerated this year in January.

When I found out about *About Time* I was excited to be able to write in to the national prison newspaper. At the time I had no idea what to write. I wanted to enter the writing competition but the subject "Food For Thought", is one of my least favourite food sayings!

So I was a little put off and tried a couple attempts to write something about it, not succeeding in my attempts. I do look forward to reading some of the submitted written work of others and possibly hope to enter into the next writing competition!

From Vanessa

One More Day Closer to Being Free

By Luke

Luke writes from a prison in QLD.

Yesterday I went for bail and I got denied, which really, really sucked.

I had to waste two phone calls to my lawyer to find out I was denied bail. Why can't the jail tell someone that their bail was denied? Everyone in my unit was asking, "did I get it, did i get it" and talking to my lawyer he told me my case was adjourned for another three weeks, so I told him to go for sentencing straight away.

I've already done 4 1/2 months, my charges have been downgraded so why am I still sitting in jail? Why do the police get to take so long to get their submissions in?

My lawyer said I'll get a sentence date in the next two weeks and I should be out on time served and I'll never be coming back, this being my third time in. I'm well and truly over it.

The only good thing in here is going to church and going to programs when they are available. I'm doing an NA course but I'll probably be out before then.

Today the whole centre is locked down, the reason no one knows. The guards don't tell why. They leave or lunch out in the sun. Today is ham wraps so they are going off in the heat plus our buy up has been sitting out there all morning. The chocolate is melting, the milk going off.

It's nearly mid day and we are still waiting for lunch and buy-up but hopefully we get unlocked this afternoon. We just have to sit and wait for some news. One more day closer to getting out. One more day closer to being free.

"I Don't Want Prison to Be Home Anymore"

By Appollonia

Appollonia writes from a prison in WA.

Dear *About Time*,

My name is Appollonia.

I have been in and out of prison since 2016. My life has been a roller coaster. I didn't grow up knowing about prison life, but I got on meth after high school, mixed in with the wrong crowd.

I was 18 when I first came to prison.

I am now 29. I've spent 10 years in and out.

As a mother, I didn't raise my son and I regret the last 10 years. Now my son is 9.

The first time I saw him after 5 years broke my heart. Seeing my son makes me want to change and be a mother to him. I have now made the choice to go to rehab.

I want to change because I don't want prison to be home anymore.

I am willing to give my best to stay out and settle down.

I would like to get out of prison and own my own business to help others who need support, because when I got out I didn't have the support I need.

I want to thank the staff at West Kimberley Regional Prison for the support on my journey to recovery.

Love, hope, faith, dream and peace.

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 24th 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
Reply Paid 94762
Melbourne VIC 3001

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

contribute@abouttime.org.au

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subscribe@abouttime.org.au

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

On Choice

By Ronin Cruise

Ronin Cruise, based in Queensland, has spent a significant portion of his life in prison. He considers writing and sharing his story a key driver in staying clean and out of prison.

The greatest power we have is our choice, our ability to make decisions.

In any given moment it is our choice to react or respond to our experience.

It is our choice in which way we choose to respond to any given situation.

We can choose to see the positive, to see that everything is working in our favour no matter how seemingly negative, or we can choose to see things in a way that we perceive to be negative.

This choice completely alters the reality we experience.

Ultimately we create our reality, our experience of life by what we decide, what we choose to let in.

We choose our thoughts, we choose the content we consume, the company we keep, everything. From the tiny subconscious things to the bigger more impactful decisions.

We have the power to choose, and it's only when you understand that it's all up to you, do you realise that you can truly decide your preferred experience in any given moment and the massive potential of that.

We always always have the choice, there are always many many options to choose from but it's the act of deciding, it's a step forward backed by power and strength.

It allows massive momentum to flow through. One of the biggest blocks for yourself is to not decide on something, it keeps you in limbo and away from progressing in your growth.

When I speak of choice and decision I mean in every aspect.

I choose to go here or there

I choose to think of this in a positive way.

I choose to experience abundance.

I choose for these toxic substances to do my body no harm.

I choose to be given the perfect opportunity.

There is great power behind the decision. It's an act of complete control of yourself.

Making a decision is on par with willing something to happen when you will yourself to push on ... it's will power.

I will -power.

And when you say I will, you are making a decision, you are creating something, an experience or a reality where anything you will to be possible is.

Reminder to please send in your contributions to the next writing challenge!

Prompt: Time Travel
What does time travel mean to you? Is it a historical story, set in medieval times or the 1960s? Is it a sci-fi about a brave new world? Maybe you have five minutes to save humanity! Or perhaps it's about reflecting on the past, or looking hopefully to the future? Share your story – fiction or non-fiction – and be in the running to get it published on the front page of the next edition!

To enter, send us a letter with your entry and 'Writing Challenge' up the top.

Please include this on the envelope – you do not need to include a stamp:

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Connect your loved one with support while you're inside

While you're inside, the people who care about you are carrying a weight most people will never understand.

Kairos Outside offers a free weekend retreat for the women in your life — your mum, grandmother, partner, sister, daughter, friend or other women in your life.

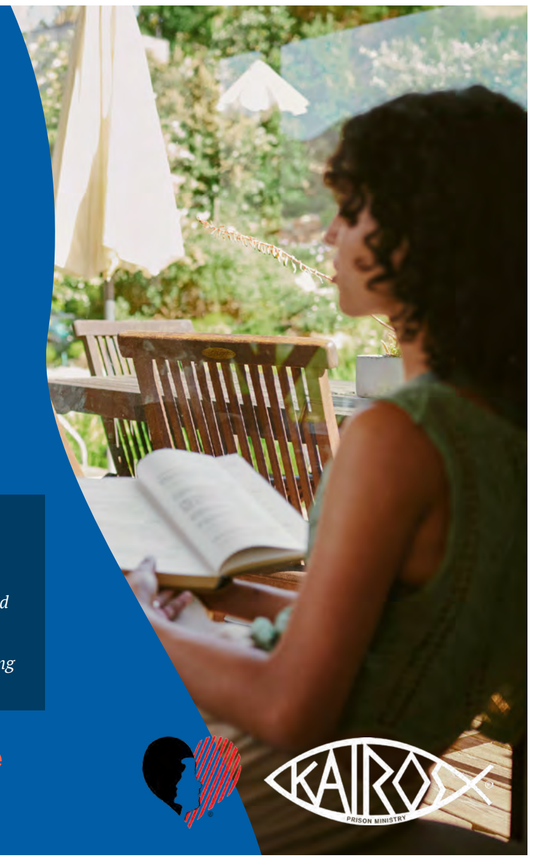
A no-judgment space for her to rest, be cared for, and spend time with other women who truly get it.

It costs her nothing, but it could mean everything.

Past guest Rachel says, *"I was fortunate enough to be invited with my mum as a guest to a Kairos Outside weekend.*

It was there that I heard the stories of other women just like me; women whose husbands, fathers, sons, daughters, and friends were imprisoned. I heard how they'd felt, how they'd survived, and I cried a flood of tears.

I couldn't believe that there were other women…who actually knew what I was living through. I found the 'hope to carry on' through the Kairos Outside family."



Tell someone you love about Kairos Outside
kairos.org.au/kairos-outside

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 opposite. 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 at the bottom).

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

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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: _____

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

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

Can you tell us why you answered this way?

_____

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

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

Can you tell us why you answered this way?

_____

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

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

Can you tell us why you answered this way?

_____

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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

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

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

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 Agree

Can you tell us why you answered this way?

_____

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

_____

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

_____

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

_____

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:

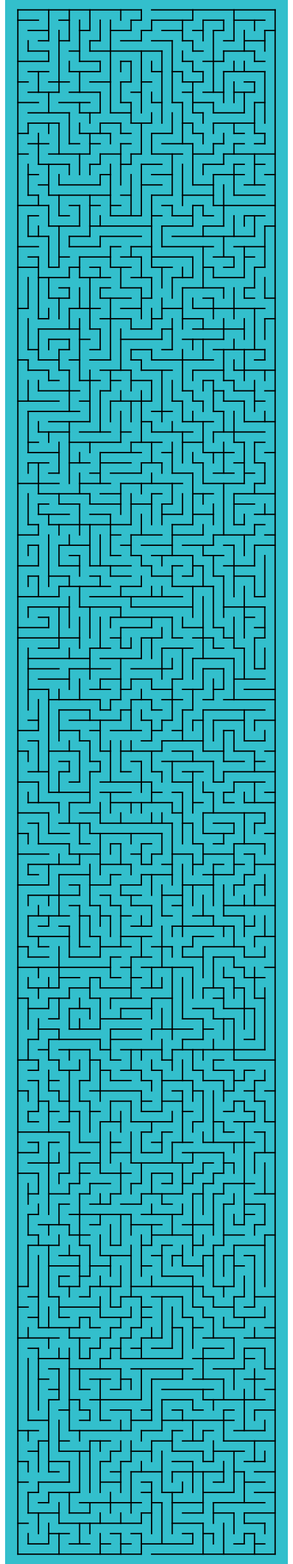
- You were abused as a child by someone connected to an institution
- You made an inquiry or started a claim that was put on hold or went cold
- You were told your claim was weak because the abuser was not technically an employee
- You received a low offer or had mediation stall after the 2024 Bird v 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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NT

Children to be Questioned For Two Days

The Northern Territory government has unveiled changes to allow police to question children and hold them for up to 48 hours in police cells, without an adult being present.

The changes to youth justice laws will be debated in Parliament.

Under current rules, children must be released by police if they are not brought before a court within 24 hours or the next business day, unless an extension is approved by a judge.



NSW

Funding For Women's Programs

Nearly half a million dollars will go towards programs for women in prison.

The NSW government will spend $450,000 on three programs in women's prisons.

The Success Works – Pathways to Success program will provide targeted learning and leadership opportunities, with a focus on improving confidence and employment opportunities post-release.

The Women and Girls Emergency Centre will provide a six-week housing pathways and life skills program to build financial literacy and independent living skills.

And SHINE For Kids will continue to run the Bringing Up Great Kids, Dinner Club program, which involves Masterchef winner Julie Goodwin and encourages mothers inside to work on connections with their children and family before they are released.

The programs will be run at Dillwynia, the Jacaranda Cottages at Emu Plains, Reiby Youth Justice Centre and Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre.

Prison Guards Go on Strike

Prison guards around NSW went on strike to protest the planned closure of parts of Goulburn Correctional Centre.

The prison officers were later ordered to return to work.

The NSW government has announced plans to close two maximum-security wings of the ageing Goulburn Correctional Centre.

The union representing the prison officers said there had been a "breakdown of communication" around the planned closures.



VIC

Multiple Incidents at Western Plains

There have been a number of incidents at Western Plains Correctional Centre in the space of a week.

In late May a fire in a cell at the prison led to firefighters being called.

The fire was contained before they arrived.

This was just days after an inmate and staff member at the same prison were taken to hospital following another fire.

Also in late May an inmate was stabbed at Western Plains, allegedly by another inmate.

Western Plains officially opened in June 2025, with a price tag of over $1 billion.



TAS

Major Legal Groups Call Out Ongoing Prison Lockdowns

Three major Tasmania legal groups have called out the ongoing lockdowns in the state's prisons, calling on the government to end them.

The Law Society of Tasmania, Prisoners Legal Service and Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service said the lockdowns were a "human rights issue" that must be addressed urgently.

"We call on Tasmanian government and the relevant unions with coverage of the prison system to work together urgently to end the inhumanity of lockdowns," the groups said.

"The unions and government have a legal and moral obligation to ensure prisoners' human rights are protected."

Prisoners Legal Service chair Greg Barns has said that days spent in lockdowns should reduce the length of someone's prison sentence.

People in prison in Tasmania have the lowest time out of cell in Australia, with just seven hours per day out of cell in 2024-25, below the national average of 8.9 hours.

Youth Detention Centre to Become Adult Prison

The Tasmania government has announced a plan to turn the Ashley Youth Detention Centre into a minimum-security adult prison.

The Commission of Inquiry into Government Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings in 2022 recommended the youth prison be closed as soon as possible.

It was labelled a "gladiator pit" and a "prison for kids".

The youth prison will be shut after the new Pontville Youth Detention facility is ready, which is expected to be in 2028.

The adult prison will be an agriculture-based rehabilitation and training facility, and will house about 40 people.



SA

Violent Incident at Yatala

Two people incarcerated at Yatala Labour Prison have been taken to hospital after a violent incident.

A fight in a cell at the prison, allegedly over the television, led to two men later being taken to hospital.

SA Ambulance was called to the prison hours later after reports of the fight, and the two men were eventually taken to hospital.

They were returned to the prison later on the same night.



WA

Two Cases of Diphtheria in Prison

There have been two cases of diphtheria identified in a regional Western Australian prison.

The cases have been linked to West Kimberley Regional Prison in the last two months.

Diphtheria is a contagious infection that impacts the throat and skin. It can be deadly for those who are not vaccinated, or are undervaccinated.

The two cases were during different times, and were not contracted while the individuals were in prison.

There have been 92 cases of diphtheria reported in the wider Kimberley region, with health authorities now urging people to get vaccinated.



ACT

Internet Access Allowed For Man on Bail

A man on bail has been allowed to access the internet to help him apply for jobs.

The man had been released on bail under house arrest, and had been prevented from accessing electronic devices or the internet.

At the ACT Magistrates Court in late May, lawyers for the man argued that he needed to access the internet to look for work, and to help with work-from-home arrangements.

This was granted by the Magistrate.



QLD

Drone Carrying Drugs Taken Down

A drone carrying an estimated $1 million in drugs has been intercepted trying to fly over the Townsville prison.

Queensland authorities said that the drone was attempted to take drugs, syringes and a mobile phone into the Townsville Correctional Centre in mid-May.

No one has been arrested yet for the incident, and police are currently investigating.

In 2022, a drone found with drugs worth an estimated $250,000 was found flying over the same prison.

A man was later charged with four offences over this incident.

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Campaign to Change Healthcare in Custody

By VACCHO

Continued from page 1.

This hits Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people especially hard, because the wider justice system is shaped by racism, Aboriginal people are imprisoned at much higher rates and their needs are often misunderstood and deprioritised.

The result is patchy care, poor continuity between prison staff and community health services, lack of cultural support and inadequate responses to mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

That is why the *Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation* (VACCHO) is campaigning to 'Transform Care in Custody'. VACCHO is advocating for reform in Victoria's prisons that will benefit not just Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders but all people in prison.

The campaign is advocating for the following:

1. Move responsibility for prison healthcare from the Department of Justice and Community Safety to the Department of Health. This is based on the idea that healthcare should be run by the health system not the justice system.
2. All custodial health services to be delivered by a public provider that is accountable to government and community, not profit seeking private corporations accountable to their shareholders.
3. Fund an Aboriginal controlled model of healthcare that is holistic, culturally safe, and meets the health and social needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody.

VACCHO CEO, Dr Jill Gallagher AO said placing healthcare in Aboriginal hands for Aboriginal people in custodial settings will help break cycles of harm.

"We know that through holistic, culturally appropriate health and wellbeing care, we can best meet the needs of Aboriginal people in custody and prevent ongoing harm including deaths in custody.

These reforms are supported by numerous coronial inquests and reports including the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the Yoorrook Justice Commission and the Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System.

"All of this evidence has highlighted systemic failures in prison healthcare and the urgent need for ACCO-led models (Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations) to promote health and prevent further deaths," Dr Gallagher explained.

ACCO-led healthcare models deliver stronger accountability, greater trust in healthcare systems, better continuity of care when exiting prison, culturally safe, high quality, trauma-informed healthcare and better health, wellbeing, rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes.

"These three reforms alone can't resolve all the health and wellbeing people face in prison, but they lay the foundations for culturally safe, dignified custodial healthcare for Mob and others," Dr Gallagher said.

VACCHO's campaign is supported by 21 organisations so far and the list is growing. VACCHO invites other organisations to show their support by signing up via their campaign website.

VACCHO welcomes stories that would support the call for change, so please get in touch at media@vaccho.org.au (if you have access to email) or post a letter to:

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Fraud charges discontinued - Hannay Criminal Defence challenge evidence obtained from the DPP.

After nearly two decades of fighting, our clients have had all charges discontinued.

Our clients were jointly charged with a single count of fraud arising from allegations that they dishonestly induced an investor to contribute approximately $2 million to a business venture between late 2007 and early 2008.

The complaint was not made until 2016, with charges laid in 2017. The matter then progressed slowly through the court system, with committal proceedings occurring in 2022 before the case was ultimately committed to the District Court. By the time the matter was listed for trial, the allegations related to events almost two decades old.

Throughout the proceedings, our clients consistently maintained their innocence. Hannay Criminal Defence identified significant issues with the prosecution case, including evidence that contradicted key allegations regarding our client's whereabouts during critical periods, disputes as to whether any false representations had been made, and concerns about the reliability of witness recollections given the passage of time.

After years of litigation, extensive disclosure requests, subpoenas, cross-examination and pre-trial hearings, a successful defence argument challenged the admissibility of important documentary evidence relied upon by the prosecution.

Following a review of the remaining evidence, the prosecution concluded there were no longer reasonable prospects of securing a conviction and formally discontinued the charges against both clients in April 2026.

The Court subsequently discharged both defendants, bringing the proceedings to an end.

The outcome marked the conclusion of a case spanning almost a decade from the laying of charges and nearly twenty years from the alleged events. It serves as an important reminder that criminal allegations must be supported by admissible and reliable evidence capable of proving every element of an offence beyond reasonable doubt.

We were honoured to assist our clients in achieving this result and helping them finally move forward with their lives.

Author: Daniel Hannay
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Victoria Restricts Access to Open Air in Prisons in Breach of Human Rights Charter

By Denham Sadler

Victoria has overridden its own human rights charter to restrict the ability of people in prison to access 'open air'.

The state government introduced legislation to Parliament last week that allows for people in prison's legal right of one hour in the open air every day to be limited due to a range of reasons.

In doing so, the Labor government admitted this move was in breach of its Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and expressly excluded it from applying to the new bill.

The legislation is in response to a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year that many cell yards and exercise areas in certain high-security and management units across a number of Victorian prisons were not providing open air.

Instead of renovating these cells to make them compliant, the Victorian government has moved to legislate to restrict the right to outside time, and to block anyone from accessing monetary compensation for not getting fresh air in prison in the past.

Currently, people in prison must get at least one hour outside "in the open air" unless this is made impossible by the weather.

The Victorian government's reforms introduce a number of other reasons why this may be limited, including the management, good order or security of the prison, and the rights, safe custody or welfare of the person in prison or others.

"These amendments enable access to open air to be managed alongside operations considerations, including to ensure the management, good order and security of the system and the safety of people in prison and prison staff," Victorian Minister for Corrections Paul Hamer said in Parliament.

"The operational reality of the system is that it is not reasonably practicable to provide each person in prison who currently has access to a private rear courtyard with their daily right to be in open air in alternative yards."

The Victorian government has moved to exclude the human rights charter to this legislation, admitting that it is incompatible with the right to protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to humane treatment when deprived of liberty.

"The government does not take this step lightly," Hamer said.

"In this exceptional case, the Charter is being overridden and its application excluded to ensure access to open air in prison can continue to be managed safely, alongside operational considerations."

The bill also blocks anyone previously impacted by not being provided time outside from getting any monetary compensation from the state government.

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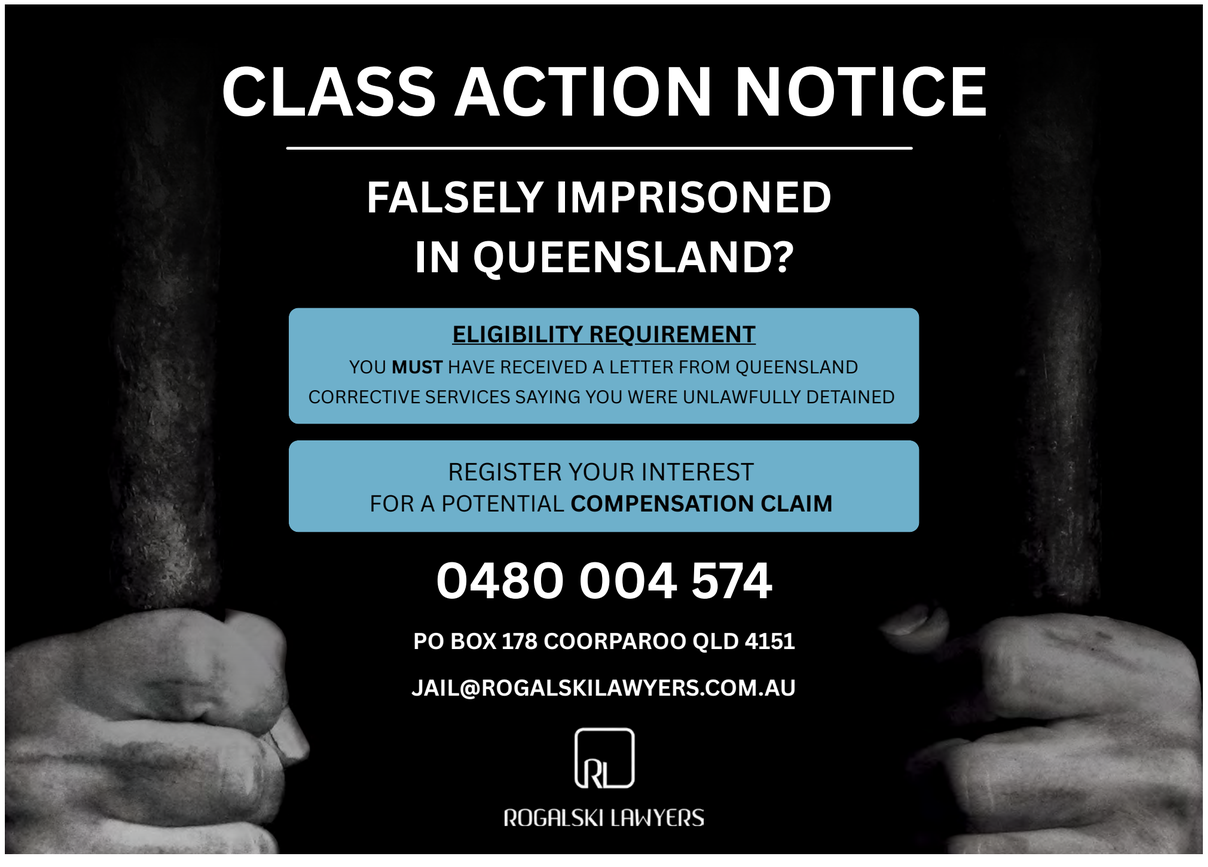


WA Prison System 'Nearing Functional Collapse'

By Denham Sadler

Western Australia's prison system is "nearing functional collapse", with continual lockdowns, people sleeping on mattresses and a significant increase in violent incidents, an independent inspector has found.

The WA Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) has issued "show cause notices" to the state Department of Justice and the Corrections Ministers over the conditions at Hakea Prison, Casuarina Prison and Melaleuca Women's Prison.

This means the inspector believes there is a serious risk at these prisons to security, control, safety, care or welfare of incarcerated people and staff, or that those being held there are being subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

"This is a decisive moment and a time of danger and great difficulty," the OICS report said.

"The problems we are seeing in the WA prison system are such that system level reform can no longer be delayed or deferred and must be urgently addressed with clear and measurable reforms.

"The adult custodial system is operating in a sustained state of unsafe failure, driven by unprecedented population growth and chronic workforce instability that have far outpaced the system's capacity to respond."

The OICS has called on the state government to commit to and provide money for system-level reforms to address the concerns at the prisons.

The inspector said that there were "deteriorating conditions" at the three prisons that led to a "system-wide breakdown".

"The inspector identified serious risks to the safety, security and welfare of prisoners, with conditions in some cases potentially amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment," the OICS report said.

The increasing number of people in custody and severe shortages of workers has led to overcrowding, regular lockdowns and a lack of access to services in WA prisons.

There has been a 37 per cent increase in the number of people in prison in WA from January 2023 to February this year.

This has meant that there are more people incarcerated than there is space in the state's prisons, leading to up to 200 people sleeping on mattresses on cell floors, and many others in triple bunking cells.

The time out of cell that people in these prisons are getting has declined rapidly in recent years.

People held at Hakea received seven hours out of their cells in December last year, and this has dropped to 5.24 hours as of February.

At Melaleuca, people got 5.36 hours out of their cells per day in February, and in Casuarina they only got just over 2.5 hours in the same month.

In the last year, the number of lockdowns at Casuarina have doubled.

A huge amount of planned visits to these prisons are also being cancelled.

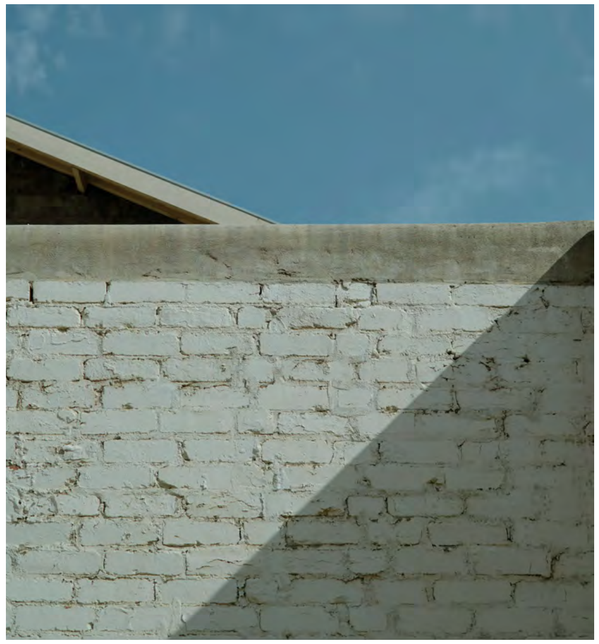
At Hakea and Casuarina, about half of all booked social visits were cancelled. At Melalucua, only a third of planned visits are going ahead.

Incidents of force being used against people in prison have increased in all of the prisons, as have self-harm incidents.

In response to the report, the WA Department of Justice said the government was "actively addressing these matters as part of system-wide reforms".

This includes "coordinated operational, workforce and infrastructure measures to manage prisoner population, capacity and staffing challenges identified in the report".

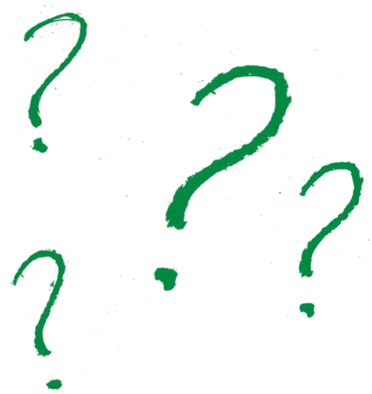




Willy Pleasance



Huge Number of Election Votes From Prison Not Counted



By Denham Sadler

While last year's federal election saw the number of incarcerated people voting increase significantly, new informal voting data reveals there is still a long way to go to ensure the prison population is provided with proper information and education.

The 2025 federal election was the first time that every state and territory allowed mobile polling booths to be placed in prisons, leading to a sharp uptick in the number of incarcerated people.

While just 274 people in prison cast a vote at the 2022 federal election, the Australian Electorate Commission (AEC) issued more than 9700 votes across 82 prisons last year.

But data provided to the Senate revealed an informal voting rate in prisons of just over 10 per cent, nearly double the national rate of 5.6 per cent.

Informal votes relate to those that cannot be counted, either because they have been filled in incorrectly or deliberately left blank or voided.

According to the AEC, the vast majority of informal votes from prison showed an intention to vote properly, but involved incorrect numbering or method, such as only including a first preference in the lower house.

Reasons for informal voting can often be down to literacy and language challenges, cultural and social barriers, confusion around voting instructions or methods and and distrust of government institutions.

In NSW, votes are often not counted because they listed just the first preference, which is a correct way to vote in the state election but not the federal one.

Australia's Voice Senator Fatima Payman, who obtained the data, said it was troubling that the rates of informal voting vary so dramatically across prisons.

"I was concerned to learn through Senate Estimates that prison mobile polling teams at the last election didn't count many of the votes they collected, with one team excluding two-thirds of the votes from Wellington Correctional Centre," Payman told *About Time*.

She said that more needs to be done to make sure that people in prison, especially those with a disability or for whom English is not their first language, are able to properly understand how to vote.

"While the AEC has done good work to improve participation for prisoners since the 274 incarcerated voters of the 2022 election, more needs to be done to make sure that these votes are not only collected, but counted," Payman said.

There were varying rates of informal voting in different prisons around the country.

The highest informal rate was at Wellington Correctional Centre, where more than 67 per cent of the votes could not be counted.

There were 108 votes made by people incarcerated at Wellington, but 73 of these were informal.

More than a quarter of votes placed at the Alexander Maconochie Centre in the ACT were informal, while one mobile polling booth at Clarence Correctional Centre had informal rates of more than 57 per cent.

Several prisons recorded no informal votes, including Cooma Correctional Centre, John Morony Correctional Centre, Palen Creek Correctional Centre, Numinbah Correctional Centre and Casuarina Prison.



Ike Curtis

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• Mob

Celebrating NAIDOC Week!

To celebrate NAIDOC week (although this might be printed too late), we're showcasing First Nations art submissions on this double page spread. We acknowledge the fierce First Nations people and elders across the country advocating for justice.



Sergeant at South Melbourne Police Station

"There was a day when everything shifted. The cops came, and I felt it – the weight pressing me down, in my body and in my spirit. What they did – it wasn't right. I feel that truth deep in my bones. Then they told me I couldn't talk about it.

But this painting holds my story - the one I'm not allowed to speak about, even though it's burning to be told.

It shows the fear and the helplessness that I felt that day. Sure, the bruises healed. But the anger, the pain, the crushing injustice? Those are still with me, sharp as ever.

My painting is not just about pain – it's about my strength about fighting to be heard. This isn't just my story. It's all of us – our sisters, beaten down by a system that wasn't made for us, that doesn't even want us. My painting carries the weight of my ancestors. And through it, I speak loud and clear. My painting is truth."



Untitled
By Thelma
Palawa People

"Cutting laps jail... that's what this painting is about. Stacey and I use to cut laps of the jail. To kill time and exercise and to talk about all our problems and hopes and dreams."

Thelma is a Palawa woman with family ties to Cape Barren Island off the north-east coast of Tasmania. She grew up in Swan Hill, a small town on the Murray River in the Loddon Mallee region. Most of Thelma's work is inspired by her totem, the Tasmanian Emu. A former graffiti artist, she first started creating work with The Torch in 2016 and has developed a unique painting style using bold, often primary coloured backgrounds with 2D depictions of emus. Thelma has a dedicated practice and has recently been exploring incorporating landscapes into her scenes. She loves connecting with her culture including researching the practice of muttonbirding, a traditional hunting method for Aboriginal Tasmanians.

Thelma has exhibited in many groups exhibitions since 2016. She was the recipient of The Torch's Dennish Thorpe Award in 2020 and in 2021 exhibited at Dark Mofo, in The Tench curated by Theia Connell.



Untitled
By Garry, from a prison in NSW.
Bundjalung people

Water themes are calming to me. Painting fish helps to transport me mentally to a time and place in my life before substance abuse became a profound part of my life experience.



Resilient Journeys
By Aaron
A proud Wiradjuri man from central-west New South Wales.

It is about all the paths we take in life and the different roads people go down to eventually make it to the centre of stability. It represents resilience in all of us and the many different places we may find ourselves in life. Be it rocky and windy or safe and sound; we all have resilience within us to make it through life's journey.



Untitled
By Tim
Dharug man

The painting represents kinship and relationships.



Self Portrait
By Tyson

Draws from a prison in NSW.







Goanna in the Stars
By N.B.
Wiradjuri people

This is my take on the Goanna (guggaa) in the stars that is part of my mob's stories.

Roger Knox: Black Elvis on Prison Stages

First Nations music legend Roger Knox has played everywhere from huge music festivals in the USA to the Sydney Opera House. But he says the shows that mean the most to him are the ones he played in prisons around Australia.

By Denham Sadler

Continued from page 1.

Beloved First Nations musician Roger Knox's career has spanned more than 50 years and taken him from an Aboriginal Mission in NSW to some of the biggest stages in the world.

Thanks to his early hairstyle and clothes, and promotion of Australian Aboriginal culture and stories in his music, he was called the "Koori King of Country" and the "Black Elvis".

Combining First Nations spirituality with country music, Uncle Roger has released five much-loved albums.
He was named NAIDOC Artist of the Year in 1993, in 2004 was inducted into the Australian Country Music Foundation's Country Music Hands of Fame and received the Jimmy Little Award for Lifetime Achievement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Music at the 2006 Deadlys.

He has been a passionate advocate for First Nations justice, land rights, culture and Black history, and regularly brings attention to these issues through his music.

Uncle Roger was born in 1948 at the Toomelah Aboriginal Mission in NSW. He is a proud member of the Gamilaroi nation, and his mother was a part of the Stolen Generation.

He regularly faced racism in his childhood; he was not allowed to attend the local high school in Goondiwindi, and instead was sent by the mission to work without pay at one of their properties.

He says music was a constant in his life from the very start – he discovered gospel music through his mother, and country and rock and roll bands through other family members. "Music was always a part of my upbringing," Uncle Roger tells *About Time*.

When he was 17 years old, Uncle Roger moved to Tamworth and performed live music for the first time in the town's local pub. "That was the first time I heard the applause of people – I was nervous but I did it, and I really enjoyed it," he says.

It was also in Tamworth that Uncle Roger first played in a prison. He was invited to perform at the local jail, which at the time was a youth detention facility. "The young people really enjoyed the stories and the songs," he says.

"It was hard at first. When you perform you can't go in there half-hearted or mediocre. You have to go in there full on, give it everything you've got and put 100 per cent effort in there."

His success in music has taken him around the world, including to play shows in Canadian prisons and to more than 37,000 people at the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival in San Francisco, where he received a standing ovation.

Days before *About Time* spoke with Uncle Roger, he played at the Sydney Opera House with his family.

This was another major milestone for the legendary musician. But he says the shows that mean the most to him are the ones he has played in prisons around the country.

After that first performance in Tamworth prison, Uncle Roger has played countless shows to inmates in Australian prisons across several decades.

"I've performed at some of the highest venues, not only here but overseas, but to me when I think back, I think my highest points, the highlight of anything I've done, was going into these prisons and singing to people in there who might have thought they were lost or forgotten," Uncle Roger says.

Each time he has played in a prison, Uncle Roger has taken an Aboriginal flag and asked inmates to sign it.

Warning: First Nations readers are warned the below image may contain signatures of people who have passed away.



The prison visits and shows have also inspired many of Uncle Roger's songs.

'Prison Wall' describes a man in prison being visited by his son:

"She brought the son I hardly know

He didn't smile, he didn't speak

Seemed like he couldn't wait to go

I long to pick him up and tell him

I'll always be there should he fall

Was he scared of me or scared to be

Behind the prison wall?"

The song 'Warrior in Chains' describes a man hearing someone in the cell next to him singing.

"I heard him crying late one night

As I was lying in the dark

He started singing out his song

He sang it from the heart."

'Murri's Plea' is about a young First Nations man he met who didn't want to tell his parents that he was in prison.

"A broken hearted Murri sits alone

In his eyes there was a picture of his mum and dear old dad

And a sweetheart he'd left away back home

Don't tell my mum and dad

I know it will make them feel sad

Don't tell them I am doing time

It'll break their hearts and mind

Don't tell my mum and dad I'm doing time."

Uncle Roger now runs into people in the community who he played for in prison decades ago.

"You get to meet them and their families – to me that means a lot," he says.

NAIDOC Week, which takes place from 5-12 July this year with a theme of "50 Years of Deadly", recognises and celebrates the history, culture and achievements of First Nations Australians.

For mob currently on the inside, Uncle Roger urges them to focus on themselves and personal responsibility. "Be yourself – be strong within yourself," he says.

"Self is the big word: self-knowledge, self-pride, self-respect, self-love, self-esteem. Be responsible to yourselves and to your families and to your communities.

"We need to come together in strength, unity, harmony and peace. Believe in yourself and be strong."

For those approaching their release date, Roger said it's important to remember the main things in life. "Enjoy your freedom – pick a different path and follow that path," he says.

"We need more of our strong people out here to be with family, because family is everything, family is healing. Once you walk out of them gates, you've done your crime and done the time, stay out."

"If you know where you come from, you know where you're going to go. Focus on that and set a course to the future."

‘It’s Changing Lives’: New Program Helping First Nations Women Find Housing After Prison



The Homeward Sisters program aims to address the barriers stopping people getting housing after prison

By Denham Sadler

Tracy was one of many women released from prison straight into homelessness.

The 53-year-old Gamilaroi and Wiradjuri woman has mental health issues and a lung condition and was unable to secure adequate housing after she was released from prison.

During Sydney’s cold winter months, Tracy lived in a tent. But then the Homeward Sisters program stepped in to help.

Homeward Sisters, a collaboration between Legal Aid NSW, Homes NSW and Corrective Services NSW, aims to remove the barriers preventing First Nations women from accessing housing assistance when leaving prison.



Through the program, clients are assessed on a case-by-case basis, with common housing issues such as black listings from previous tenancies, conditions imposed before housing is offered, paused housing applications and debts due to family and domestic violence resolved.

“What this program has created is a quick and easy process to address those barriers with Homes NSW, and together we are able to really remove systemic



challenges that Aboriginal women are experiencing,” Legal Aid NSW senior solicitor housing and homelessness Natalie Bradshaw told *About Time*.

Thanks to the Homeward Sisters program, Tracy was able to secure priority housing that meets her needs.

Her new home is on the ground floor, which she needs because of her lung condition. She is now approaching her one-year anniversary of being released from custody, and said she is now feeling optimistic about the future.

“Ending up in a tent was very stressful,” Tracy said.

“If it wasn’t for Legal Aid I’d still be in a tent waiting for housing. This project has been a big help and life-changing because it’s meant I have a roof over my head and it reduces my risk of reoffending.”

Homeward Sisters works with First Nations women in prison approaching their release date, and refers them to a legal aid lawyer to help them resolve any outstanding issues that might stop them from getting social housing assistance from Homes NSW.

The results for people who have accessed the program have been “amazing”, Bradshaw said, with the majority of First Nations women taking part in it being approved for priority housing.

“I’ve been doing housing work for a very long time and I’ve never seen such great outcomes for our clients,” Bradshaw said.



“It’s been life-changing for our clients.”

The initiative started as a pilot program, and has now been expanded to become an ongoing initiative.

It has already worked with 245 women – two-thirds of First Nations women in prison as of the start of this year.

Nearly two-thirds of these women have a child aged under 18, and 68 per cent were previously homeless.

“Children are always at the forefront of our clients’ minds when they’re released from custody,” Bradshaw said.

“They want to be reunited and this project has really seen us help women on that journey and get there faster – to be reconnected with their children, families and community.”

The vast majority of people the program has worked with also were experiencing a mental health condition or domestic violence.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in 2019, more than half of the people leaving prison expected to be homeless in the community.

NSW government data from 2023 found that from 2011 to 2016, 12 per cent of people leaving prison accessed homeless services within one year.

The rate was double that for First Nations women, with nearly a quarter of all of those leaving prison accessing specialist homelessness services.

Legal Aid NSW has placed fliers in women’s prisons in the state and will soon have information available on the tablets.

First Nations women in prison in NSW can self-refer for the program by calling Legal Aid NSW for free through dialling #2 on the CADL phone system.

You can also get a support service R A Correctional Staff member to refer you.



• Culture

Beyond the Bars: 25 Years of Prison Radio

The radio program was established as a way to break the revolving door of the system

By Areej Nur

Areej is a volunteer at 3CR.

As 3CR marks 50 years of radical radio, *Beyond the Bars* enters its 25th year of broadcasting live inside Victorian prisons.

Since the inaugural broadcast during NAIDOC Week in 2002, *Beyond the Bars* has used radio as a vessel for cultural connection. The planning and time spent preparing for the yearly broadcasts reflects 3CR’s profound and inherent commitment to community.

Over the years, the station has continuously upheld its responsibility by providing a space for Aboriginal people to share their stories and strength.

For nearly 20 years, Kutcha Edwards steered these broadcasts with a deep understanding of the prison system. As NAIDOC Person of the Year in 2001, Kutcha was entrusted with speaking on air to the men at our very first broadcast from Port Phillip Prison.

As a survivor of the Stolen Generations, he helped establish the broadcast as a way to break the revolving door of the system.

“The mobs inside warm up to *Beyond the Bars* because they can, in a sense, voice what is going on within the confines of maximum-security prison but also internally in one’s self,” Kutcha said.

Beyond the Bars builds on the legacy of late broadcasters like Gilla McGuinness, a pillar of the community, and poet Lisa Bellear.

In 2003, Lisa presented the first women’s broadcast from the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, providing a vital platform for truth-telling and radical love. When *Beyond the Bars* began, her work, alongside Gilla’s and many others including Johnny Mac, Freddy Norris, Haiden Briggs, Ross Morgan and Lester Green, established the airwaves as a space where Aboriginal people were heard on their own terms.

These pioneers understood that radio is more than sound, it is a lifeline that carries the warmth of community into the coldest of institutions.

Today, Shiralee Hood is leading the project alongside a dedicated team of Aboriginal broadcasters. Shiralee and the team spend months visiting six prisons before going live, building a bridge of trust and mutual respect.

She views the broadcast as a radical act of visibility, noting the project is about witnessing the profound resilience needed to survive, “getting people to see beyond the bars, to the actual Aboriginal person who’s speaking”.

This 25-year milestone is a testament to the enduring power of Aboriginal people. It also highlights the persistent neglect of a country that remains in breach of obligations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.



Within the prison industrial complex, the over-representation of the most incarcerated people on earth remains a stark reality.

“It’s hard to be in a society that doesn’t like you,” Shiralee said.

“Yet when the microphones go live, the spirit of the people proves stronger than the concrete walls.”

One participant once described *Beyond the Bars* as “a few hours of remission”, a moment where stories truly matter and the prison itself fades away. Another shared how the broadcast “makes us feel that we really belong back in the community”.

In this way, the airwaves become a sonic archive of survival where culture, from soulful songs and poems to the powerful rhythm of rap, acts as a lifeline of resistance and resilience.

These storytellers, artists, and Elders carry an unbroken spirit far beyond the bars, and for 25 years this groundbreaking project has proven that the sovereign voice of the oldest living culture is always louder than the systems attempting to contain it.

• Health

Mental Health in Solitary Confinement

Advice from someone who has done it

By Ashleigh Chapman

Ashleigh Chapman has autism spectrum disorder and spent ten years in prison and two years in solitary confinement. She uses her time learning, unlearning and relearning to help and advocate for those who are incarcerated.

Solitary confinement is unfortunately all too common in Australian prisons. Often also called 'segregation', 'isolation' or 'lockdown', it means confining people to their cells for 22 to 24 hours a day, and allowed only minimal meaningful interaction with others.

Solitary is terrible for mental health, and shouldn't happen. But it's happening. For me, the most important part of enduring it was keeping my mind active. But how do you do that? Is a hard question to answer as we are all different people with different concerns, issues, problems.

I spent two years in solitary confinement and I had to get creative. This is what I did, and some of the other things other people did that were in there. Some may work for you, some won't. It is about finding your skill/talent and what you like or not. It also depends a lot on what the prison allows you to have in your cell. Ask the officers if they can print off colouring pages, puzzles, origami sheets. Ask if your family or friends can send some in. The chaplain and prison educators can also help in some prisons. Make this a part of your case management. Call it meaningful engagement or mental health strengthening. Make it one of your goals.

Other things you can do in your cell:

- Work out (Lift the chair, push ups, sit ups, walking back and forth whilst lifting your knees)
- Write
- Draw
- Become ambidextrous – yes this is how creative I got. (Use your non-dominant hand to do things like brush your teeth, swap the knife and fork around when eating)
- Read: borrow a book from the library or get one sent it
- Juggle toilet paper!
- Scrunch up paper and throw into the bin like mini basketball
- Knit and/or crochet

Keeping your mind active is very important when you are in solitary confinement as the affects can cause harmful reactions, thoughts, feelings and behaviours and these can be misidentified as trouble making. I know it is hard, and sometimes you feel slow and have an inability to think or feel like doing anything, but try something new, try something you never thought about before. This will keep your brain active and may help with minimising or removing the harmful reactions, thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

It is ok to feel spaced out and feel like doing nothing, but this is where your mental health could decline even further. So push yourself and your mind even if it is just for five or ten mins a day. Try something new and weird and wacky. Whatever makes you laugh may make it a little less monotonous. Even skipping around your cell, act like there is lava on the floor and you need to stretch your body which is also good for your physical health with ultimately helps your mental health as well.

Remember – it is only you in the cell, so no one to see if you think you look silly! It is very important to look after your mental health whilst in solitary confinement. The longer you are in there, the more outlandish things you might need to do to keep your mind active.

Thinking of you all. Keep busy and keep those minds active as best as possible.



'Hope' by Jenny, available to purchase through Boom Gate Gallery

'You're Cured!': Struggle to Strength with Hep C

Mike's story of beating Hep C from prison

By Mike

Most days inside had been pretty much the same for me. I used to draw a lot, but my real passion was photography... and that was a lot harder to do inside prison. My routine was all about survival—just getting by. My world felt small. I made a few mates, which helped, but most days still felt identical. Little changed.

Except for me.

Everything shifted when I finally started taking hep C seriously. Maybe it was the posters on the walls, or the flyers lying around, or the videos we could watch... or maybe it was my mates talking about how well their treatment was going. Thinking back, it was probably all of it. A thought took hold: "I'd shared injecting equipment – could hep C be affecting me?"

I decided to put in a bluey to see the nurse and find out. But as I sat waiting, doubt really hit me. "What if I did have it? What if treatment was painful? Was it even worth the trouble?" Then the nurse called me in, and I remembered that fear wasn't going to get me the truth—only action would.

The nurse was great—patient, kind, and she explained everything in plain language. She told me the test only involved a tiny pinprick of blood from my finger. No needles in the arm. It really was painless. My mates kept encouraging me, stoked that I'd taken the first step.

About a week later, the nurse told me I had tested positive for hep C. Strangely, I didn't feel sad. I felt determined.

"How soon can I start treatment?" I asked. And so, after a chat with the nurse, I began. Just pills daily, no injections, little to no side effects for me. It was easy to stick to the routine inside. Life in prison is nothing *but* routine. Some fellas dismissed the treatment as pointless, but my mates' support meant a lot to me.

A few weeks later, I was halfway through treatment and feeling more energised and sharper. The brain fog had lifted – but then I was released from prison, right in the middle of my treatment. My routine disappeared overnight.

Suddenly I was out in the world again: distractions everywhere, challenges everywhere. But my nurse had found me a doctor on the outside. Now it was up to me.



Freedom was overwhelming. Catching up with old friends felt good. Money was tight. Sometimes I thought about not finishing treatment.

But I remembered the nurse's advice, the posters, my mates' encouragement. No way was I going to let hep C stand in the way of a second chance. I had too much to live for—starting with my photography. So, I made up my mind to keep going with treatment.

Four weeks after finishing, I went back to my new doctor for the follow up test to see if the virus was gone. Even though I'd been feeling good, I still worried it had all been in my head—that the treatment hadn't worked.

But then the doctor looked at me and said, "You're cured."

It felt like a huge weight had been lifted. I'd beaten the virus—and the doubts I'd carried before and during treatment. I felt healthier than I had in years, stronger, and ready to help others. Now I share my story in my community, showing how information, small steps, and a little courage changed my life.

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

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

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

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

Funded by Gilead Sciences Pty Ltd. Level 28, 385 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. ABN 71 072 611 708. Date of preparation: June 2026, AU-UNB-1097



• Legal Corner

Interstate Prison Transfers 101



Willy Pleasance

An introduction to welfare transfers

By About Time

Disclaimer:
This is information only and NOT legal advice. If you are considering an interstate prison transfer, you should consult a lawyer and case manager to assess your options.

People in prison can apply to transfer from a prison in one state or territory to another, generally for welfare reasons to be closer to family, community supports, or rehabilitation opportunities.

Interstate transfer applications are governed by state and territory legislation that mirrors each other such as the *Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Act 1982* (Qld) and for commonwealth prisoners, the *Transfer of Prisoners Act 1983* (Cth).

Similar legislation operates across Australia, allowing prisoners to move between participating jurisdictions while ensuring their sentence continues to be administered lawfully.

Grounds for Welfare Interstate Transfer

Welfare transfers are the most common type of interstate transfer application. These are generally requested where a prisoner's family, friends, cultural supports, or other significant persons live in another state and maintaining those connections would benefit the prisoner's wellbeing, rehabilitation, or reintegration into the community.

Examples of welfare grounds may include:

- All immediate family lives interstate;
- No meaningful support network in the current state;
- A close family member suffers from serious illness;
- Accommodation and support arrangements are available in the receiving state upon release;
- Cultural or community ties exist in another jurisdiction.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, interstate transfer applications may involve considerations such as connection to kinship networks, Country, culture, language groups, Elders and community. This recognises the importance of Culture to a person's identity, wellbeing and rehabilitation, and how separation from these networks can have significant welfare consequences.

Human Rights Considerations

In jurisdictions with human rights legislation, including Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, decision-makers may also be required to consider cultural rights when assessing transfer applications. These rights include the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enjoy, maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, language, kinship ties and distinctive spiritual relationship with traditional lands and waters.

Who Can Apply?

Only sentenced prisoners can apply for interstate transfer.

Different rules may apply to prisoners serving state, commonwealth or concurrent sentences.

It's unlikely your application will be approved if you are appealing your sentence or have outstanding criminal matters, and it's advised to wait for these to finalise before applying.

Prisoners on parole are generally subject to separate interstate parole transfer legislation rather than interstate prisoner transfer laws and is another kettle of fish. Let us know if you'd like information of parole transfer laws and processes.

How to Apply

Interstate welfare transfer application forms should generally be available through prison sentence management staff, case managers, or prison administration.

Applicants should provide as much supporting evidence as possible, including:

- Letters from family members and friends;
- Evidence of accommodation arrangements;
- Evidence of employment opportunities after release;
- Medical certificates where illness of a family member forms part of the application;
- Information demonstrating social, cultural or community connections in the receiving state.
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people, this may include letters or support from Elders, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, cultural support workers, community justice groups or other organisations able to explain the significance of the prisoner's cultural and family connections in the receiving jurisdiction.

Decision-makers may consider a range of factors, including:

- The prisoner's welfare and safety;
- How long you have left in your sentence (people with more than 12 months to serve are more likely to be allowed a transfer due to the length of the application process);
- Safety and security of the sending and receiving prison;
- Behaviour and programs undertaking in prison;
- Family ties;
- Rehabilitation progress and prospects of successful reintegration;
- Criminal history;
- Outstanding charges or appeals;
- Community safety concerns;
- Victim considerations;
- Whether the transfer could result in an unfair sentencing advantage;
- Anything else the Minister/ authority finds relevant.

It is recommended you talk to you talk to a lawyer or case manager if you can to help arrange your strongest case.

Approval Process

Interstate welfare transfers require approval from authorities in both the sending and receiving jurisdictions.

First, you send your application to the Corrections Minister in your state/territory (is state/territory prisoner) or the Federal Minister for Justice (if Commonwealth prisoner). In addition to your application, those authorities will request reports on your from your prison.

If they approve your application, they then write to the Minister/AG of the receiving jurisdiction, and ask for the transfer. If they agree, you will be allowed to transfer.

Because multiple government agencies and jurisdictions are involved, the process can be lengthy. In practice, applications may take many months and sometimes years before a transfer is approved and carried out.

What Happens After Approval?

If both jurisdictions approve the transfer:

1. Arrangements are made for the prisoner to be transported interstate, and costs are generally covered by the sending jurisdiction.
2. Classification, medical and program information is forwarded to the receiving prison from the sending jurisdiction.
3. The prisoner is received into custody in the new state or territory. If they need to stay somewhere overnight due to transfer times, it's usually at a police watchhouse.
4. The sentence continues to be served under the administration of the receiving jurisdiction.

Effect on the Prisoner's Sentence

One of the most complex aspects of interstate transfers is the administration of the prisoner's sentence after relocation.

As a general rule:

- The sentence itself travels with the prisoner.
- Court orders and sentencing directions remain in force.
- The sentence is treated as though it had been imposed in the receiving state.
- The receiving state's correctional laws then govern the administration of the sentence.

This can create complications where sentencing laws differ significantly between jurisdictions, particularly regarding matters such as remission, parole eligibility, classification systems and sentence administration.

While the process can be lengthy and requires approval from multiple jurisdictions, successful transfers can improve family contact and support rehabilitation. Given the complexity of the process and the lengthy waiting periods following a refusal, careful preparation of the application is essential.



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Though Levitt Robinson Solicitors is located in Sydney it advocates for the rights of both juvenile detainees, and adult prisoners nationwide.

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• Experiences

Managing Your Sentence: The Flow of Time in Prison



'Insanity' by Tony, Boom Gate Gallery

How to use your time while you're incarcerated

By Anonymous

Anonymous writes from a prison in VIC.

You can 'pass time', 'keep time', 'waste time' and 'lose time'.

You can be 'ahead of time' or 'out of time', have 'good times' and 'bad times', or even 'the time of your life'. And of course, you can do 'hard time'. Time is a river, flowing in but a single direction, sweeping us ever-forward to our allotted fate.

Time is a key element of human existence. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines time as the "indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present and future regarded as a whole". Einstein defined 'spacetime' in his theories of general and special relativity as the four dimensional medium in which the universe exists, measured by length, width, height and time.

Philosophers have argued about the nature of time for centuries. For instance, whether time is independent of events; or that without events to mark its passage, time is little more that an unobservable abstract. Aristotle described time as 'the measure of motion' (or change). Which is probably why time seems to stand still when you're stuck in the same cell, day after day, with nothing to do.

There are three types of time: perceptual (right now); conceptual (all other times – past, present and future) and subjective (time from in individual's viewpoint).

Each person perceives time differently at different stages in their life. As children, minutes can seem like hours. But as we age we become more aware of time – and begin to budget it. As our lives become more complex and more filled with responsibility, we are even held hostage by it. And as we get older, we begin to covet it.

In prison, time can be the weight that crushes the life out of you; thinking about the years of incarceration ahead, or the years that have passed since you've seen home and family.

After being incarcerated for a little over three years (not yet at my halfway point) I've found it's better to live one day at a time, trying not to look further than a week ahead. I find it comforting to cross each day off my calendar (more a measure of 'days passed' than 'days left'); while other inmates have told me it seems to make their time feel longer.

In prison we are advised: "All you have is time" and transitioning from a 'time poor' to 'time rich' environment can be a significant adjustment: How to fill all that additional time?

You can work, which kills up to five hours a day (sometimes longer if you can get overtime) – depending on your job.

You can sign up for education opportunities. Many inmates improve their english and maths skills, while some complete tertiary qualifications through distance learning.

You can work on your fitness in the gym, playing sport, or just walking around the yard.

You can catch up on all those books you were "getting around to reading" on the outside – there are worlds of entertainment available at the library.

Or you could explore your creative side; painting, drawing, writing, hobby-craft, or playing an instrument – activities that can provide a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Some inmates play endless games of scrabble, cards, or pool, or simply go to bed early and sleep ten to twelve hours a day.

The most useful skill in prison is definitely the ability to keep yourself amused.

All inmates are time travellers. We leave our world and go back to the 90s (no internet, no smartphones, no streaming), then eventually emerge into the 'future'. If enough time has passed, this new world may be scarily different.

My advice? Each new dawn is one day closer to release. Focus on the moment and time will take care of itself. It's not the amount of time you've got – it's how you use it.

Inside Job

Gary on money, work and starting from prison

By Gary Griffiths

Gary was incarcerated in WA. He now runs 'Recovery Tapes', a podcast of raw stories from ones who made it back.

Let's face it: money makes the world go around. Some of you reading this article will be doing time for stealing money. Some of you will be reading this having sold drugs to get money. And some of you will be reading this having committed an offence for a basic need that didn't cost much money at all. It's all money, money, money.

It's a catch-22 in our society: you can't survive without it, and if you don't have it coming in every week, things get hard real quick. I've been there myself – not working, stealing everything I could get my hands on, trading goods to sell so I could make some quick cash.

But just like in the movies, no matter how good things are going, it always comes to a point where you either get caught or the plug runs out, and things backfire. Then bam, you're back doing ram raids and burglaries, just like you said you wouldn't the last time you got out.It took me a while to get my head around this, and one thing I learnt doing my last sentence was the importance of having a job and sticking with it.

When I was locked up, I couldn't get much money sent my way. I was sick of having no spends, 2–3 minute phone calls, and there's only so many times you can work out in a day. So I got a job at the print shop where a mate of mine was working. Even though it was boring, and I hated it for the first time in a while, I was supporting myself without stealing or doing anything I could get in trouble for.

Soon enough a wing cleaner job came up. Having a unit job is the cream of the crop in jail because you get all the benefits that go with it. Within three months of me starting to work, I had a single cell and had saved up to get a stereo.

Kendrick Lamar's first album had just dropped, *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City*. I borrowed it off one of the boys. I remember the feeling: sitting back listening to it, it kind of felt like I was at home in my bedroom. It's weird how your brain can make you feel normal in such a dull place, but I was happy. I had worked hard for that stereo, and the music made it all feel better. I can't really explain it any other way.

If you fast-forward a few years, I was on the outside and I hadn't been back for a while. It was coming around to that time where doing crime started to seem okay again. I hadn't done anything with myself since getting out: no job, no courses, no TAFE. I literally just used drugs and ruined everything for myself. To be honest, I felt that moment where I sort of accepted that I was probably gonna be back inside soon anyway, so who cares, right? Wrong.

I found out my partner was pregnant, and we were living in a set of apartment blocks that were pretty shady. It wasn't a good place to be living in those circumstances. So I went to the factories up the road and asked for a job. Coincidentally and luckily for me, one of the bosses at this factory had done a lot of jail himself and turned his life around. He could see himself in me, I suppose, and he took me under his wing.

Within three to six months of working, I had started paying my old court fines off and could apply to get my licence, which meant we didn't have to get the bus everywhere while my girlfriend was pregnant. This was huge. Having a car and our own independence made me re-learn the lesson I'd learnt all those years ago in jail: having a job gives you purpose. It gives you structure and financial independence.

I didn't have to line up at Centrelink anymore or go to those job appointments and pretend like I was trying when I wasn't. Life got good real quick. All of a sudden we got approved for a 3-bedroom house, and then before I knew it there was a little baby girl with us as well. I applied to get forklift tickets, which eventually led me to a better-paying job.

Since all of this really sunk in, I have worked a lot. I have run my own business, subcontracted for builders, gone to courses, done workshops – the list goes on. I have been in my trade for six years now, and all of these things have helped me get further and further away from the jail life. I've also met a lot of people who come from the same situation who say working saved me from my old self.

The reason why I wrote this article is in the hope someone will read this inside prison and get a job as soon as they get out. It's hard at first, being told what to do all day. You might feel like you don't belong there, or everyone knows you've been locked up and are silently judging you, and that may be a reality you do have to face at some point. But that's better than being in jail, eating shit food and living in a tiny box watching reruns of the same TV shows, right?

Another reality is this: it's about your future. It's not about anyone else. This is your time to grow and evolve out of the old you and into a person with discipline and structure in their life. Every successful person has worked hard to get where they are, and a lot of them have gone through battles to get there. But the main thing is they stick at their goal and don't stop.

For us, it's about getting out of the system and changing our lives so we can be the fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunties that our families need us to be. But also, so we can be who we need to be for ourselves: happy and healthy.

If you're reading this in jail, you can do it. There are so many opportunities out there for us in 2026. Set yourself a small achievable goal and go for it. You only get one life. There's no other chance coming your way. This is it, and being inside those jails across our country is a waste of it.

I believe every prisoner deserves a shot at a good life, and it's only you that can give that to yourself. So get out and prove everyone wrong who ever doubted you. Show them that you aren't what they said you are, and enjoy your best life: working hard and enjoying your family and friends on the outside.



Don't Erase Your Prison Years

Welcome the time spent inside as an important chapter of your life

By Steve Rothwell

Steve spent many years running from the trauma of his incarcerated past until he broke down and realised he had to face his demons. He is now devoted to helping others overcome their traumas.



Willy Pleasance

I used to work in underground coal mines, and down there I experienced a similar sense of camaraderie to what I later encountered in prison. Both were surreal, artificial environments where people depended heavily on one another. There was a strong need for cooperation and mutual support.

When the mines closed, it meant the end of that harsh, cut-off world. Yet many of the men still missed it. The very place they had once complained about going to each day was also the place where a powerful sense of belonging had existed.

When people talk about institutionalisation, the emphasis is usually on dependence on systems: the structure, the routines, the fact that meals, laundry and daily logistics are organised for you. But I think something just as important is often overlooked: the social environment.

This is an example of how prison life can provide some meaning – we have camaraderie, and at times, support. Through this, we remember that prison isn't wasted time – prison is and was your life.

Prison time becomes most psychologically damaging when it is treated as 'non-life'. When you view it as nothing but wasted time, shame takes over. When there's no conceivable upside, then the years feel like they've been erased from your story.

One important lesson I've learned is making prison part of my life story instead of seeing it as a chunk of life that's been stolen from me, has made it much easier to live and get on with life now that I'm out.

So the question becomes: how do you stop prison years from becoming a black hole in your life story? How do you make sure those years still count?

Reclaiming Your Real Life from Prison

A common belief inside is this: "My real life stopped the day I was sentenced." That's where the damage begins. Identity freezes, growth feels pointless, planning feels naive. Shame fills the vacuum.

It's understandable. Prison disrupts almost everything that normally structures life: relationships, work, time itself.

For people serving long sentences, prison isn't just an interruption. It's the environment you will live in for years, sometimes decades. Pretending those years aren't real only deepens the negative impacts.

The healthier move is refusing to cut a section of your own life out of your story.

Even on long sentences, you still possess something important: Your mind, your ideas, your ability to think and talk and understand the world.

Prisons are full of fascinating characters who think differently, push against systems, and have lively takes on the world.

Some of the best conversations I've ever had happened inside.

Once a group of us were sitting around talking about life, joking, telling stories, going deep into ideas. For a while the walls seemed to fade away. We could have been anywhere. What did we have in that moment? We had ourselves. We had each other. And we had the freedom of our minds. That kind of social freedom matters more than people realise.

I look back fondly at those moments, because in a world dominated by uneventful dullness, they were such radiant times of hope. They were something to be cherished and enjoyed. Precious moments. Moments I didn't want to end. We were all happily engaged with each other's company. That's real, good life.

For those still inside, especially on long sentences, one question can change your mindset: If these years are shaping me, how do I want them to shape me?

You may not control the length of your sentence. You don't control the institution. But you still influence the person you are becoming within it, and that does matter. It's about reclaiming yourself within these unkind walls. Your character, your personality, your curiosity, your ideas. Those are the real core of who you are. And nobody can take those away.

Prison and Shame

Many people leave prison with a lot of shame about their past. They avoid mentioning it and feel exposed if it comes up. They treat those years like contamination. The problem is that secrecy often strengthens stigma, and avoidance feeds shame.

A better approach is gradual acceptance. Instead of trying to erase every memory from prison, allow yourself to remember moments that mattered. A useful conversation. A lesson learned. A conflict handled better than you might have years ago.

The goal isn't nostalgia, it's perspective. Over time, those years stop feeling like a black hole and start feeling like a chapter. When you stop fighting your own history, you free up energy. Energy you can later put into rebuilding work, relationships, and confidence.

Integration isn't about pretending prison is or was good. It's about refusing to erase yourself.

Prison time counts, however difficult or alien it may be – because it is lived. And anything lived still belongs to you.

● Reintegration

Ask Stacey: 'I Have No One on the Outside!'

Stacey is back to answer your questions on work after prison, making friends and more.

By Stacey Stokes

Stacey Stokes is a transgender girl who had a 10 and a half year sentence in a men's prison. She has an undergraduate in creative writing and has recently been published extensively. Stacey was a recipient of the 2025 Varuna Trans and Gender Diverse Fellowship to develop her manuscript, My World.

Hello my valued readers!

Welcome to another session of Ask Stacey.

These answers are from my life (and are supposed to make you laugh a bit!). This is NOT legal advice – on all things, ask your parole officer and consult your lawyer. Do this via email and texts to show you did in fact raise it. And if they don't answer you, don't do it!

Send through more questions for me – I love to answer them!

I lost my job when I was sent to jail, I have a large gap in my resume now and a record. What should I do?

HEAPS of people ask me this. Firstly, don't stress, it's possible to get a job. All the guys I know who have gotten out of jail and have stayed out, have gotten work. Once you get your head right, the rest will follow. When it comes to looking for work, google organisations like Green Collar who can give you advice on how to manage it. There are even places who will hire ex offenders for lived experience work. If you have parole like I did, you could use the intensive period to learn a new trade at TAFE or uni. I learned how to write stuff, and now I write stuff. It's very possible and I believe in you.

Q: I have read there is 'lived experience' work out there! Is this true and what is it like?

Yes, you read right! There is lived experience work out there. People with lived experience – meaning direct, personal experience rather than work or academic knowledge – offer valuable insights that organisations may overlook. They then hire people with lived experience to help them. The requirement is to have a criminal record! So, if you're in jail reading this, you're qualified already!

When I got out, I did this sort of work. I felt a bit like a fraud because I had no qualifications. So, I got an undergraduate certificate in creative writing and I'm also studying criminal justice and criminology. But no one told me I needed to. It depends on the organisation and what your role is.

I would flag that doing lived experience work is a responsibility and it's not easy – talking about prison can bring up a lot of stuff.

Also, some places can be predatory, such as contracts that say that they own all the intellectual property you develop. The common moral standard is that no one has a right to own our stories or tell our stories, except us.

I have no one on the outside. All my friends are in jail now. I will be lonely when I get out, what do I do?

Make friends with ChatGPT, it's all the rage. Haven't heard of ChatGPT? It's a free online robot that you can ask anything. It's very chatty and knows you really well. People are using ChatGPT for everything – from recipes to counselling. People are even naming their ChatGPT. It's so crazy out there – there are girlfriend/boyfriend apps!

You may think that sounds weird, and I agree. That's why I help run a support group for formally incarcerated trans and gender diverse people. I have suggested other organisations do the same for the people they support. Ask



for contact details for services before you get out and hit them up for support groups. If they don't have one, they should know an organisation that does. Some people go to Narcotics Anonymous or Alcohol Anonymous as well. Remember, no one knows anything about you! Join a gym, go to speed friending. Don't lead with the worst thing you ever did and you'll be fine.

Should I call the Ombudsman? Will I get retaliated against for calling them?

If your quiche is cold or your mattress is lumpy, maybe don't call the buds... However, please remember, your freedom is all that is supposed to be taken away. You're still a human and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Regardless of what anyone else says.

In my experience, the ombudsman is a paper tiger that is utterly powerless. They probably won't fix anything. But you should absolutely call them anyway because mail gets lost and things vanish from cells. They will record whatever it is that has happened and you can be confident that there is a record of what human rights violation has occurred. In terms of retaliation. My experience is that whatever they can do to hurt you, they are already doing and that's why you want to complain. If you complain about someone and then they retaliate, stay calm and record it. Patterns in behaviour will emerge that are obvious to everyone.

If you do not have the emotional capacity for more stress though, I also understand. I've been there too and it's exhausting.

What can I do to make my parole pass uneventfully and without incident?

As Charles Darwin said, "it's not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most adaptable to change". The answer to how to complete parole is often: change. Get a job and make new friends. Adapt and grow. You don't walk around like a five-year-old pooping yourself anymore. Because you changed. You can't do whatever led you to jail anymore either. Sometimes this means small changes. Other times it means drastic changes that are scary, like cutting off my... Richard "Dick" Nixon once said, "defeat doesn't finish a man, quitting does. A man is not finished when he's defeated. He's finished when he quits."

• Creative

All for One, One for All at Bandyup

By Ruth

Ruth writes from a prison in WA

Bandyup is a place,

Where we are a mixed race.

It doesn't matter where we are from,

We should support each other as one.

Arguing and fighting won't make it right,

Be kind to one another to keep us tight.

No one likes to be locked in a cell.

We are all struggling like hell.

When someone is down, don't pull them to the ground.

Be there for them, let them know you are around.

On days when you are feeling blue,

Remember we all feel like that too.

Keep hold of your dignity and grace,

Respectful harmony to make this a better place.

All for one – one for all.

One Day We Will Be Free

By Matt

Matt writes from a prison in WA

They talked to us about our struggles,
their words we could not hear,
while being condemned and held accountable;
our vision was not clear.
Although it seemed as if we looked,
please know we could not see.
And at times of need, we felt powerless;
one day we will be free.

You cried and judged us for all we said and did.
We couldn't hear the words you spoke as you held the smoking gun.
Did you know that the tears we shed and the pain we felt were real?
And at no point with the devil did we plan to make a deal.

I now want to feel the pain of loss and suffer when I grieve;
family standing by my side, whom I hope I'll never leave.

The contrast being joy and happiness, the sunshine rays are bright.
I want to step out of the darkness; no longer, to my neck, addiction holds its knife.
For many years I would hide from pain,
the tears I would not show.
My plan is to be no longer somebody we both used to know.

Reminder to please send in your contributions to the next writing challenge!

Prompt: Time Travel
What does time travel mean to you? Is it a historical story, set in medieval times or the 1960s? Is it a sci-fi about a brave new world? Maybe you have five minutes to save humanity! Or perhaps it's about reflecting on the past, or looking hopefully to the future? Share your story – fiction or non-fiction – and be in the running to get it published on the front page of the next edition!

To enter, send us a letter with your entry and 'Writing Challenge' up the top.

Please include this on the envelope – you do not need to include a stamp:

About Time
Reply Paid 94762
Melbourne VIC 3001



Mother

By Biannca

Biannca writes from a prison in Victoria

What did you see when you looked at me?

Just a little girl, I had no voice

You kept me down without a choice

You gave heartache and pain

Said I was your endless shame.

You stole my youth, my childhood

Stole who I could have been, stealing my motherhood

What happened to you to treat me that way

With anger and hate, you kept me at bay.

Just a girl wanting your love

Always praying to the Heavens above

I used to wish you loved me too

Now I know, I was nothing to you.

Now, I'm not so little and not so weak

I use my voice with courage to speak.

You tried to bury me but wonderfully I grew

A life in darkness, now my light shines through

My once broken heart you no longer held

This story of loss had to be told

Gone is the girl I used to be

Gone is the hold you had over me.

Now, what do you see when you look at me?

Little Rhyme

By Justin

Justin writes from a prison in NSW

Here's a little rhyme
As I'm chilling doing time
Paying the price for my crime.

Now the tables are turned, it's a lesson learned
No point crying, letting things do my head in like I'm dying
No more swelling or taking in out on some poor lady yelling

I will pick up my act, as a matter of fact
Dust my self off from this big fall
Stand up, believe in myself, stand tall
For its time to turn over a new leaf and start to have belief
Cause soon you'll be out with loved ones, such a relief
So stay strong with a positive mindset, things wont go wrong
Better days are not long away
Enjoy time with all the brothers along the way

• Learn

Eleven Things I Learned This Month

By Jeff

Jeff writes from a prison in QLD

1. **"There is no happiness on earth equal to that of liberty regained" – more wisdom from Don Quixote**



Sippakorn Yamkasikorn via Unsplash

2. **"I estimate there are 53,701 worms in an acre of good agricultural soil" – Charles Darwin**

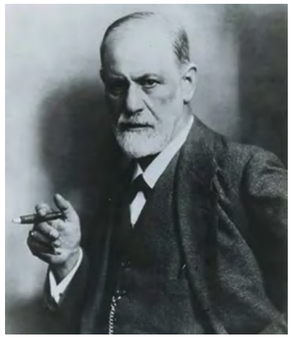
3. **"Little thieves are hanged, but great ones escape" – 17th-century saying, meaning that sufficient power and wealth can ensure that a wrongdoer is not punished**



David Trinks via Unsplash

4. **Chimps and apes cannot lock their knees, as humans can. That is why they walk with bent legs and cannot stand upright for very long**

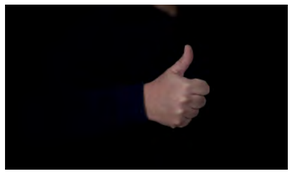
5. **"To hate to be a tee-totaller. Imagine getting up in the morning and knowing that's as good as you're going to feel all day." – Dean Martin**



Max Halberstadt

6. **"The greatest question that has never been answered and which I have not yet been able to answer ... is what does a woman want?" – Sigmund Freud**

7. **Cigarettes are the only legal product that, if used according to the manufacturer's instructions, have a very high chance of killing you. – Michael Buerk**



Engin Akyurt via Unsplash

8. **"Okay" is the most widely understood word on earth – Women's Weekly Puzzle Book.**

9. **"Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies" – Gore Vidal.**



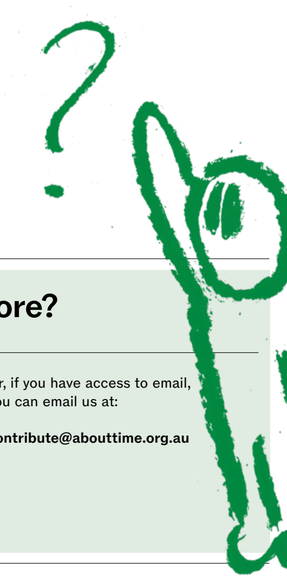
Corbis via Getty Images

10. **"When the President does it, it means it's not illegal" – not who you think! It was Richard Nixon!**



Iñaki del Olmo via Unsplash

11. **A paradox: A library has two catalogues. The first – all those books which have some reference to themselves. The second – all those books which do not have any reference to themselves. In which catalogue is the second catalogue listed? – Bertrand Russell.**



• Curious to Learn More?

Want to learn more about a certain topic? The Learn section is for articles and practical how-to-dos on a variety of topics. If there's anything you want to learn about, please write to us!

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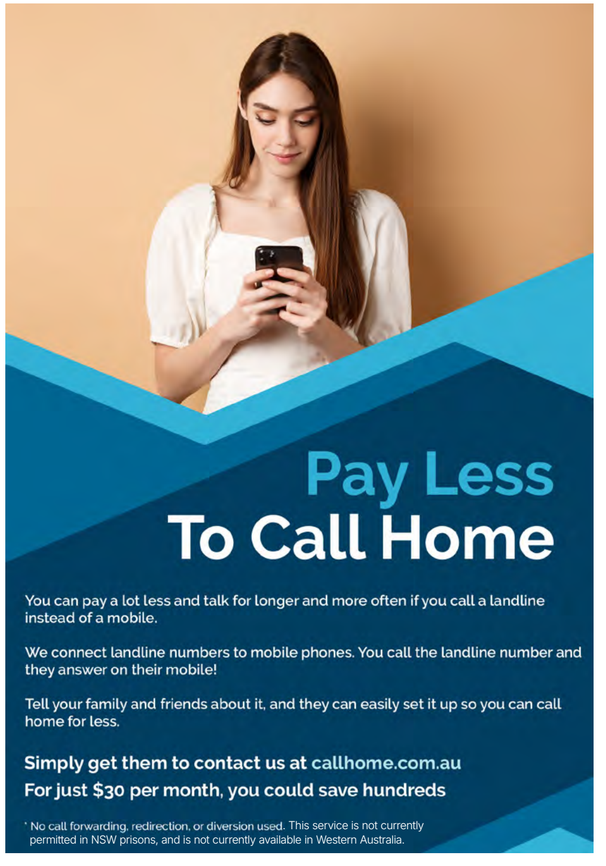
Or, if you have access to email, you can email us at:

contribute@abouttime.org.au

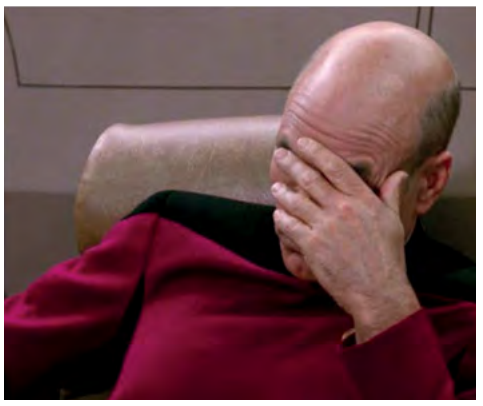


• Play

Meme of the Month

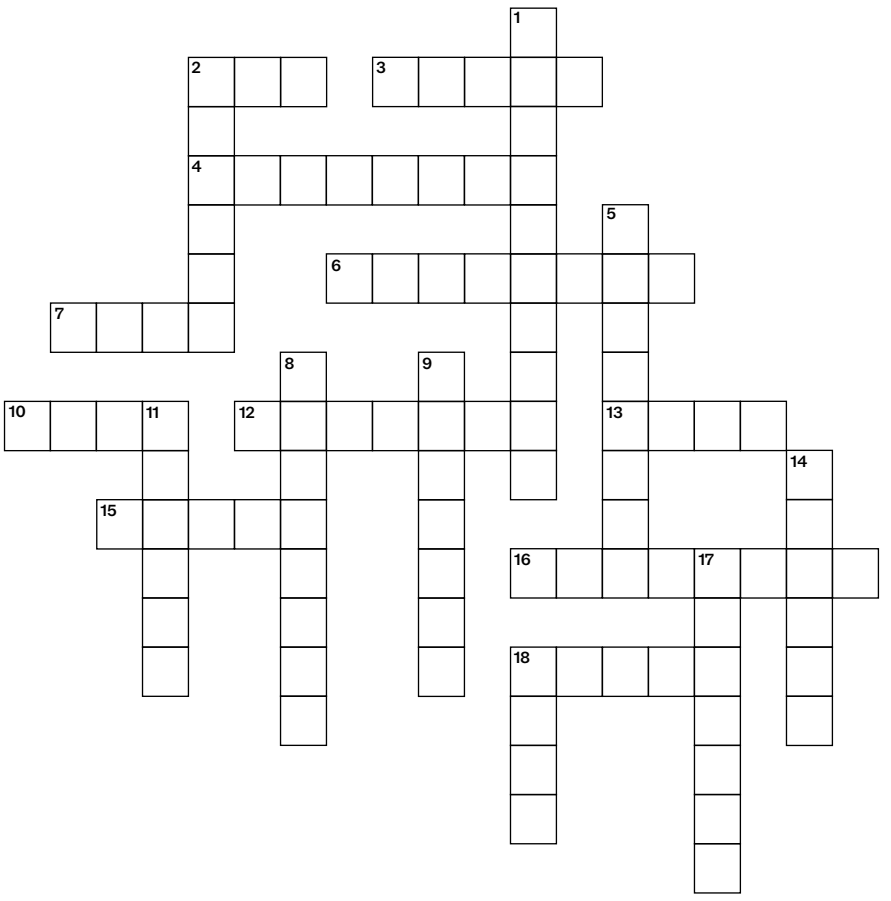
By Meicho

“When the new celly asks to watch Home and Away.”



Meicho writes from a prison in QLD.

Crossword



ACROSS

2. Opposite of night (3)
3. A sudden loud noise (5)
4. A person who writes music (8)
6. A shape with three sides (8)
7. A large body of water surrounded by land (4)
10. Opposite of a win (4)
12. To look carefully at something (7)
13. Frozen rain that falls in small balls (4)
15. A written message sent electronically (5)
16. To make something less severe (8)
18. A place where goods are sold (5)

DOWN

1. A person who studies the stars (10)
2. A period of ten years (6)
5. A large animal with a trunk (8)
8. A person who travels to unknown places (9)
9. A place where books are kept for borrowing (7)
11. The highest point of something (6)
14. A baby cat (6)
17. A word meaning very happy or joyful (7)
18. To move through water using arms and legs (4)

Crossword Answers (ACROSS)

2. Day
3. Crash
4. Composer
6. Triangle
7. Lake
10. Lose
12. Examine
13. Hail
15. Email
16. Mitigate
18. Store

Crossword Answers (DOWN)

1. Astronomer
2. Decade
5. Elephant
8. Explorer
9. Library
11. Summit
14. Kitten
17. Gleeful
18. Swim

Quiz

Test your general knowledge on our monthly quiz!

1. In which continent is the 2026 football World Cup being held?
2. Which non-capital city in Australia has the highest population?
3. What is the collective noun for a group of crows?
4. What is the nickname of the Greater Western Sydney AFL team?
5. How many sides does a decagon have?
6. Which fast food chain has the most stores in Australia?
7. How many letters are there in the English alphabet?
8. What colour is usually associated with envy?
9. When used in movies, what does CGI stand for?
10. Who directed the movie ‘Goodfellas’?

Quiz Answers

1. North America
2. Gold Coast
3. A murder
4. The giants
5. Ten
6. Subway
7. 26
8. Green
9. Computer generated image
10. Martin Scorsese

Sudoku

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

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

Colouring In

