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ISSUE NO. 26 SEPTEMBER 2026 ABOUTTIME.ORG.AU

About Time

Australia’s National Prison Newspaper

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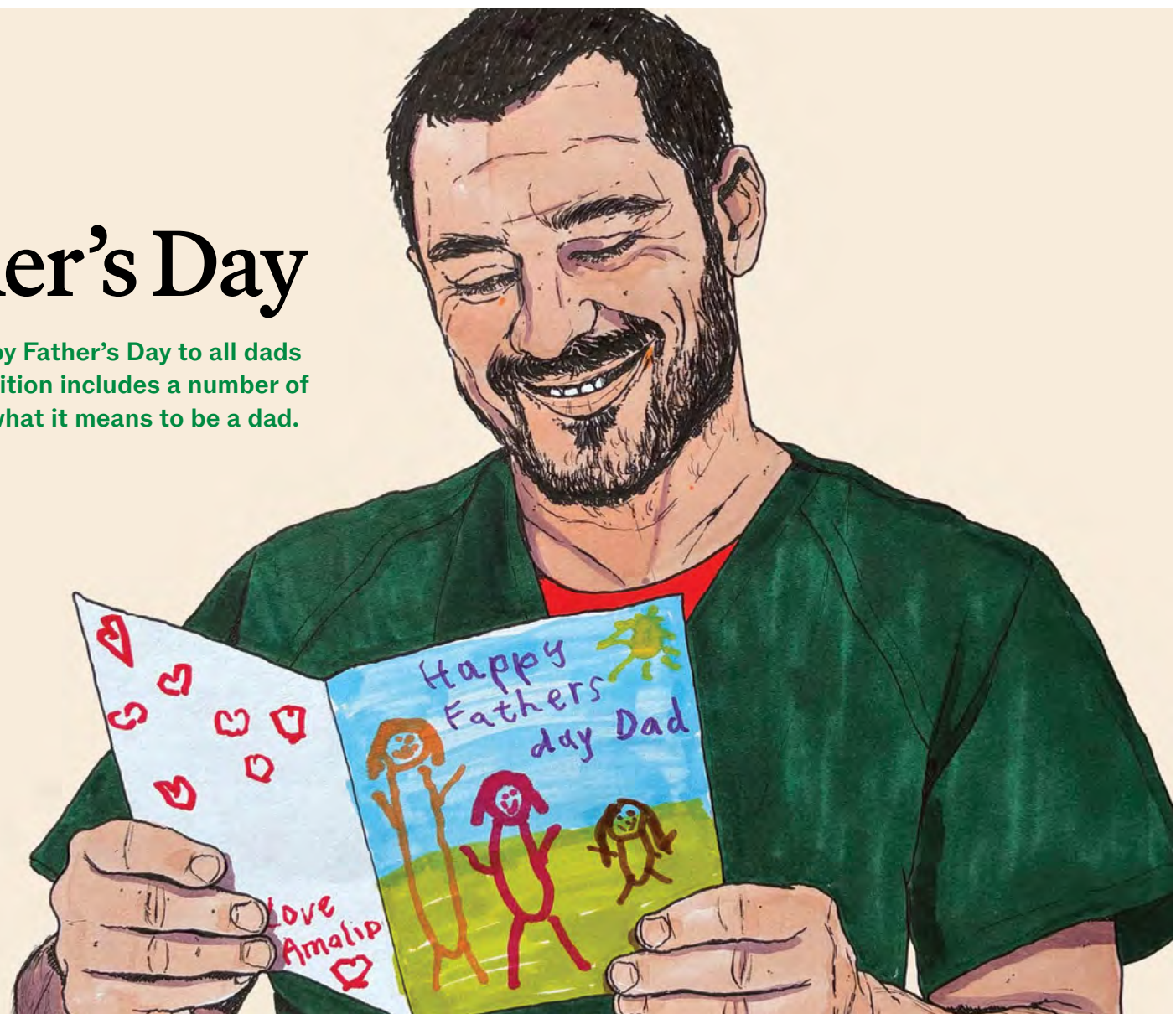
LETTERS · NEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS · EXPERIENCES · LEARN · HEALTH · MOB · LEGAL CORNER · REINTEGRATION · CULTURE · CREATIVE · PLAY

Happy Father’s Day

About Time **would like to wish a happy Father’s Day to all dads currently behind bars. This special edition includes a number of stories celebrating fatherhood and what it means to be a dad.**



Ike Curtis

You Don’t Stop Being a Dad: Father’s Day on the Inside

Gary Griffiths on the importance of growing as a father and making positive choices.

By Gary Griffiths

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

Father’s Day can bring pride, guilt, sadness, hope, or all of them at once, and being in jail doesn’t stop that.

Just because you’re locked up doesn’t mean you stop being a dad. You might not be present due to your situation, but you can still be there for your kids as much as you can, and that still means a lot.
Continued on page 16.

The Program Helping Dads Read Bedtime Stories From Behind Bars

Each year, around 500 Australian children receive a recording of their incarcerated father reading them a story – a small act keeping families connected through a difficult time.

By Denham Sadler

Denham is the Chief Reporter at *About Time*.

Read the full story on page 8.

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Letters

'Everyday Feels Like a Battle': Serving Time Away From Home

By Deanno

Deanno writes from a prison in QLD.

Hey there everyone,

I hope you're all doing well.

I wanted to talk a bit more about my day-to-day experience in regards to where I'm at mentally due to my situation.

So I was extradited from my home in Western Australia and taken to Queensland, where I have been serving my sentence.

I have been waiting on an interstate transfer since July 2025. I have been calling my partner back home in WA and have received updates from time to time. Every day waiting to be sent home is affecting me mentally more and more every day.

I find it hard to sleep, I find it really hard to walk past the visits area on a daily basis and see other prisoners having visits with their loved ones, knowing that this will never happen for me until they hurry up and send me back home.

I find myself sitting in my cell mostly all day that I'm not at work as I feel so depressed and alone, and feel like I'm made to just sit in this prison so far from support and my loved ones and suffer more and more everyday.

Everyday feels like a battle for me, being here in a state I don't know and have nothing and no one.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me, take care everyone, peace!!



'She Makes Me Want to Be a Better Man'

By Dougie

Dougie writes from a prison in VIC.

Dear *About Time*,

I'm so sick of coming back to prison, and hurting the one I love. My wife has put up with so much from me.

I want to change my ways and always be there for her, like she has done for me.

I have enjoyed reading your newspaper. It has given me hope, and the stories I've read have inspired me to change.

Being behind these walls have given me time to reflect on my life. I'm locked up, but my memories are in my heart forever.

She makes me want to be a better man.

Time for a change.

Love thy will be done.

From Dougie

Changes Need to Happen

By Brady

Brady writes from a prison in TAS.

Hey, my name is Brady.

I've been coming to prison for the last 10 years off and on, and I'm currently in Risdon Prison, Tasmania.

I wanted to write about the lockdowns we have been subjected to and how it's not getting any better.

The lockdowns are getting worse and worse. Changes need to happen and not in a few years – now. It's not just max that get locked down, it's everywhere. All us inmates want something to change, we need help, someone needs to help us by standing by our side and take this to state parliament and then onto the courts if need be.

We have a canteen list where we can get items like toiletries and food.

A few times over the years I've sent letters to the bigger boss about trying to put more things on canteen.

A bag of protein 1kg is $45.15, a bag of coffee 180g is $16.66, toothpaste is $9, a 175g bag of chips is $5, underwear is $16.66, roll on is $4, shampoo is $12.50.

We only get paid $27.50 a week – that's what inmates who don't work get paid.

All the best.

Letters From the Outside

On 'Victoria Overrides Human Rights Charter to Restrict Access to Open Air in Prison'
"Having worked in Victorian prisons and experienced them as a practitioner, I can personally attest to the need for fresh air and sunlight each day for my own mental health."
– Melanie

On 'There Is Another Way: Doing Justice Differently'
"At last some sanity in the world. Let's hope Australia follows the trend. It's a known fact that youth institutions are a training ground for the Big House. I worked for 20 years as an education officer in maximum security and saw first hand how young people leave as damaged and hardened humans. Heartbreaking."
– Bunty

Bunk Beds Should Be Abolished Unless They Can Be Made Safe

By Anthony

Anthony writes from a prison in NSW.

Hi all,

I just want to bring to everyone's attention an issue about the bunk beds in correctional centres. It may not apply to all correctional centres but some of the inmates have complained or brought to attention that there are no handles or guards to help while climbing up and down from the top bunk.

It's a huge safety issue. The steps are metal with no grip tape on the step, so if you slip you could injure yourself. The bottom step, which is level with the bed base of the lower bunk, is more than 400 millimetres in height from the floor.

It's easy to misjudge the height. We are not allowed to use boxes as steps to stand on.

Another issue that I would like to point out is that the side railing isn't high enough. What happens if an inmate rolls over in the middle of the night, rolls too far and falls off the top bunk? It's a long way down to fall.

Why can't the jail put grab handles for the stairs so we can climb up to the top bunk? An extra step for the bottom step when we climb up and down could also prevent an accident.

A way to solve the problem of rolling off the bunk is to weld something up to make the side of the bunk bed higher – with the mattress and blankets there's only about an inch or two of height off the frame.

I think that bunk beds should be abolished unless they can rectify the issue.

The Power of Writing

By Anthony

Anthony writes from a prison in VIC.

I'd like to give a shout-out to Vanessa from prison in WA and welcome to *About Time*. I discovered *About Time* early last year 2025 and always look forward each month for the read. Last year in two seperate issues I had stories published and seeing them in the national prison newspaper was the best feeling.

I've always had a love for writing but never had the time, now incarcerated I have nothing but time so I decided to put pen to paper and with two stories published I am now working on writing a book.

Sometimes when we write something worth publishing it is when we least expect it. For me writing is a powerful tool that helps with my mental health.

Keep up the good work and never give up writing, I look forward to future stories.

Anthony, from Victoria



Send Us a Letter

Your contributions are the centerpiece of the paper. If you would like to contribute to *About Time*, please send your letters to the below postal address (it's free!):

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If you're able to use a blank envelope or an A4 folder, you can send this for free using the Reply Paid address. You don't need to buy a prepaid envelope or a stamp.

Why Can't We Buy Healthy Supplements?

By Luke

Luke writes from a prison in TAS.

In Tasmania, a lot of people come into custody off the streets affected by using large amounts of drugs of various kinds so they are under-weight and very unhealthy, which is no good at all.

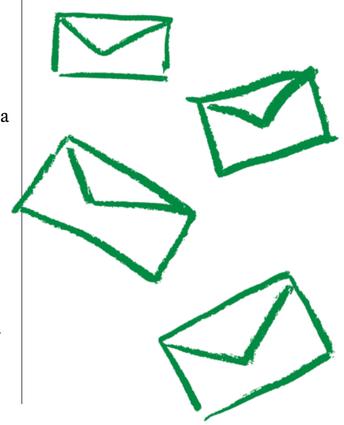
The government wants people to be healthy and to stay off drugs – while people are in custody we do a lot of training to stay healthy.

We want top quality proteins, supplements and items for our health. But we can't buy what we want, need and like.

On the canteen form we have protein that's the cheapest stuff ya can buy and not of good quality.

I don't understand why. Normal people can purchase any good health items they want and need from chemist's body building shops and more.

Tasmanian inmates would be grateful to be able to buy items so our health can be in the best shape possible to be fit, healthy and strong. Prison is a place for rehabilitation and used as a rehab place for people to get off drugs and to get healthy.





Sick of being sick? Have you been forced to wait months or even years to see a doctor in a Qld prison?

We know that many prisoners in Queensland are suffering because of long wait times to see a doctor, a nurse or a dentist, while others have been diagnosed with serious conditions – including Hep C, Cancer, and HIV – for which they have received no treatment.

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The High Court Just Rewrote the Rules.

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

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

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

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

THE STORY BEHIND THE CASE

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

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

HOW THE LAW GOT HERE — A SHORT HISTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHY THE 2024 BIRD V DP DECISION HURT SURVIVORS

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

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

WHAT KINDS OF INSTITUTIONS DOES THIS NOW COVER?

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

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

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

COULD THIS AFFECT YOUR CASE?

Speak to us if any of these apply to you:

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

HOW TO GET ADVICE FROM INSIDE

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

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

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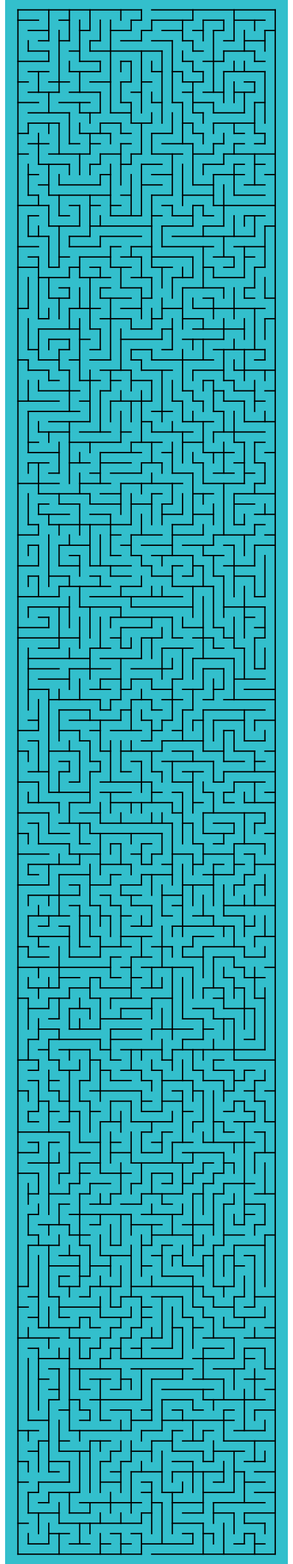

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Finding Hope in Hopelessness

By Adrian

Adrian writes from a prison in NSW.

How do we escape the trap of feeling worse rather than better?

The hardest part is changing our ways of thinking and realising that in order to escape these thoughts and turn our life around. Firstly, we have to examine our own mind and thoughts – deeply challenging ourselves. Acknowledge that it is indeed our fault and that directly or indirectly we made a choice that landed us where we currently are.

Then, we have to want to change in every way, emotionally and mentally, to become a better person. Can I do this from prison with all the negativity, anger, hate, fear, insolence, insecurities, pettiness, judgement of whether one crime is better or worse than another, control issues, domination, ignorance and arrogance?

I found a way for me and some of those who know me in the wing I am currently housed. One little slip up with argumentativeness, blaming and becoming irate because someone didn't see things in the same light as I did brought me undone and I am back to the beginning once again.

Being born and bred Catholic gave me a slight advantage. I knew what faith was, I knew what prayer was, at least in respect of reciting them and I have experienced some moments that could be called miraculous survival.

In 1999, a semi-trailer dumping a load of road base at a road works site in Geurie, NSW rolled, landing on the ute I was driving. I survived with some whip lash and back strain and of course PTSD.

The thing was, I survived – why? I don't know, and at times throughout my life there have been thoughts as to why did I survive, what makes me the lucky one. It's called survivor's guilt. I pushed on though and found it was an opportunity to grow.

As life continued in its highs and lows, I kept coming back to what is it that pushed me to strive? What is it that gave me hope and not just wanting to curl up in a corner forever? I searched different faiths and did all the things that Christians do but then my faith waned and I completely fell off the wagon and continued in a downward spiral of issues and selfishness, eventually low self-esteem and some drug use.

This spiral continued downward til I found myself repeatedly here and needing to find a way up and quickly. I'm not getting younger, my parents are ageing and the only person I am thinking about is myself and my issues.

Twelve months ago coming back in again on the tablet in the learning and development section, I came across some teachings of the Buddha. What struck me first was the same issue that the Buddha had 2,600 years ago was the "human condition".

I had also thought of this same issue, with all the tools and technology we have and access to global communication in the palm of our hand why haven't we learnt any form of compassion, understanding and acceptance on a global scale. The ego and "me" as the centre of the universe is valid today with all the issues I mentioned earlier which is still leading the way to divide and blame each other for our mistakes and misapprehensions.

As I read more I realised there are certain truths as to who and what we are. I found that because we think so small in regards to "my" world, we act small. I got excited by this and started reading more and more of this truth stuff (Dharma) and then I thought, okay let's give this meditation thing a shot and see where it leads.

Through meditation I started to ask myself and see myself in a different light. I started reading other texts on Buddhism and Christianity parts and interpretations on the Qur'an, books by popes and saints. I even realised truth from fiction writers and in movies and TV series.

I started finding answers, my mind became clearer, calmer, less full of "junk". I discovered I had an ability to draw, paint and write from the heart about issues that we think are too big for one person.

I discovered that through small acts of generosity, compassion, understanding and listening that I am not the only person that feels this way.

My spiritual awareness started to grow to a point where I started to feel differently. Not better, or more superior than anyone else, not wanting to grasp to small ideas or concepts, but a greater understanding that there needs to be a movement towards "us" and making everything less complicated.

There is a comfort that comes from focusing on emptiness. It's a sublime and unique experience where we let go of all our complications, personas and masks that we put on in front of others every day.

I'm not saying you will find all the answers and I'm not saying I have found all the answers either but just start by letting go of that control, the wanting to manage the outcome of every situation to "my liking". Get to know yourself in the emptiness of your mind.

Working on Myself For My Partner and Daughter

By Aidan

Aidan writes from a prison in WA.

To *About Time*,

I am writing as I saw my partner's article and it inspired me. This is probably my millionth time in prison, and time stands still.

My reason to change is my partner and my daughter.

I say enough is enough!

I want to live a normal life with my partner and the kids – I love you babes.

From Aidan

Still Inside, Nine Months After Parole Date

By Chris

Chris writes from a prison in VIC.

Firstly thank you for all you do in preparing and producing *About Time*. I became eligible for parole in October 2025, over 9 months ago. I was sentenced for Commonwealth offences and I am required to apply for Commonwealth parole. When I was sentenced my lawyer advised me that parole would be a formality and that I would not even be required to apply. I have since long since learned that this advice was incorrect.

Finding information relating to Commonwealth Parole or people able to provide correct advice has proven challenging since I was sentenced.

In October last year my parole was refused, mainly due to my report from my offence related program (FIS) not being available. At this time CCS recommended me for parole. The Commonwealth Parole Office was provided with my report from my Offence Related Program more than 4 months ago and still my application to reconsider me for parole remains unactioned whilst I remain incarcerated long past the time that my sentencing judge reccomended me eligible for parole.

I have engaged a lawyer to assist through this process but even identifying a lawyer that understood and dealt with Commonwealth parole was a difficult task that I was only able to manage with the support of my partner outside.

Again thank you for your time.

Chris.

Biannca's Crocheting

By Biannca

Biannca writes from a prison in VIC.

Hello,

Just thought I would send in two photos of what I have been up to during my time in prison.

The leopard family is my latest paint by numbers project.

Meet Marie from Aristocats. She is one of my many crochet creations.

Each crochet "hole" has cotton placed, separated and fluffed using a nail brush to have this finished look.

B.





Write to Us

Your contributions are the centerpiece of the paper. If you would like to contribute to *About Time*, please send your letters to the below postal address (it's free!):

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News and Investigations

The Program Helping Dads Read Bedtime Stories From Behind Bars

By Denham Sadler

Continued from page 1.

A new program is helping dads in prison read bedtime stories to their children.

The Storytime program, run in prisons in NSW, Queensland and WA, records fathers reading stories and sends them to their kids on the outside.

The recorded stories range from simple picture books for toddlers to Harry Potter for teenagers. The fathers are encouraged to add a message to their child at the start or end of the story, and to change the names of the characters to their own.

The recording is sent along with a physical copy of the book so they can continue reading whenever they like.

Linda Carn works for SHINE for Kids, an organisation that runs the program in NSW and Queensland prisons.

She said it provides a strong connection for fathers and their children, beyond the regular visits.

"It gives fathers in custody the opportunity to stay connected with their children in a meaningful and personal way," Carn told *About Time*.



Sophie is the mother of a three-year-old boy who has received a recording from his father in prison. She said it has been "incredibly special" for the family.

"For our son, hearing his dad's voice and knowing the story was recorded especially for him brings comfort and familiarity," Sophie told *About Time*. "It creates a moment where he can simply enjoy his dad reading to him, just like so many other children do.

"It reminds him that he is loved, thought about every day, and is still a very important part of his dad's world. Rather than every interaction being centred around incarceration, Storytime creates moments that simply feel like a dad reading to his little boy. Those moments are incredibly precious to us."



Carn said she has heard from a mother on the outside whose child was having a "massive meltdown" in a shopping centre. The mother took out her phone and played the recording of the child's father reading out a story, and they quickly calmed down.

In Western Australia, it is available at Acacia Prison and the Wandoo Reintegration Facility. Fathers in custody can participate if they have been charge-free for three months, have not been charged with child sex offences and have not been issued a violence restraining order.

In New South Wales and Queensland, SHINE for Kids started the program during the Covid pandemic, and has maintained it due to its popularity.

Each year about 500 children around Australia receive a recording through the program.



It also can improve literacy and education opportunities for the children.

"Parents tell us all the time how precious they are," SHINE for Kids CEO Julie Hourigan told *About Time*.

"Children, especially young people, can become familiar with and hear their dad's voice, and they can listen to the recordings over and over again."

Other families play the recording on the way to a prison visit, and on the way home.

It is estimated that about 40 per cent of all adults in prison have dependent children on the outside.

Carn encouraged all fathers in prison to take part in the program if they can.

"Reading a story or sending a letter can have a lasting impact.

"Your child doesn't expect perfection – they want to know that you love them and you're thinking about them on a daily basis, every second of the day. It gives them love, comfort and care."

Sophie, a mother of a two-year-old girl who has been part of the program said it has made a "huge difference" and provided an "opportunity to maintain the bond" between the two.

"It might feel like reading a story is a small thing, but to a child it can mean everything. Programs like Storytime help children continue to feel that love, and I truly believe that preserving those relationships, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, benefits not only the child but the whole family."

People in prison in NSW can contact their Programs Officer to express interest in the program, and those in Queensland can request a General Request Form.

Referrals can be made during family visits, and posters are placed in the screening area of some prisons so people can apply for it when they enter prison.

Families on the outside can contact SHINE for Kids via its website (shineforkids.org.au), where they can also find resources for families impacted by incarceration.

Fatherhood in Prisons: Lessons From Around the World

By Denham Sadler

There are groundbreaking programs around the world aiming to help fathers behind bars.

The Family Intervention Unit at HMP Parc in Wales is a 60-bed wing housing only fathers.

Each of these cells has a mission statement written on the outside, describing why they chose to come to this unit.

One of the man's mission statements is to "have a closer relationship with my kids".

A range of courses are provided to those in the unit, including parenting skills, pre and post-natal advice, baby bathing lessons and homework clubs with their children.

All of the fathers in the unit must cook and clean for themselves.

Those who have been housed at the fathers' only unit have been found to have a lower recidivism rate than the general prison population in the United Kingdom.

There are similar units at a number of prisons in the Netherlands, known as Fathers' Wings.

These areas of the prisons are specifically for fathers, and include family rooms that aim to make the experience for children visiting their fathers more welcoming and less intimidating.

The first Fathers' Wing opened in the Netherlands in 2018, and the third unit launched in recent years.

The men in these units receive father-specific training, with a range of courses focusing on preparing them to resume their role as fathers.

The Fathers' Wings also feature a family room where dads can do homework with their kids, and where they can video call them at other times.

Part of the purpose of these specific units is to allow fathers to be around other fathers, with an aim of creating a more parental-focused environment with more freedom to reveal a vulnerable side.

These programs show that change is possible, and that efforts are being made to focus on fathers behind bars and their children on the outside.

In Canada, the HERO (Helping Everyone Realise Opportunities) Dad program has been running for nearly a decade, and now operates in 19 prisons.

It begins with an eight-week parenting course, followed by Dad Groups, where fathers meet regularly to talk about the shared experiences of being parents.

The organisation also offers one-on-one phone sessions, and Dad Groups on the outside for those who are released.

New Book Explores Experiences of Fathers in Australian Prisons

By Denham Sadler

A new book offers an insight into the experiences of fathers behind bars in Australia.

Dr Tess Bartlett, an independent research consultant and senior report writer / analyst at the Waitangi Tribunal Unit in New Zealand, interviewed 39 fathers in prison in Victoria about their experiences of parenthood during incarceration. She also wanted to hear about what services and programs are needed.

The book is called 'Fathers in Prison: New Insights in Masculinities, Identity and Carceral Space' and was published by Routledge in late July.

It explores masculinity, imprisonment and the impact of incarceration on families, through the interviews with fathers in prison.

"Lots of them said it would have been better to have more support when they entered the prison," Bartlett told *About Time*. "They said it would have been good for someone to ask them about their kids, or whether they had kids, and how they could be supported on the outside."

Bartlett's research has shown her that a focus on fathering can help men survive prison and enables them to maintain normal relations with their families.

"If you give people something that they can focus on, whether it's being a parent or someone doing their job or looking after their pet, that becomes part of their identity and means it's something that can help them belong and feel connected to other people," she said.

"If you're in prison and you have that focus on being a father or a parent, you have that sense of belonging, that connection, and you're able to talk about that openly in a space that actually supports it, rather than feeling like you have to change yourself or hide it in order to fit into the population you're in.

"It's about giving something positive – a positive identity to focus on to do with fathering."



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QLD

Crackdown on E-Bikes, E-Scooters and Personal Mobility Devices

By QLD Prisoners' Legal Service

New laws about the use of e-bikes, e-scooters and personal mobility devices came into effect in Queensland from July.

Over the last decade, the use of these devices has steadily increased. It is not uncommon for Queensland cities to have rentable e-scooters on footpaths, or to see people of all ages riding e-bikes.

The government has introduced new laws banning devices faster than 25km/hr and targeting people who ride them while intoxicated, without a helmet, with modifications, or without a driver's license.

Importantly, from 31 August, there is a requirement that all riders have at least a learner driver's license. This means people who have lost their driver's license will no longer be able to ride these devices.

Limited exceptions apply, including for people with medical conditions or disabilities.



NT

Concerns Raised Over Lack of Forensic Mental Health Unit

People in the Northern Territory are spending long amounts of time in hospital wards instead of appropriate forensic mental health facilities, according to the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM).

In its annual report, the NPM revealed that a First Nations man had spent more than 300 days in a high-acuity mental health ward at Darwin hospital while waiting placement in a more appropriate place.

During this time,. he was under continuous supervision by two uniformed correctional officers.

The report said this highlighted the need for a dedicated forensic mental health facility in the Northern Territory.

The Cognitive Behaviour Unit at Darwin Correctional Centre has been listed as an "Approved Treatment Facility" in the NT, but the NPM said it is still a prison-based setting, and is used to house people from the general prison population too.





VIC

Vegemite Push Goes to Court

An incarcerated man has had his day in court over a challenge to the ban on Vegemite in Victorian prisons.

The case claims that the ban on Vegemite in prisons is in breach of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, which includes that people of specific cultural backgrounds are protected in "enjoying" their culture.

The man, who is representing himself, is claiming that Vegemite is part of the culture of being Australia.

He referenced a number of examples of the role of Vegemite in Australian culture, such as the heritage-listed Vegemite factory in Port Melbourne, and the Men at Work song that references a Vegemite sandwich.

Vegemite is also banned in prisons in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. It can still be purchased at buy-up at prisons in New South Wales.

New Gym Equipment Coming to Western Plains

New gym equipment will soon be coming to Western Plains Correctional Centre.

The state government has said that the current equipment on offer is "insufficient" for the number of people incarcerated at the prison.

It has purchased 35 multi-gym stations to be installed at the prison.

This gym equipment will be placed across communities, along with the Karlton Close Supervision and Support Unit.

"Gym equipment is essential in ensuring the men at Western Plains have access to recreational activities as part of their structured day," the Victorian government said.



TAS

Kitchen Shut Down Due to Floor Faults

The kitchen at Risdon Prison was shut down in early July after faults were found in its flooring.

Food was flown in from Victoria to cover for the closed kitchen, which had only just recently officially opened.

An issue was discovered with the "slip resistance of the flooring" of the new commercial kitchen and bakery, which was opened in early April.

The company that build the kitchen will now cover the costs of fixing the flooring.

While the kitchen was being fixed, food for the prison was sourced from Victoria.

The union representing prison workers said that the floor of the kitchen was not adequate for the wear and tear of a kitchen that makes food for more than 800 people each day.



ACT

Prison Policy Changes to be Tracked Online

A new public transparency tool has been launched to track how the ACT government is putting in place the recommendations made by the territory's prison inspector.

The ACT Custodial Inspector created the public tool to track whether the recommendations it has made to improve conditions in prison have been implemented.

The online dashboard includes more than 200 recommendations made in prison reviews since 2019.

According to the Custodial Inspector, there are 52 "open" recommendations that have not been implemented, including for efforts to be made to give more "purposeful activity" to those incarcerated in the ACT.

The Inspector has called for a multi-purpose industries building to be established at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to offer courses, such as in forklift driving.

"This was an opportunity to bring together lots of different pieces of data and put it in one place that will hopefully be user-friendly for members of the public, for community organisations, for other stakeholders, to better understand what recommendations have been made, what issues have been identified, what the government has done to respond, and also if they've committed to something and they haven't yet fulfilled it," ACT Custodial Inspector Rebecca Minty said.

"It's our opportunity to flag that."



NSW

New 10-Year Strategy to Keep Women Out of Prison

Corrective Services NSW has launched a new Women's Strategy 2026–2036 that aims to keep women out of prison and provide proper rehabilitation and reintegration services to those who are incarcerated.

In the strategy, Corrective Services NSW said it had made a "commitment to systemic reform", and that the document is a "framework for sustained, organisational-wide change" and a "blueprint for change".

The state government consulted with more than 400 people, including those with lived experience, to help develop the strategy.

There were just over 900 women in prison as of the end of March last year.

According to the strategy, just under 20 per cent of these women were homeless when they entered prison, and 60 per cent had a drug-related issue.

More than half of women in prison are on remand, and 50 per cent of these women are eventually released without sentence, or get a non-custodial sentence.

The new strategy involves more initiatives to keep women out of custody, and improvements to reintegration and rehabilitative programs.

The strategy also makes commitments to women in custody: that they will be treated with dignity and respect, will be safe and supported in rehabilitative environments, be able to maintain connection with family, kin and culture and be provided with opportunities to build skills and knowledge.

Transfers from Goulburn Prison Begin

The transfer of inmates from Goulburn Correctional Centre to other prisons in New South Wales has begun.

The state government announced earlier this year that four wings of the Goulburn prison would be closed, with the minimum security wings and High Risk Management Centre to keep operating.

Prison officers at the centre submitted a motion to not assist with these transfers, including the processing via the normal reception-room process.

The prison staff said they would continue facilitating scheduled court and medical movements.

Instead, the management team of the prison will be responsible for these transfers.



WA

Disturbance at Casuarina

Some of the cells at Casuarina Prison have been damaged because of an incident in July.

There were reports of "significant damage" to a unit at the maximum-security prison.

The state Corrections Department said there was damage to two wings of a unit at Casuarina.

It said that seven people had "caused a disturbance" in the wing.



Paramedics Not Police to Attend Some Mental Health Crises in NSW

New specialist teams will respond to people in distress under a $270 million health-led model, but advocates say key questions remain about how far the reform will go.

By Denham Sadler



Highway Patrol Images via Flickr

Paramedics rather than police will respond to some mental health emergencies in New South Wales, with the state government introducing a health-based response.

The NSW government has detailed a new statewide mental health emergency response model centred on paramedics responding to people who are in crisis in some cases, instead of police.

New mental health teams will respond to these incidents 12 hours per day, seven days per week in "areas of high need".

The state government has not revealed further information on which time of the day the teams will operate or where they will be located.

A $270 million investment will go towards efforts to ensure that those experiencing a mental health emergency are connected with appropriate health-led support rather than law enforcement.

Eight Mental Health Acute Assessment Teams will provide immediate support to individuals in crisis and connect them with the right care.

These teams will include a paramedic and specialist mental health nurse.

A Virtual Mental Health Hub will also be established within NSW Ambulance to provide real-time clinical advice to frontline responders.

There have been long-running campaigns to stop police attending events involving people in mental distress following a series of emergencies, including recommendations from the Bondi Junction Coronial Inquest, the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into community mental health and a NSW Police Force review of mental health incident responses.

According to NSW Police statistics, more than 40 per cent of critical incidents of serious injury or the death of a person interacting with police involved a mental health crisis.

NSW Minister for Mental Health Rose Jackson said this was a "major milestone" for the state.

"When someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, they need the right care from the right people, and that's exactly what this new health-led responder approach will do," Jackson said.

"We know this reform has taken time, and that's because it really matters."

Human rights law firm National Justice Project said there were a number of unanswered questions around the plan, and that the funding allocated to it fell short.

"Ultimately, this is about keeping people experiencing mental health distress safe and as a campaign and sector we have called for genuine alternatives and there are still many questions to be answered from this announcement," Alternative First Responders project lead Chloe Fragos said.

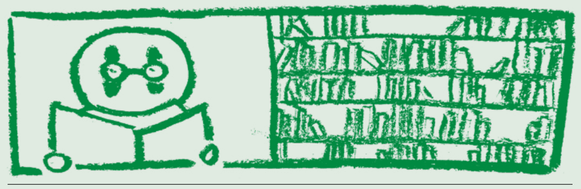
The organisation is pushing for further investment in "alternative crisis response systems that prioritise dignity, safety and care over police force".

The Victorian government is looking at a similar reform after it was recommended by the Royal Commission into Mental Health in late 2024.

The Commission found that the current system was ill-equipped to deal with mental health emergencies, and the involvement of police often led to bad outcomes.

The introduction of this change has been delayed until next year.

In South Australia, a co-responder model has been trialled where police are accompanied by clinicians when attending some mental health call-outs.



Want to Learn More About a Topic?

Is there anything you'd like to get some more information on? It can be a law, a rule in prison, a legal term or anything else. It also doesn't have to be about prison, it can just be a topic or issue that you're interested in. Please write to us and let us know and we'll try to include some information on it in an upcoming edition of *About Time*.

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Inspector's Corner

Your monthly review of prison oversight



Definitions
Here are what some of the key words and phrases in this section mean.

Ombudsman
An independent organisation that looks into issues with government agencies and public organisations. In several states, they are the main bodies that look into complaints about prisons.

International human rights standards
These are rules aiming to protect the basic dignity, freedom and equality of all people, set out by the United Nations.

Antenatal care
The medical care provided to a pregnant woman.

Compensation
Something given or paid to someone because of a loss or injury.

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



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Man Unlawfully Kept in Prison For Months After Release Date
The South Australian Ombudsman has released a summary statement of its investigation into a man who was unlawfully kept in prison for months after his release date due to a "systems error".

The man was not told this had happened for five years, with the Department for Correctional Services only informing him once the Ombudsman started investigating.

The SA Ombudsman found that the Department for Correctional Services had breached the law and international human rights standards by holding the man in prison far beyond the end of his sentence.

The state government has said it will not provide compensation to the man, despite the Ombudsman recommending it do so.

In a letter to the impacted man, the Department did not apologise or clearly explain that he may have a legal basis to make a claim against the state of South Australia, the Ombudsman said, with the onus placed on him to seek compensation.

The delay in telling the man what had happened was "serious and unacceptable", the Ombudsman said.

"The seriousness of the Department's error was exacerbated by the fact that the Department knew it had held the prisoner in error and failed to provide timely advice of this fact, offer an apology or make him aware of the compensation options available to him," the Ombudsman report said.

The SA Ombudsman recommended that the Department review its systems across all of its prisons to make sure this does happen again, and implement a policy stating that if this happens again, the person is told as soon as possible and it is made clear that they are eligible for a pay-out.

The Ombudsman also recommended that the Department consider making an ex-gratia payment – a voluntary payment without admitting legal liability – to the man.

The Department agreed to the first two recommendations but has rejected the latter.

"Since this incident occurred six years ago, the Department and G4S have implemented new processes to manage prisoner release dates," a spokesperson for the SA Department for Corrections told *About Time*.

"The government respectfully disagrees with the Ombudsman's request to pay compensation."



QUEENSLAND

Capricornia Inspection Findings
The QLD Ombudsman has released findings from its inspection of Capricornia Correctional Centre.

The Ombudsman found positives around how First Nations people at the prison were able to maintain connection to culture, including through virtual Elders visits.

It also applauded the prison's immunisation clinic.

But the Ombudsman identified issues around overcrowding at the prison, accessing medication, strip searching and high temperatures in cells.

The report said that people were having issues in getting medications that they had been prescribed in the community when they entered the prison.

It included an example of a man who had been on anti-convulsant medication for two years before he was imprisoned, but who had to wait six weeks to get that medication in custody.

The Capricornia prison is operating over-capacity, the Ombudsman said, with a modified unit routine leading to less time out of cells.

The prison has a capacity for 1,127 people, but there were 1,172 incarcerated there at the time of the inspection. Nearly half of all people in the prison are First Nations.

The Ombudsman recommended a new strategy be developed to increase out-of-cell time, for air-conditioning to be installed in all low-custody accommodation units, for better access to Sorry Business for First Nations people, and the introduction of digital scanners to reduce the number of strip searches.

Brisbane Correctional Centre Inspection Findings
By QLD Prisoners' Legal Service
The Brisbane Correctional Centre Inspection Report was published by the Inspector of Detention Services QLD in April 2026.

The purpose of the report is to provide Queensland Parliament with advice and recommendations about the functioning of Brisbane Correctional Centre (BCC).

The recommendations put forward by the Inspector are aimed at ensuring that people's basic rights are protected when:

- Entering the prison for the first time.
- Accessing information and courses whilst in prison.
- Accessing legal advice.
- Accessing health care.
- Making a formal complaint or raising a concern.
- Sharing cells.
- In lockdowns

For example, the Inspector was concerned about the way lockdowns were being used at BCC.

The Inspector reported that since 2017 BCC was subject to a "Modified Unit Routine" (MUR) to help manage the effects of overcrowding.

Prisoners on the bottom landing would have out-of-cell time in the morning and prisoners of the top landing would get it in the afternoon.

The Inspector said this created an inequality because prisoners with out-of-cell time in the morning would be allowed 4 hours but prisoners with out-of-cell time in the afternoon would be unlocked for 4.5 hours.

The Inspector noted that prisoners who only accessed phones in the morning struggled to speak to their lawyers who were often in court.

While prisoners locked down in the afternoon struggled to access Elder visits and Sunday Services.

The MUR did not allow for prisoners to alternate between morning and afternoon out-of-cell time.

In addition, the Inspector said: "We reviewed unit logbooks across 6 units during 3 days of the onsite inspection and found that unlock and lock away times for the MUR were not recorded".

Therefore, there was uncertainty on how the MUR was being used, and how much out-of-cell time was being facilitated.

Queensland Corrective Services responded to the Inspector's concerns stating that:

"All prisoners at BCC who are not subject to any restrictions (for safety and security) receive four hours out-of-cell time. Should there be any variation to this, for example, an emergency lockdown, the details are recorded in the unit occurrence logbooks."

The report has been tabled in Parliament, and another inspection will take place at BCC in five years.

Upcoming Inspections
The Queensland Ombudsman has wrapped up inspections of Capricornia, Numinbah, Lotus Glen, Woodford Correctional Centre and the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit and is preparing reports on its findings.

Consultation is currently open on a review into Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre.

The Ombudsman is also currently looking into the maximum security units at Arthur Gorrie, Brisbane and Woodford Correctional Centres, with submissions now closed.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Upcoming Inspections
The Western Australian Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) is preparing to release its findings from inspections of Melaleuca Women's Prison.

These inspections were focused on governance, the early days of custody, duty of care, daily life and the prison and security.

It will also release its report into Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison by the end of the year, and will begin inspections of Bandyup Women's Prison.

The OICS will inspect West Kimberley Regional Prison in September, with a report expected to be released by midway through next year.

This month the office will kick off a review into the cycle of overpopulation, with a focus on the experience and outcomes of those on remand, the rehabilitative capacity of the prison environment and the accessibility of parole.

This report will be provided to the Western Australian Parliament in June next year.

It is also conducting a review into the management of pregnant women in custody in the state. This is looking at whether the Department provides pregnant women in prison support and antenatal care that is equal to what is provided in the community, and the experiences of pregnant women in custody.

The OICS has appointed Jane Higgins as its new Acting Inspector. Inspector Eamon Ryan will be on extended leave until he retires in November.



NEW SOUTH WALES

Upcoming Inspections
The New South Wales Inspector of Custodial Services has announced inspections of Broken Hill Correctional Centre and Tamworth Correctional Centre in regional NSW.

It will also soon conduct inspections of the Emu Plains Correctional Centre and St Heliers Correctional Centre.



• Experiences

You Don't Stop Being a Dad: Father's Day on the Inside

By Gary Griffiths

Continued from page 1.

Let's be real here for a minute: it's almost like the system is happy to forget all of that because you committed a crime or ended up locked up for whatever reason.

But this article is not about that. It's about still continuing to show up for your kids with things like consistent phone calls, visits, family days, writing letters to your kids or even something as simple as doing your courses and staying out of fights and jail politics so you get that parole date!

Kids don't need a perfect father, they need a father that keeps trying to grow.

Each positive choice that you make is an investment in your kid's futures and staying out of prison is the biggest gift we can give them for their futures. I'm pretty sure I can speak for most blokes in jail when I say there's no way we want our sons to end up going to jail or be stuck in the system the way we are or were, but it does happen and that's why I'm writing this article with love and positive energy.

Every father that's reading this who is locked up: you deserve better for yourself! And by being better your kids automatically get better, you get better, your wife or partner gets better. It's a win-win-win situation and it's a powerful thing.

Accountability is 100 per cent one of the best lessons we can teach our kids and by owning up to what's happened doing your time and breaking the cycle is the best foot forward even if it doesn't feel like it at the time.

Your children are watching who you become, not just who you are. When dad is happy, free and being positive, it rubs off onto our children and then they become all of those things in their little lives. Once again, it's a win-win for everyone.

I write this from experience. I broke the cycle of going to jail and being addicted to drugs, and my daughter and son's futures are the motivation that paved my way out of that life.

It's never too late to start being better – age plays zero part in it. Using the opportunities inside of jail to start being better is huge – it's free and it will help with parole approvals and things like being moved to a lower security jail for better visits.

Fatherhood isn't defined by your worst mistake and small steps towards change can make a big impact in your future. Every positive choice you make is another brick in the wall to building your new life.

Father's Day can be a day of reflection and commitment to change, so that when you finish your time you can be there with them to watch them grow.

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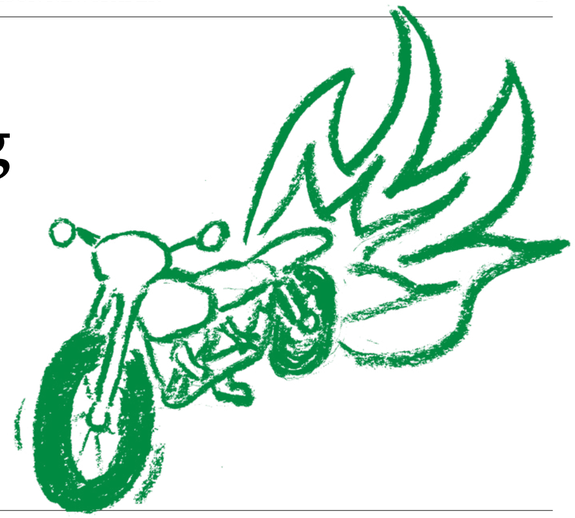
To the Gods of Speed: An Ode to Motorcycling



Finding freedom, focus and danger during a motorbike ride along the coast.

By Ivan

Ivan writes from a prison in VIC.

It was mid-afternoon in the Port Campbell area, with a southerly wind blowing, and Henry and I were just about to leave the Boggy Creek Café.

Henry was out front, waiting. He is a motorbike mechanic who used to have his own bike shop in Melbourne and races superbikes professionally. Like me, he's competitive. Three weeks before this ride he had spent $5,000 upgrading his bike's engine to increase its speed and handling.

This was our third ride together and we were planning to meet the rest of the group at Port Campbell Caravan Park.

I stepped out of the café onto the rickety veranda. Henry was out front on his Triumph Triple, engine revving. He turned and looked at me, then sped off before I had a chance to put on my helmet. He didn't like to lose and neither did I.

Luckily, last week I had spent a small fortune on a microchip, airbox upgrade and full Akropovic exhaust system on my Yamaha MT-01 1700 CC V-twin. My bike was now on steroids! I jumped on and revved the throttle. Despite the thumping vibrations of the engine, it felt like a sleek ride, and it was fast.

It only took me about 10 minutes to catch up to Henry. I dropped down a short dip in the road and was airborne for a bit. I could feel the cold air rushing through my helmet and I suddenly smelt the freshness of the creek under the bridge.

We were close to the coast now, on a very bendy road. I flipped my bike from left to right to heat up the outer edges of my tyres. These were the stickiest tyres my supplier had in stock.

I got very close to Henry's bike and was about to pass him, but I was being pelted by tiny rocks from his back wheel. I gritted my teeth. Suddenly, I saw a bend in the road ahead. I saw an opportunity to pass him and took it.

I could hear his fairing and headlight being showered by tiny bullets from my back wheel. I knew my bike's thunderous exhaust would vibrate every bone in his body as I rumbled past him. No way was I going to be pelted with stones again!

He was just inches behind me, but my focus was on where I was going. To ride this fast safely, you have to be in the zen of bike riding. I learnt this in an advanced motorbike-riding course with Stay Upright – a Melbourne rider-training business. They said riding is 97 per cent total concentration and only 3 per cent physical strength. For me, it is a state of meditation.

When you're riding you are processing everything: the conditions of the road, the weather, your speed, and you're always anticipating what other road users are going to do.

Your mind is 100 per cent focused. It's like you are part of everything – you become one with the bike.

We flew around the next hairpin bend with Henry still two inches from my back wheel, trying to pass me. I was blocking him at every opportunity.

Then, to my horror, a white rental van was parked on the wrong side of the road. Our side! A group of tourists had spread out in front of it, and some were taking photos of an echidna near the double lines.

These people would have heard our bikes screaming from 10 kilometres away!

I kept my focus and crossed the double white lines into oncoming traffic, darting between the group of tourists and the cars, my knees scraping the asphalt. Henry went bush into the gravel on the left side of the road, but managed to keep his bike upright. As soon as we passed them, I pulled up next to Henry. I lifted my visor, gave him a big cheesy grin, and took off.

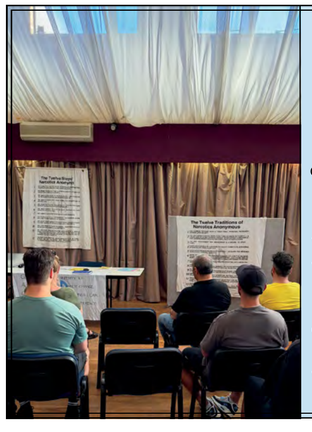
We stopped at the Peterborough Pub, 10 kilometres east of the caravan park. A southerly wind was still blowing. The ocean was only several hundred metres away and we could taste the salt in the air.

Henry was full of adrenalin. He pulled his helmet off and punched me in the arm. Talking 1,000 miles an hour, he said, "Did you see the speed we were going?"

"Sorry," I said. "I don't look at the speedo."

Several months ago, I had been out riding and was about to pass two bikes on a bend – I only glanced at the speedo for a microsecond: it was fast! I almost crashed exiting that bend and I never got distracted by a speedo again.

We ordered two Coopers Green and had the barkeep roll them on the bar. Henry and I clanged our ice-cold beers together. We toasted to the gods of speed.



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‘I Owe It To My Son to Stick it Out’: My Path From Trauma to Healing

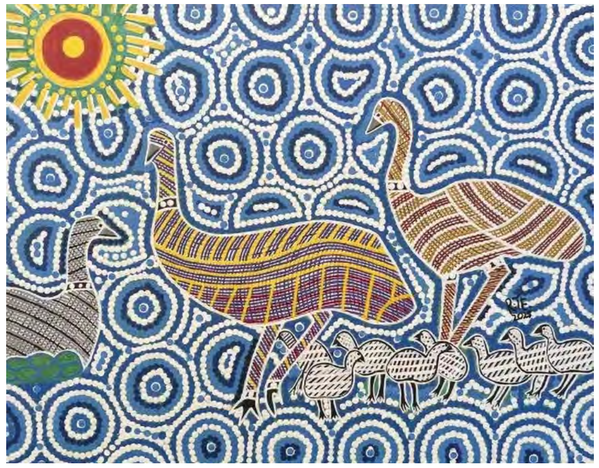


Image Caption

By David

David writes from a prison in VIC.

My name is David. I am a proud Yorta Yorta man currently locked up in Victoria.

I am doing 14 years. I am 38 years old and I have spent 21 of that in jail.

I grew up in Avoca, Tasmania, before coming back to Naarm (Melbourne).

I recently had an epiphany – I was in the slot and I was looking out the window thinking: “how come I’m here?”

I have a son, 18, who I love to death. He has a partner who I love as much as my son. I hope they stay together forever as I know she brings the happiness to my son I can’t. I have been in jail all his life. It is my biggest regret.

It took me 35 years to ask for help. I was sexually abused as a child. I was severely beaten as a child. I grew up in a life of crime, drug and alcohol-fuelled violence. It was all I knew, and after acting out as a kid, then an adult, I threw away my life as I was broken. I didn’t know how to fix it. I only knew how to continue it.

I never had support until I met my son’s mum. She tried, but I was young and didn’t know what to do. After that broke down, I still didn’t know what to do, so I focused on trying to fix everybody else’s life issues, which led to big sentences.

That brings me to now. In this sentence I finally found it. I found that inner self saying “enough is enough” in 2019. My now-partner is calming, caring, loving and everything in between. She came into my life when I’d seen a knot on the end of a rope. I felt as if I failed my son, my mum and family. I felt as though it would be easier to turn off the lights and stop hurting them all by coming in and out of jail.

But I knew that was being selfish and I owe it to my son to stick it out. He could have cut me out of his life, but he didn’t, so I told myself now is the time to do it.

So I reached out to clinicians in prison and committed to doing my H-VIP (High Intensity Violence Intervention Program), and this time I told myself to do it for me, not parole.

So I did it. It went for 9 months, but it was during Covid so it ended up being 12-14 months. I had done this program before, but I didn’t commit like this time as I was young and immature.

It was hard as we did a lot of what triggers me and life story and more relationships, a lot I struggled with, but it worked. Inside I found out a lot about myself and that my offending was because I didn’t deal with the child abuse trauma, and my offending was trying to protect others and acting out.

It really did help me. I found inner peace and I finally told my mum: “I am ready, Mum.”

She asked, “what for?”

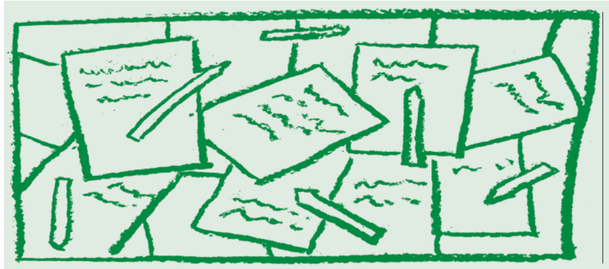
I said: “to be a son, partner, uncle and most of all, a father,” as I choked back tears. I finally feel as though I can do it, but I still have 6 years and I have 16 months till parole.

It actually felt so good to say to the clinicians, “please sign me up to any programs,” and to be told, “you have done every one offered”.

I actually enjoy them so I can grow, and instead of fighting people’s battles I can talk to them like a mentor. And boy oh boy it feels good. A lot of this is because of my partner, who has stood by me for 8 ½ years, and now I am so close. I am getting excited and scared – everything at once.

To my partner and son, I love you all so very much. I am so proud of you, and I can’t forget my future daughter in law. You both make me so happy. To see youse smile and the way you look at each other is just beautiful.

And to my partner, thank you. I know I am childish at the best of times, but I love you so much and can’t wait to come home to you.



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• Health

How to Manage Stress in Prison

You can't always control what happens around you, but you can control how you respond.

By Alison Cullen

Alison is a Forensic and Clinical Psychologist.

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, but within a prison environment it is often increased by uncertainty, loss of freedom, separation from loved ones, conflict, boredom, and concerns about the future.

Learning to manage stress is not about removing things that cause stress or difficult emotions; it is about developing the skills to respond to them in ways that support health, safety, and wellbeing.

Where Stress Comes From

Stress begins with how we see and think about events rather than the events themselves.

When we see something as threatening, overwhelming, or beyond our ability to cope, the brain activates the body's survival system, commonly known as the "fight, flight, or freeze response".

Stress hormones are the chemicals that your body releases when it sees something it thinks is a stress, such as adrenaline and cortisol. They prepare the body to react quickly by increasing heart rate, muscle tension, breathing rate, and alertness.

While this response is helpful in genuine emergencies, remaining in this heightened state for prolonged periods can lead to irritability, anxiety, poor concentration, sleep disturbance, impulsive decision-making, and physical health problems.

The prison environment contains many things that can create stress. These may include noise, overcrowding, limited privacy, institutional routines, uncertainty about legal matters, conflict with others, separation from family, grief, financial concerns, and adjusting to a new way of living.

Additionally, many individuals entering custody already have a history of trauma, addictions, mental health difficulties, or adverse childhood experiences, making their stress response more sensitive. As a result, situations that appear minor to one person may feel overwhelming to another.

The Warning Signs

One of the most important steps in managing stress is recognising its early warning signs. You may notice muscle tension, headaches, racing thoughts, irritability, difficulty sleeping, withdrawing from others, feeling constantly on edge, or becoming short-tempered. You may also notice changes in appetite, increased cravings, negative thinking, or feeling emotionally numb.

Identifying these signs allows you to do something before stress escalates into anger, conflict, self-destructive behaviour, or relapse.

While you cannot always control what's happening to you, you can influence how you respond to them. The first strategy is learning to regulate your body.

Take a Deep Breath

Slow belly breathing activates the body's natural calming system which helps reduce physiological arousal.

Breathing slowly into the belly for four seconds and exhaling gently for six seconds (note the exhale is longer than the inhale) signals to the brain that the immediate danger has passed. Progressive muscle relaxation, stretching, regular physical exercise, and mindfulness practices can further reduce tension and improve emotional regulation.



Control Your Thoughts

A second strategy involves managing your thoughts. During periods of stress, the mind often jumps to worst-case scenarios or interprets situations in unhelpful ways that increase distress.

Common thinking errors include catastrophising ("I can't cope"), mind reading ("everyone is against me"), or all-or-nothing thinking ("everything is ruined").

Learning to pause and challenge these thoughts often reduces their emotional impact. Think about how you may respond to a loved one if they were in your position, expressing similar thinking errors. Replacing unhelpful thoughts with balanced, realistic alternatives promotes clearer thinking and better decision-making.

Keep Your Own Routine

Maintaining a structured daily routine is another effective stress management strategy, as creating personal routines, where possible, provides a sense of purpose and control. Setting small, achievable goals each day helps maintain motivation and self-efficacy. Achieving even small goals reminds us that progress is still possible despite difficult circumstances.

Talk to People

Social connection also plays a vital role in managing stress. Isolation often increases distress, whereas supportive relationships can provide encouragement, perspective, and hope. Building respectful relationships with people, engaging positively with correctional staff, participating in educational/rehabilitation or work programs, and maintaining contact with family where possible can all strengthen resilience.

Focus on Your Health

Looking after physical health significantly influences stress levels. Regular exercise improves mood by releasing endorphins, while adequate sleep supports emotional regulation, concentration, and memory. Eating balanced meals, staying hydrated, and reducing reliance on caffeine where possible can also improve wellbeing. Physical health and mental health are closely connected – improvements in one often benefit the other.

Remember Everyone Gets Stressed

Finally, it is important to recognise that emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, guilt, or shame are normal human experiences. Difficulties arise when emotions are ignored, suppressed, or acted upon impulsively.

Naming emotions, discussing them with trusted supports, journalling, practising mindfulness, or using grounding techniques allows emotions to be processed rather than avoided. Remember that emotions are temporary experiences which rise, peak, and eventually subside. They therefore do not require immediate action.

Resilience is ultimately built through repeated practice of healthy coping skills, even when life remains difficult. Every time you choose to pause before reacting, regulate your breathing, challenge an unhelpful thought, and/or seek support, you strengthen the pathways in the brain that build resilience.

The more consistently these strategies are practised, the more automatic they become, laying the foundation for healthier choices and a more hopeful future.

Yoga For Good Digestion!

Republished with permission from *Inside Time*

Determined to make positive changes in life? It can start with digestion!

As well as digesting the food we eat, we also digest emotion and thoughts. Yoga can help with all three of these. Many of us can feel stagnant and stuck – stuck where we are, stuck in the loop of our thoughts and stuck with the same feelings and triggers. Yoga movements can create a healthier digestive process for our food, but also gives us space to digest our thoughts and feelings.

Try moving through these exercises, keeping your focus on breathing in and out. Feel refreshed by having a break from constant thinking and worrying. Spending a minute or more in silence at the end, letting go of thoughts, allows your body to process emotions.

Try this every day if you can. You may soon start to notice you feel fresher and lighter – not just physically – but emotionally too.



1. Pencil stretch

On your bed or the floor, stretch your whole body and relax. Repeat this five times.



2. Hug knees

Put your hands below your knees and hug them towards you. Hold this for five slow steady breaths.



3. Knee to chest

Put your hands below one knee and hug it towards you. Hold this for five slow steady breaths and swap sides.



4. Knees to side

Engage your core muscles to protect your back. Drop your knees to one side and then the other. Keep moving like windscreen wipers. Repeat this five times.



5. Rest

Time to rest. Can you let go of thinking? Bring your attention to your breathing and let thinking drop away. Stay here for 20 breaths (or more) – in and out.



6. Meditation

Meditate sitting, kneeling or on a chair. Can you notice each breath in and out? Count each one up to 10, and then start again. When you lose track come back to the counting – this gives the mind a rest from thinking. Start with about one minute and if this feels okay you might like to build up the time. If difficult thoughts or feelings flood in, bring your attention back to where you are. Feel the solid surface beneath you.

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.

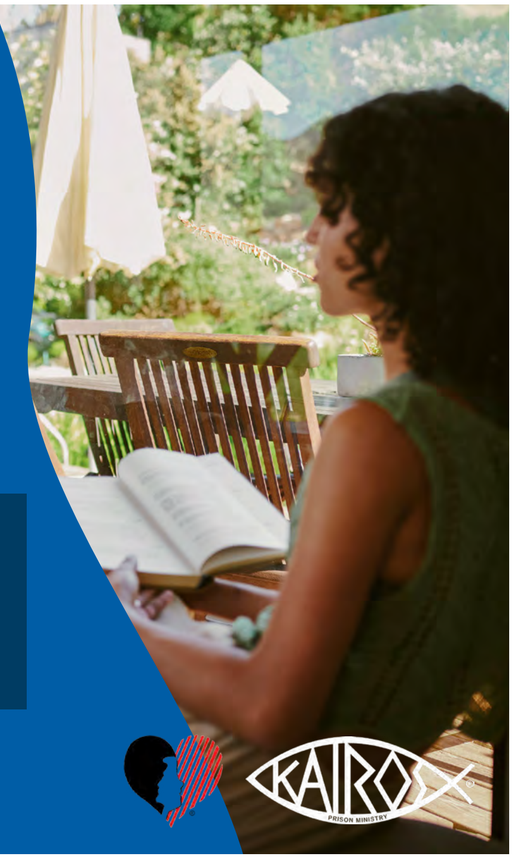
It costs her nothing, but it could mean everything.

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



• Reintegration

Ask Stacey! Pension After Prison and Interstate Parole



Stacey answers your questions on how accessing the disability pension after prison, how to serve your parole interstate and what women actually want.

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 worker, your parole officer and consult your lawyer.

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, most notably, "Nothing to hide, tales of trans and gender diverse Australia", which was published and distributed internationally by Allen & Unwin. Stacey was a recipient of the 2025 Varuna Trans and Gender Diverse Fellowship to develop her manuscript, My World.

Welcome to another exciting instalment of Ask Stacey! And I got one of my favourite questions!

Question 1: I have heard that if you have spent 5 years or more in prison you can qualify for a pension similar to the disability pension due to being institutionalised. Is this true?

Sort of. So, it's not that you have done five years and now are eligible for a disability pension. And institutionalisation is not in the current Diagnostic Statistical Manual of mental disorders. It's the symptoms that matter – panic attacks, anxiety being outside, loud noises make you freak out. Centrelink will interview you and a doctor will need to assess you and complete a Centrelink form to say you meet a certain level of disabled.

Can you get to appointments? Can you function? Also, a disability payment is for conditions that will not change and are actively being treated. So, symptoms have stabilised.

You can get exemptions from job search when you leave jail for a certain period, but you are then expected to either study or job search. In that time I'd recommend talking to your family GP about how you are feeling being free. Are you anxious constantly? Are you having nightmares? Do you feel depressed? Is being around too many people freaking you out? Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder might be the issue. I still wake up screaming, thinking there are people in my cell... I mean room.

Question 2: I intend to apply to serve my parole interstate, how do I do that?

Good question, and depending on what state you're in, it can be really good to serve your parole interstate because some states are very strict with parole conditions, and others treat parole as if it was just another community order like bail.

To do an interstate parole, you must apply for parole in both states. You notify your case manager that you want to do parole interstate, like you would a normal parole application and they facilitate it, or refer you to the staff member whose job it is.

Your application should include a statement as to:

- the supports in the state or territory you are seeking to transfer to, including the availability of accommodation
- family or other social circumstances that benefit your welfare following your release from prison.
- Medical reasons, your job prospects or any other matters. Like old mates back home, so best to stay with grandma interstate.

Question 3: What do women want?

I have no idea! So I googled it. And well, market research says women consistently prioritise high-quality, practical items that elevate their routines. Such as apparel with real functionality... thanks AI! The way to a girl's heart is through a pair of yoga pants, with pockets!

But seriously, men and women want the same things in a relationship: trust, respect, companionship. The trouble is that we are all unique. And that's where the issues are.

For example, I want Warhammer 40k figurines, not yoga pants with pockets. The real question is what does *your* girlfriend want. Maybe ask her, not me.

Please remember, we all deserve healthy relationships, and we are all worthy of love. When emotional safety is missing and scripted arguments are the norm, when you feel more relief apart then together, is it love, or possessiveness and identity attachment?

A partner provides a loving, safe and supportive environment, but partners are not responsible for the other person's feelings. Feelings come from within us, and no matter how much you or your partner tries, no one can fill a void that is inside another person, or a sadness from deep inside them. That requires therapy.

I went to therapy and it helped a lot! My sadness isn't as deep now! It's mostly just surface level these days.

Question 4: Where is the sorry book? And how do I sign it?

The sorry book is a long and proud tradition of Australian convicts being bored. You see, in the late 18th century, inmates used to tell the new arrivals that Timor was just a walk north through the scrub. Or that there was a self-proclaimed king of the mountain and he had a colony free of the British in the mountains. They had to stop after soldiers found skeletons who had tried to walk to Timor from Sydney prisons. Or starved in the bush looking for the free colony.

These days there are sorry books and fishing trips. I once told someone in my industry they needed a sky hook to sow some prison greens.

To be clear though. The closest thing to the sorry book is a confession. Do not do or say anything you have not discussed with your lawyer first. Honestly. Lawyers, get one. They really help.

That's it for today! Love you all and stay safe. You are not alone and not forgotten.

The Freedom Nobody Prepared Me For

Your healing won't be a straight line, but you are more than the labels that have been given to you

By Sam G

Sam G is a member of FIGJAM, a collective of formerly incarcerated women, trans and gender diverse folks.

In 2020, I faced a prison sentence that changed my life forever. But honestly, the punishment followed long after my sentence ended. At that time, I was drowning in addiction, homelessness, domestic violence, self-harm and risky behaviours. I was living in a world I genuinely wasn't sure I would survive.

Prison was dehumanising me and gave me labels that felt impossible to escape.

It felt like people were deciding what kind of support I needed, what programs I should engage in and what was wrong with me, and that my survival depended on complying with this.

During this time, it felt like I was performing recovery after prison, not actually doing it

Not once did somebody ask me what I needed, what mattered to me, or what healing looked like from my perspective.

At first I thought I could speak honestly about how I was going. I told the truth. I said I was struggling and that I felt isolated. I was trying to balance employment, exclusion orders, parole conditions, and rebuilding my life. It felt like a losing battle.

But instead of being met with understanding about my situation, I was made to feel dangerous, broken and undeserving of compassion.

After that, I became hardened.

I stopped being honest about how I was feeling and started focusing on getting through it. I cared less about my own version of healing and more about performing what others considered "successful reintegration", even if that was isolating and difficult. I accepted the isolation. I accepted that maybe this was just what my life was now.

I was later commended by some people for having a "full 360".

Looking back, I keep coming back to questions about power dynamics. I wonder what it would have been like to have a lived experience peer worker beside me, someone to witness that experience, hold space, and remind me that I was still human.

I don't think a peer worker would have solved every problem I faced. But I do think they could have changed how I experienced those problems.

Instead of feeling like something was wrong with me, I might have felt understood. Instead of trying to perform recovery, I may have felt safe enough to be honest about where I was. Having someone who believed my voice mattered could have made reintegration feel less like something being done to me, and more like something I was actively part of.

Over the last six years, I've been rebuilding my life and rediscovering who I am outside of those labels. During this time, I realised people don't always need solutions. Sometimes they need connection before anything else.

That understanding became the foundation for why I began studying. In the last two years, I have completed a Diploma of Counselling, Intentional Peer Support training, and I am currently finishing my Alcohol and Drug Skill Set. I am also a member of FIGJAM Collective where I have found a community of staunch advocates providing connection, support, and stability.

My life now isn't perfectly healed or resolved, but I've learnt that healing was never about becoming a perfect version of myself. It was about finding connection, safety, and spaces where I could be fully human.

Through peer work I've learnt that we don't stand above people as experts trying to fix them. We stand beside them. We learn from each other. We create relationships built on honesty, shared humanity, and understanding.

After a lifetime of being judged for my experiences, the person I once felt ashamed of has become the person I now use to connect with others.

For those of you who are still incarcerated, please know there is a beautiful life out there waiting for you. Your journey may be slow. Healing may not happen in a straight line. Some days will simply be about surviving, and that's okay too.

Allow yourself the chance to rediscover who you are beyond survival, shame or labels. Your people and your peers are here to walk alongside you through that journey – not to judge you, fix you, or tell you who to become, but to remind you that your life, your story, and your future still hold value.

• Help Us Prepare You For Outside!

The Reintegration section is here to help you prepare for your release and returning to the community. Please write to us with any concerns, questions or advice you've got and we'll do our best to include information on this in an upcoming edition of the newspaper.

Please send your letters to the below postal address (it's free!):

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Louise's Story: 'Your Sentence Will End. What Matters Is What You Do Next'



Willy Pleasance

By Louise

Louise was incarcerated in NSW.

What Got You Here?
If you had told me 20 years ago that I would one day be sitting in a prison cell, I would have laughed hysterically.

Extreme domestic violence changed everything in my life. It was devastating.

In 2020, after years of trauma and addiction, I was sentenced to seven months in prison. I broke the law. I pleaded guilty. I served my sentence. Jail was the best and the worst thing to ever happen to me.

What Got You Through?
It was the inmates who got me through. Women who had almost nothing gave me friendship, advice, food, laughter and hope. They carried me through some of the darkest months of my life when the system that was supposed to be responsible for my welfare often failed to do so. They were brilliant women, some of the best women I've ever met.

What Happened Next?
Walking out of prison was the beginning of the hardest chapter, as I'd left physically and emotionally exhausted. I'd lost around 40 kilograms, my hair had fallen out, and my mental health was in a terrible state. Every morning I woke with overwhelming panic attacks and wondered how I was ever going to rebuild.

Although I was still mentally very fragile, I managed to pick up work. Throwing myself back into work gave me structure, purpose and something to focus on besides my own anxiety. Those first few months were incredibly difficult. There were days when I wasn't sure I could keep going, but slowly, almost without noticing, things began to improve.

Then after spending years trying to hide that I had been in prison, I decided to tell the truth. Owning my story became one of the most liberating decisions I've ever made.

Today I have returned to journalism, focusing on prison reform, particularly the experiences of women in prison, as well as domestic violence, trauma, addiction, mental illness and what it really takes to rebuild after everything has fallen apart. My hope is that by telling these stories honestly, we can help create a justice system that is both accountable and compassionate.

If there's one message I hope people take from my work, it's we have to stop believing that people should be punished forever. If they've served their sentence and are working hard to rebuild their lives, we should be encouraging that, not standing in the way of it. Accountability matters. So does redemption.

In September I will celebrate six years of sobriety. Looking back, the best gift prison gave me was getting sober.

If you're reading this from a prison cell, remember this: your sentence will end. What matters is what you do next. Learn everything you can. Accept help where you can find it. Be kind to yourself when rebuilding feels impossible. Most importantly, don't let anyone convince you that your future has already been written. It hasn't. You have served your sentence. You still have the right to build a life worth living.

There is hope. Sometimes it takes longer than you want it to. Sometimes rebuilding is painfully slow. But if you keep putting one foot in front of the other, life can become something you never imagined. Mine certainly has.

What Do You Think of the Paper?

We are distributing the newspaper to every prison, and we have asked your staff to provide the copies to you directly. We'd love to hear your thoughts and feedback.

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

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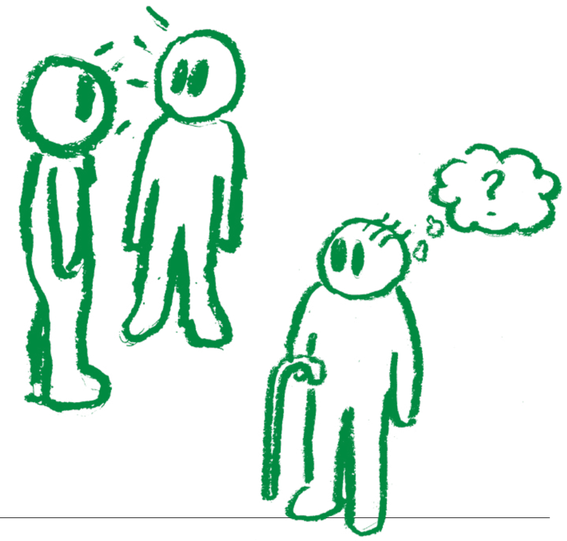
Culture

A 'Grumpy Old Man's' Guide to the Language of Young People



The writer reflects on young people's slang, prison language and the words that take over a culture.

By Mont Blanc

Mont Blanc writes from QLD.

Call me a grumpy old Baby Boomer, but I can't understand young people. Or more specifically, young Queensland males. Literally.

They seem to have their own language, or dialect – barely intelligible to a carefully educated person over the age of 50. Perhaps the most ubiquitous word of this cohort is 'mad'.

This word is now used for any positive reference. It replaces delicious, plentiful, interesting, humorous, beautiful, beneficial and thousands of other adjectives. 'Mad' has negated the need to know any other word which could broadly be construed as 'good'.

For example, "I had a mad sandwich at the courthouse," "he said the new jail is mad," "the magistrate gave him a mad sentence," are all expressions of a positive experience. Note that 'mad' lacks degree. Something is never 'very mad' or 'somewhat mad'.



But 'mad' is far from the only culprit in this drive to simplify the mother tongue. At least if it's used as an adjective replacing other adjectives. Unlike the following.

Recently a youngster arrived in our residential unit and took his first shower. He emerged from the bathroom, thankfully with a towel around his waist, and declared loudly: "that shower pressure is gangsta".



Knowing the shower, I understood that he meant 'strong' or 'good' or 'powerful'.

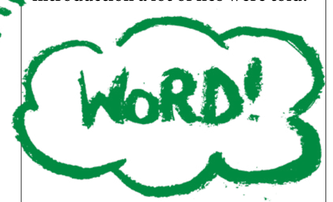
So unlike 'mad', 'gangsta' is a noun replacing an adjective and thus an entirely different bird.

Another word one hears in every other sentence is 'bro' or sometimes the full 'brother'. I liken the use of 'bro' to the way 'comrade' was used in Soviet Russia. It's a handy term for use in jail where chaps are not generally keen to remember names. Everyone directly addressed is 'bro' while every person referred to is 'old mate'. As in "bro, he snores mad, word".

"Who?"

"Old mate."

The other term required to master is 'word', which seems to be a contraction of 'by my word', indicating the veracity of a preceding statement. It is used with great frequency, perhaps suggesting that before its introduction a lot of lies were told.



Obviously the elephant in the cell, to appropriate a cliché, in any commentary about the language of young inmates, is the proliferation of swear words. However, such conversation topics are not suitable for such a respected publication such as *About Time*.

Viewing a news item recently where the American President was speaking on the acquisition of Greenland (or was it obliterating a civilisation or disparaging the Pope?), I asked the young chap alongside me what he thought of Donald Trump. He replied "he's mad, bro. Word."

I was not sure in this instance if he was using the adjective in the traditional or the modern sense.



Share Your Story

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Legal Corner

A Plain English Guide to the Courtroom

By Anthony Burke

The law, like other professions, has its own language. It helps keep all the lawyers huddled around some special stuff and keep the rest of us outside.

It is not just the law that has its own language. Every profession does. Medicine has its codes; finance its acronyms; academia its jargon.

But the stakes here are different.

When a doctor uses unfamiliar language, the patient may feel confused. When a lawyer does it in a criminal court, a person may lose their liberty without ever fully understanding the process by which that happened.

The courtroom is, in theory, a public place. Anyone can walk in. Justice is meant to be seen to be done. But language can quietly close the doors that architecture leaves open. You can sit in the gallery, hear every word, and still not understand what is unfolding.

Inside the system, everything is precise. Each word has a settled meaning, refined over centuries. Outside the system, the same words are fogged, distorted, or entirely opaque.

The person caught in the middle must somehow bridge that gap in real time, often under stress and with consequences that are immediate and irreversible.

Which raises a simple question: why is the translation not built into the system?

Why not accompany "custodial sentence" with "you are going to prison"? Why not say plainly that an adjournment means nothing will be decided today?

Some lawyers already do this. The good ones always have. They quietly translate the moment into something human.

But the system itself still speaks in its own tongue.

And so the person standing there hears the words, recognises the sounds, and yet does not quite grasp the meaning.

It is not that justice is absent. It is that justice is being spoken in a language we were never taught.

Legal Meaning	Plain English Meaning
Mitigation	Reasons why the court should go easier on you.
Aggravating factors	Reasons why the court might go harder on you.
Prior convictions	Your past catching up with you.
Character references	Letters from people who say you're better than this moment suggests.
On the balance of probabilities	More likely than not.
Beyond reasonable doubt	So sure that hesitation would feel unreasonable.
In camera	Behind closed doors. The public is not allowed in.

Legal Meaning	Plain English Meaning
Your Honour	The person in charge here. The one who decides what happens to you.
The accused / the defendant	You. The person whose life is about to be rearranged.
The prosecution	The side trying to prove you did it.
The prosecutor	The lawyer arguing against you — not personally, but it will feel that way.
Defence counsel	Your lawyer. The one person in the room whose job is to be on your side.
Plea	Your answer to the charge: did you do it or not?
Guilty plea	Yes, I did it.
Not guilty plea	No, I didn't – and you'll have to prove it.
Bail	Permission to stay out of custody while your case is sorted out.
Refused bail	You're going to stay locked up until the court decides your case.
Remand	Being held in custody while waiting for your case to finish.
Adjournment	Come back another day. Nothing is being decided today.
Mention	A brief appearance where little happens except scheduling the next step.
Committal	A preliminary check: is there enough evidence to send this case to a higher court?
Indictable offence	A serious charge – the kind that can lead to a jury trial. A jailable offence.
Summary offence	A less serious matter, usually dealt with quickly by a magistrate.
Custodial sentence	You are going to prison.
Non-custodial sentence	You are not going to prison – but there will still be consequences.
Community corrections order	You stay in the community, but under strict rules – and someone is watching.

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• Mob

Just Keep Turning Up



Through scholarships, mentoring and culture, the GO Foundation is backing First Nations young people to stay in school and build new pathways.

By Denham Sadler

You've probably heard of AFL legends Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin. But what you might not know, is that they also started their own charity called the GO Foundation.

The foundation provides cultural and aspirational mentoring, access opportunities and financial support for education for young First Nations people.

About Time spoke to proud Wiradjudri man and GO Foundation Deputy CEO Mark Heiss and proud Wiilman Noongar man Tyran Hill, who received a scholarship from the foundation in 2020 and is now the organisation's scholarships program manager in Adelaide.

MARK HEISS

AT: Can you tell us about the work the GO Foundation does?

Mark: GO is a First Nations-led and governed organisation. We have a vision to empower through educational scholarships and cultural and aspirational mentoring.

We've awarded over 2,300 scholarships in the last 17 years and currently support 670 young people on scholarships.

How important is education and getting started early with that? What difference can it make to someone's life?

It's super important –we believe that education is one of the key game-changers.

If a young person completes their education, they'll have higher literacy rates, be employed for a longer period of time, and have higher levels of home ownership.

Just keep turning up. The impact of education on people's lives just hits so many social indicators.

How have you seen people change as they've taken part in the program?

We had a young fella in Adelaide who wasn't truanting school, but was taking the mickey when he had a chance. And he sat down with our co-founders, Adam and Michael, and this young fella was in Year Five. And they said, "Mate, you have to keep coming to school". That one conversation meant that in Year Six, he got the award for 100 per cent attendance.

He has spoken at our graduation and talked about how that one conversation made a difference to his outlook on being at school and how he could see the two paths and where he could end up: "If I can go on this path, I can be like Uncle Adam and Uncle Mickey and be successful."

What's your message to Mob currently in prison?

Aboriginal people have been in Australia for a long time, and they've been through lots of hard times. We're talking millennia. And I believe our ancestors are looking over us. So if you can think that, "well, my ancestors have been through this, what would they do in a particular situation and what would they be proud of me doing?", that can be a good lens to think about decisions and behaviours.

In the journey on the way out of incarceration, it can be a mantra to live by: "What would my ancestors be proud of?"

The second piece is around education. No matter where you are, you can be in a learning scenario, and by learning, whether it's about your connection to culture or learning through more formal means, that's going to make a difference to what happens when you get out.

TYRAN HILL

AT: You received a scholarship. What's it like being on the other side now and working with the kids and young adults?

Tyran: It's definitely a full circle moment. I've been working for GO for almost four years now and I've worked with a number of the same kids since I started, so seeing them grow up has been really special, and watching them grow from little kids to emerging leaders, it's pretty inspiring and makes you super proud.

How important is that focus on education from a young age?

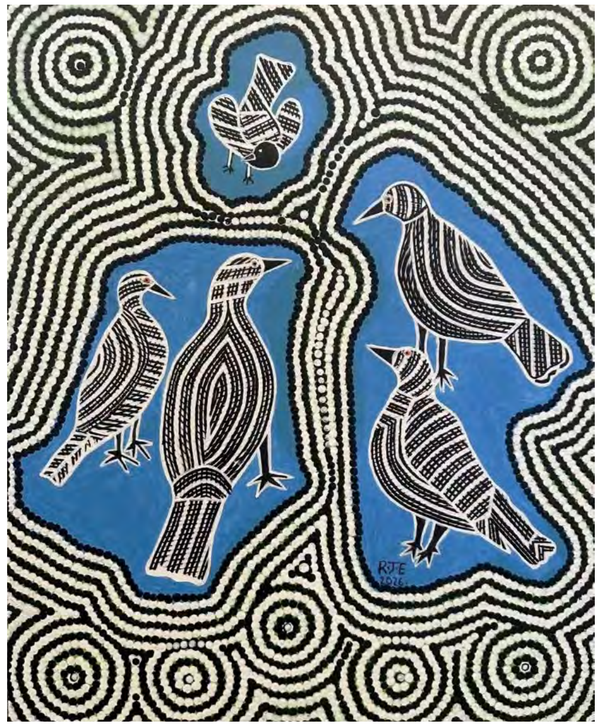
Education opens doors for everything.

Books aren't for everyone and school is not for everyone, but as long as you're rocking up and giving it your best shot, hopefully we can work towards finding something that you do really like and enjoy, and something that's going to be a career for you for a long time.

What's your message to Mob currently in prison?

Just remember the importance of culture. Sometimes there has been a lot of intergenerational trauma and intergenerational incarceration and circumstances that have contributed to that.

If we can keep our connection to culture strong and keep striving to educate ourselves and make the best for ourselves, hopefully we can really work towards breaking that cycle and inspiring our next generation so they don't have to go through what everyone else has had to go through before us.



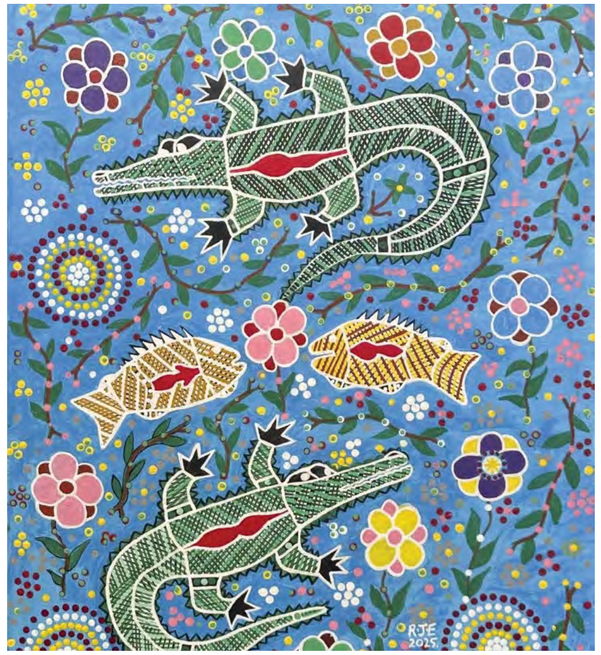
'Currrawongs and Wagtail' by Richard, $700, 6594, 75cm x 60cm, acrylic on canvas



'Dolphin Family' by Kenneth, $500, #5955, 60cm x 75cm, acrylic on canvas



'Fire Burning' by Carl, $350, #5714, 60cm x 75cm, acrylic on canvas



'Swamp Alligators' by Richard, $650, #6209, 75cm x 60cm, acrylic on canvas

Boom Gate Gallery

Most of the art featured at Boom Gate Gallery is made at Long Bay Gaol, with some coming from other prisons in NSW. The prices of the artwork are set by the artist, and 75 per cent of the sales go to them.

To ask about buying a painting, you can visit:

www.nsw.gov.au/arts-and-culture/boom-gate-gallery/indigenous-artwork

or email:

boomgategallery@dcj.nsw.gov.au

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Learn

Learn Origami!

You can make a swan or a penguin with just this page

By About Time

Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding. It allows you to turn a flat piece of paper into nearly anything you can think of, like an animal, flower or a hat. All you need to start learning origami is a piece of paper – you can even use a page of this newspaper once you've finished reading it!

Here are two beginner origami projects to get you going, thanks to Sydney-based origami artist Michael Clonaris. Michael has been doing origami for more than 40 years and is the co-founder of The Origami People with his wife, Etsuko.

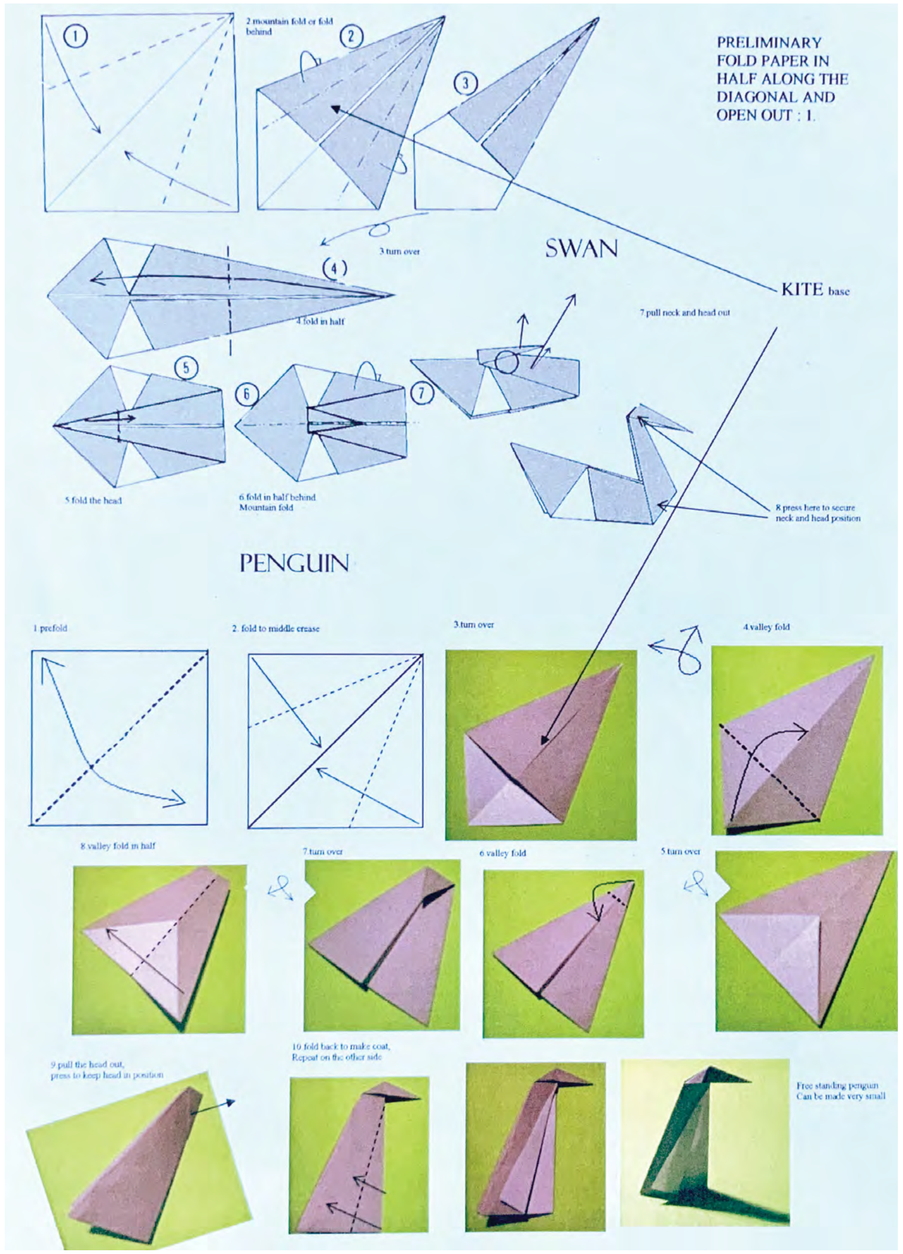
First up, some origami terms and basics. You'll often need a square, so to make this out of a rectangle, such as this page, you'll need to fold a corner across to make a square with a rectangle at the bottom, and then carefully cut or rip along this line to make a square.

The two main types of folds are:

- Valley Fold: This is when you fold the paper towards you
- Mountain Fold: This is when you fold the paper backwards away from you

Don't worry if it looks a bit strange – that's all part of it!

Thanks to Luke (from a prison in QLD) for the idea to include some origami in the newspaper.



By Michael Clonaris



Want to Learn About a New Topic?

Do you 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!

Please send your letters to the following postal address – it's free!

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Melbourne VIC 3001

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

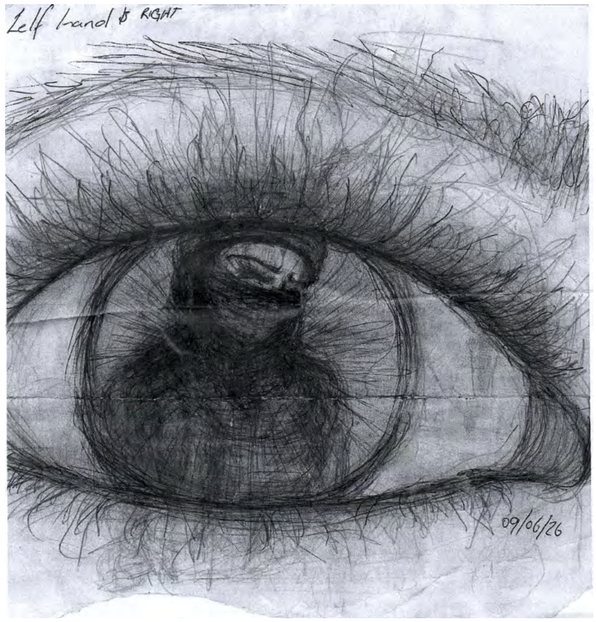
contribute@abouttime.org.au

Creative

Left Hand and Right

By Amber

Amber draws from a prison in QLD.



Senses

By Glen

Glen writes from a prison in WA.

Do you see what I see
I can't see what you see
If you could see what I see
And I could see what you see
What would we see

Do you know what I'm thinking
I don't know what your thinking
If I knew what you were thinking
And you knew what I was thinking
What would we think

Do you know what's important to me
I don't know what's important to you
If I understood what's important to you
And you understood what's important to me
Would it still be important

Do you know how I'm feeling
I don't know how your feeling
If I knew how you were feeling
And you knew how I was feeling
How now would we be feeling
Would that be important to us
What would we think
Would we now see?

Tightrope Walker

By Murdoch

Murdoch writes from a prison in VIC.

Oblivion comes at a price I will not pay
I look to you every time as I begin words I pray
Rest my weary soul upon this red I lay
As this body of mine grows fatigued by words I tire
Lift me up to your heavens taking me higher
As I begin this tightrope walk upon your wire
Transmit my thought from deep within my desire
I fall and hurt from not seeing my own home
For where does my soul linger where must I roam
Running out of time I slowly close my mind
Trick or treat just to see what I could find
Staring at the sun to see if I'd go blind
Now I give a lot of love to see what I can find.

Dear Dad

By Stevie

Stevie writes from a prison in VIC.

I wrote this in 1995 when my dad passed. My mother came across this recently and posted it to me. Then I translated it as best as I can.

Dear Dad

Entering into a trance
muttering words of vines
love stories you wrote were
magnificent and great.

Why didn't you write
about meaning of this existence
even though you felt
how exhausting that is.

Take your life
and hide from everything
you decided
to be gone so early.

Dazzled in alcohol
disappointed living
was it impossible
finding Enlightenment.

To my dear dad
for your name I
compose this
bliss of Nirvana.

'They Know the Person, Not the Crime': A First-Timer's Poem on Family

By Martin

Martin writes from a prison in VIC.

I am starting my fourth week in the prison system and already in my third prison. This is my first time inside and I must say, stumbling across *About Time* has made things so much better. The open, honest, raw and relatable articles are real gems and resonate hugely.

I felt compelled to contribute so here follows a few submissions for your consideration.

About Time
There is a great paper
'About Time',
Which is free and won't cost you a dime,
With articles galore,
It is never a bore,
And provides a refreshing angle on crime!

Gotta Get Through This
First time in jail, and last time I swear,
Prison and bail, a total nightmare.
Missing family, my freedom and work,
I made one mistake, now feel like a jerk.
But I am lucky, now let me explain,
Loved ones stand by me, that helps keep me sane.
They know the person, not based on a crime,
But years together, and love over time.
So I can smile, with them as my light,
And all the while, I have them in sight.
Just that one reason, can get me through this
Season to season, it is them I miss.

Heart On My Sleeve

By Martin

Martin writes from a prison in QLD.

I'm a rapper and I thought I'd share one of the songs I've written. It's so far unpublished, however as soon as I get out of prison I'd love to find a way to have it recorded and published correctly – mixed and mashed.

I've always had an amazing talent in writing poetry and rap music however I don't have many ideas for how to share it or what to do with it as far as recording and publishing it.

I really wish there was more support for artists like myself.

So I thought I'd share a song I wrote called "Heart on My Sleeve".

I'd love the song to relate to or even just help another person that feels the same.

Martin – Jackhammer Jesus
(Rap Name)

Hook intro
(Rapper) heartfelt/(mid range)
Heart on my sleeve it bleeds it screams
Was broken in the dark but I'm still building of them dreams
I'm the same man I was, "you could never see"
Slamming bibles on my path and preaching on me

Verse 1
We were in and out hurricane in the sheets
Wedding plans, promises – now just broken receipts
I see you still rocking the ring -– that I bleed for
Crawling through the dirt every "dollar was war"
Supposed to be settled back now, starting a life
But you walked outta your mind, the needles twisting
the knife.
So beautiful when I met you
Now I just wish I could forget
Unrecognisable shadow – man I pray you get better
"I'm Jackhammer Jesus"
and I raised myself from the pit, lucky I crawled out
With a bible clutched in my fist
But I couldn't erase a vision of a girl I believed
So I wear it on my chest and let it bleed hard on my
Sleeve

Hook
Heart on my sleeve it bleeds, it screams was broken
in the dark but I'm still building of them dreams I'm
the same man I was, that you could never see slamming
Bibles on my path and preaching at me

Verse 2
Yeah! The drugs kept me moving – when the
Nights went black lost my best mate even
he vanished from crack
No pillow for my head just a bottle and
plan. Stacked the bricks and the hurt turned a
Ghost into man.
Now all we've got is the police and a no contact
order law between the love the hurricane crossed
the border
I built "elite construction" outta the Fire and Rage
Hammer in my grip, but I'm still tearing at the cage
I could buy the whole block
but who's gonna sit at my
table? I'm a king with no crown and my throne is
Unstable. I'm still swinging in the silence – with the
pain that I preach. Preaching sermons threw the
dirt wearing my heart on my sleeve

Hook
It bleeds it screams, broken in the dark but I'm
still building of them dreams. I'm the same man I
was, you could never see.
Slamming Bibles on my path and preaching on me.

Verse 3
Now it's just mirrors and reflections of a ghost.
I could rebuild the whole world but there's one thing I'm
missing the most.
"Every house" every wall "every nail that I drive"
was just a coffin for the love I kept half alive.
I'm better than that girl, wax higher than needles
But you chose the reapers and the reapers chose
to preach back on the evil.
So I packed what I had and retired I believed
you lost who you were now I wear that in
Grave.
I'm still Jackhammer Jesus, baptised in the fire
crucifix, crowbars, scriptures soaked in desire
I'll hammer drug these heavens till the angles all
Bleed, reaching for the stars with my
Heart on my sleeve.

Outro
Heart on my sleeve, jackhammers on the earth
Before I give up they'll have to bury me
first.

Share Your Work With Us!

Your contributions are the centerpiece of the paper. If you would like to contribute to *About Time*, please send your letters to the following postal address (it's free!).

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Aztec Warrior II, Leonor, Graphite, Charcoal on Paper, 2025

Aztec Warrior II

By Leonor

Leonor draws from a prison in VIC.

Somebody's Daughter Theatre offers women within the prison system in Victoria, the opportunity to participate in weekly art workshops.

Participants are introduced to a range of art materials and given guidance to explore their self expression and creativity in a supportive environment.

Artworks produced by the women are exhibited annually in conjunction with the Somebody's Daughter Theatre Production for the prison community, family and friends, dignitaries including members of parliament and the general public.

Leonor:
This is my second Aztec Warrior drawing. This time I wanted to focus more on the details of the elaborate ornamented figures and hieroglyphs. Like Huitzilopochtli (the Sun God) and Quetzalcoatl the plumed serpent, to name a few. The warlike Aztec established an empire that was constantly expanding. In less than 200 years the once barbarian Aztec had develop a civilization that caused the leader of the Spanish conquistadors to declare there capital Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) "The most beautiful City in the world". Through all ranks of Aztec society, family and community were prized above all else, and a strong moral code prevailed. A surprisingly tender streak could always be detected beneath the war like facades.

There Is Nothing in the Universe That Hurts the Way You Do

By Daniel

Daniel writes from a prison in NSW.

To *About Time*,

I wrote this song when I started my sentence in June 2026. Thank you for your wonderful newspaper. It brings happiness to so many prisoners like me who made an error in judgement and wish this nightmare was over. Hope it finds the back pages.

Daniel

Verse 1
They say stars collapse in perfect silence
Whole galaxies fall without a sound
But I have felt something far more violent
Than anything the heavens have torn down.
Black holes swallow light forever
Time bends, planets drift apart
Yet nothing in the universe remembers
The weight of a broken heart

Pre Chorus
Time keeps turning like nothings changed
And I'm standing here in the wreckage you made

Chorus
There is nothing in the universe
That hurts the way you do
No supernova burns as bright
As the love I lost with you
The cosmos keeps its distance
Cold and endlessly vast
But my heart collapsed in seconds
From the future to the past

Verse 2
They measure pain in miles of darkness
In years of light we'll never reach
They do not count the distance
Between your hand and mine on empty sheets
The moon still holds the restless oceans
Gravity still knows its role but
Love rewrites the laws of motion
When it lets go.

Pre Chorus
The stars still rise like they always will
But they cannot tell me how to feel

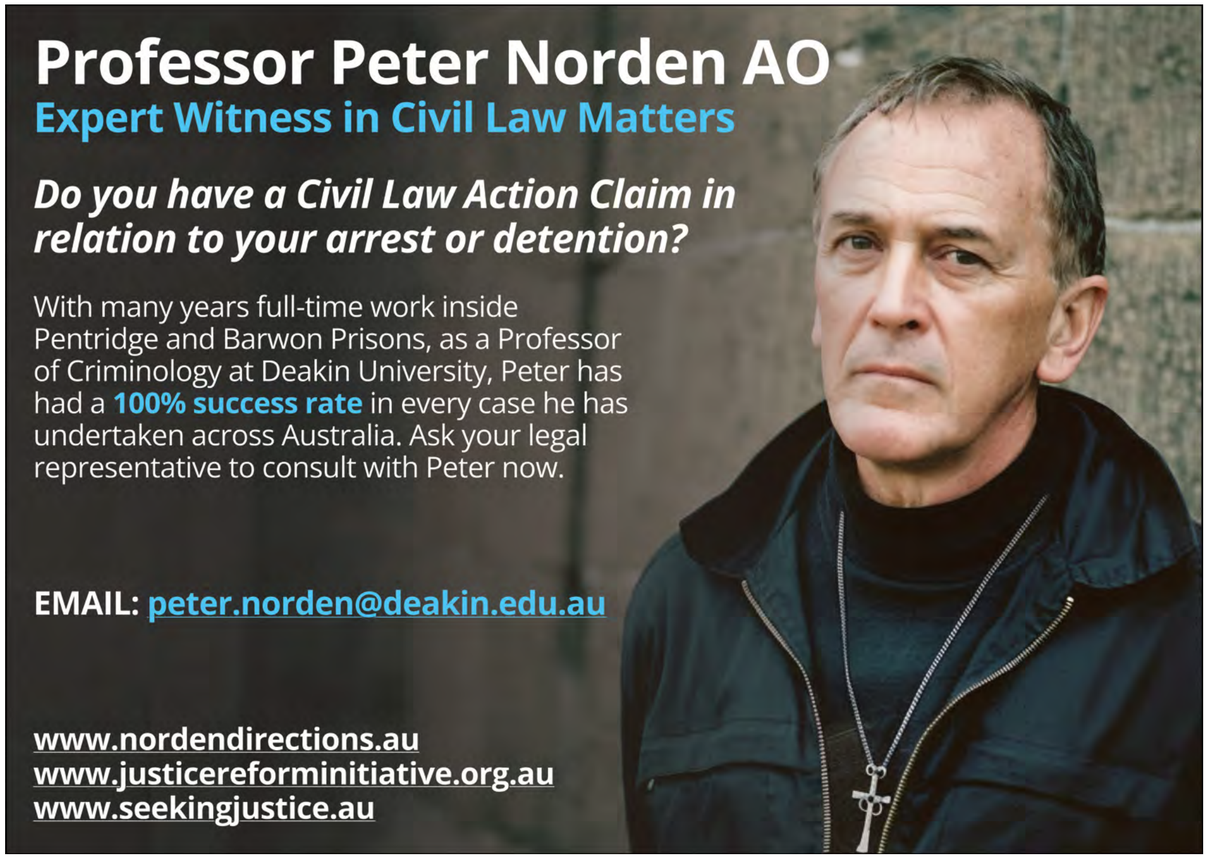
Chorus
There is nothing in the universe
That hurts the way you do
No spinning star, no falling sky
Cuts straight and clean in two
The cosmos keeps its distance
But it does not feel as vast
As the silence you left echoing
Where our forever asked —

Middle Eight Solo

Bridge
If love was made of stardust
Than maybe that is why it aches
We were meant to shine together
Not fall apart like cosmic fate

Chorus
There is nothing in the universe
That hurts the way you do
But even broken constellations
Still learn how to be beautiful
If hearts are just small galaxies
Learning how to be aligned
Than maybe I will orbit hope
And leave the dark behind.

Outro
If love was written in the skies
Than pain is just its echo passing by –
I am still here
Still true
The universe still aches for you...



Play

Trivia Quiz Winter Warmer #2

By Gadjet

Gadjet writes from a prison in VIC.

1. Which actor played the lead role in the film adaptation of Dr Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat*?
2. Besides sounding like an item of clothing, what kind of animal is a leatherjacket?
3. *Jersey Boys* is a musical and film based on the lives and career of which American pop group?
4. The Golden Slipper Stakes is what kind of annual race held in Sydney during autumn?
5. The island of Bermuda and Capri both lend their name to what kind of garment?
6. Which popular TV show featured bananas chasing teddy bears?
7. What is the name of the head cloth traditionally worn by nuns?
8. Cape Town is a popular seaport in which republic?

The answers are on the back cover.

Sudoku

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

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

Bad Jokes

By Erin

Erin writes from a prison in QLD.

Who can chug a litre of fuel?

Jerry Can!



Meme of the Month

By Meicho

Meicho writes from a prison in QLD.



Spot the Differences

Can you find the six differences in this photograph of a rugby match in the Netherlands in 1992?

The answers are on the back cover.



Q	E	X	T	P	Y	U	A	N	B	U	F	E	N	K	M	Z	H
U	X	V	L	E	Z	B	S	Y	D	N	E	Y	Z	U	X	G	O
F	K	G	A	D	L	C	A	N	B	E	R	R	A	W	U	O	B
R	B	E	U	N	G	I	M	E	L	B	O	U	R	N	E	H	A
E	R	E	N	Z	P	B	H	O	B	E	D	A	R	W	I	N	R
M	I	L	C	G	V	R	S	G	L	V	N	U	W	T	F	R	T
A	S	O	E	A	L	I	C	E	S	P	R	I	N	G	S	U	E
N	B	N	S	W	L	B	Y	Y	L	S	Z	P	E	R	T	H	G
T	A	G	T	Z	Z	N	D	O	U	P	B	W	E	E	D	G	C
L	N	I	O	E	V	D	G	O	L	D	C	O	A	S	T	S	U
E	E	F	N	N	E	W	C	A	S	T	L	E	R	Q	G	G	J
F	W	Q	V	Q	K	Y	A	D	E	L	A	I	D	E	A	C	V

Word Search

Find the below words in the above puzzle. Words are hidden horizontally, vertically and diagonally.

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
CANBERRA
BRISBANE
ADELAIDE
LAUNCESTON
ALICE SPRINGS
HOBART
DARWIN
NEWCASTLE
PERTH
FREMANTLE
GEELONG
GOLD COAST

Nine Letter Word

How many words can you make using these nine letters? You have to use the middle letter. See if you can find the nine letter word!

R	E	F
M	L	W
S	I	A

Write Your Words Here!

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.

This is our 26th edition, distributed to all prisons in every state and territory in Australia.

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:

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ISSN #2982-0758

Nine Letter Word Answers

Nine Letter Word:
Welfarism

Seven Letter Words:
Filmers, Flamers, Flamier, Mailers, Realism

Six Letter Words:
Failer, Filmer, Flamer, Flames, Flares, Mailer, Realis, Serial, Slimer, Smiler, Wailer

Five Letter Words:
Earls, Fails, Feral, Files, Films, Flair, Flame, Flare, Fleas, Flews, Flies, Frail, Lairs, Lames, Laser, Leafs, Liars, Limes, Liras, Mails, Males, Marls, Meals, Miler, Miles, Rails, Rales, Realm, Reals, Rifle, Slime, Smile, Swirl, Wails, Wales, Wiles

Four Letter Words:
Ails, Ales, Alms, Awls, Earl, Elms, Fail, Film, Flea, Flew, Lair, Lame, Lase, Laws, Leaf, Lear, Leas, Leis, Lies, Life, Lima, Lime, Lira, Mail, Male, Marl, Meal, Mile, Mils, Rail, Rale, Real, Riel, Rile, Sail, Sale, Seal, Slam, Slew, Slim, Wail, Wale, Weal, Wile

Three Letter Words:
Ail, Ale, Awl, Elf, Elm, Els, Lam, Law, Lea, Lei, Lie, Lis, Mil, Sal

Crossword Answers (ACROSS)

3. Avocado
6. Hive
7. Spring
9. Triangle
11. Piano
13. Mars
14. Big Ben

Crossword Answers (DOWN)

1. Pacific
2. South
4. Vet
5. Wellington
8. Puppy
9. Tennis
10. Author
12. Kangaroo

Sudoku Answers

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

Quiz Answers

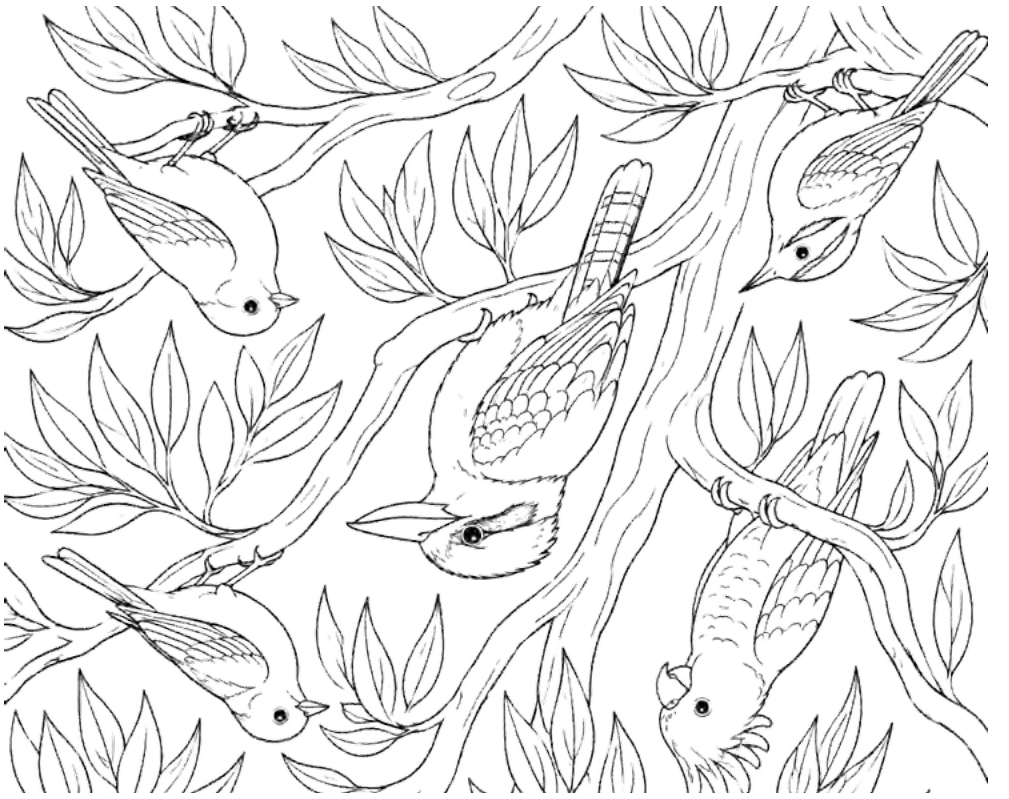
1. Mike Myers
2. Fish
3. The Four Seasons
4. Horse Race
5. Trousers (shorts, pants)
6. Bananas in Pyjamas
7. Wimple
8. South Africa

Word Search Answers

																	H
			L				S	Y	D	N	E	Y					O
F		G	A			C	A	N	B	E	R	R	A				B
R	B	E	U				M	E	L	B	O	U	R	N	E		A
E	R	E	N								D	A	R	W	I	N	R
M	I	L	C														T
A	S	O	E	A	L	I	C	E	S	P	R	I	N	G	S		
N	B	N	S									P	E	R	T	H	
T	A	G	T														
L	N		O				G	O	L	D	C	O	A	S	T		
E	E		N	N	E	W	C	A	S	T	L	E					
							A	D	E	L	A	I	D	E			

Spot the Differences Answers





Colouring In

ACROSS

3. The main ingredient in guacamole (7)
6. A place where bees live (4)
7. The season after Winter (6)
9. A shape with three sides (8)
11. Instrument with black and white keys (5)
13. The red planet (4)
14. Famous clock tower bell in London (3, 3)

DOWN

1. Largest ocean in the world (7)
2. The opposite of North (5)
4. A doctor who treats animals (3)
5. Capital city of New Zealand (10)
8. A baby dog (5)
9. The sport played at Wimbledon (6)
10. A person who writes books (6)
12. Australian animal that carries its young in a pouch (8)

Crossword

