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About Time

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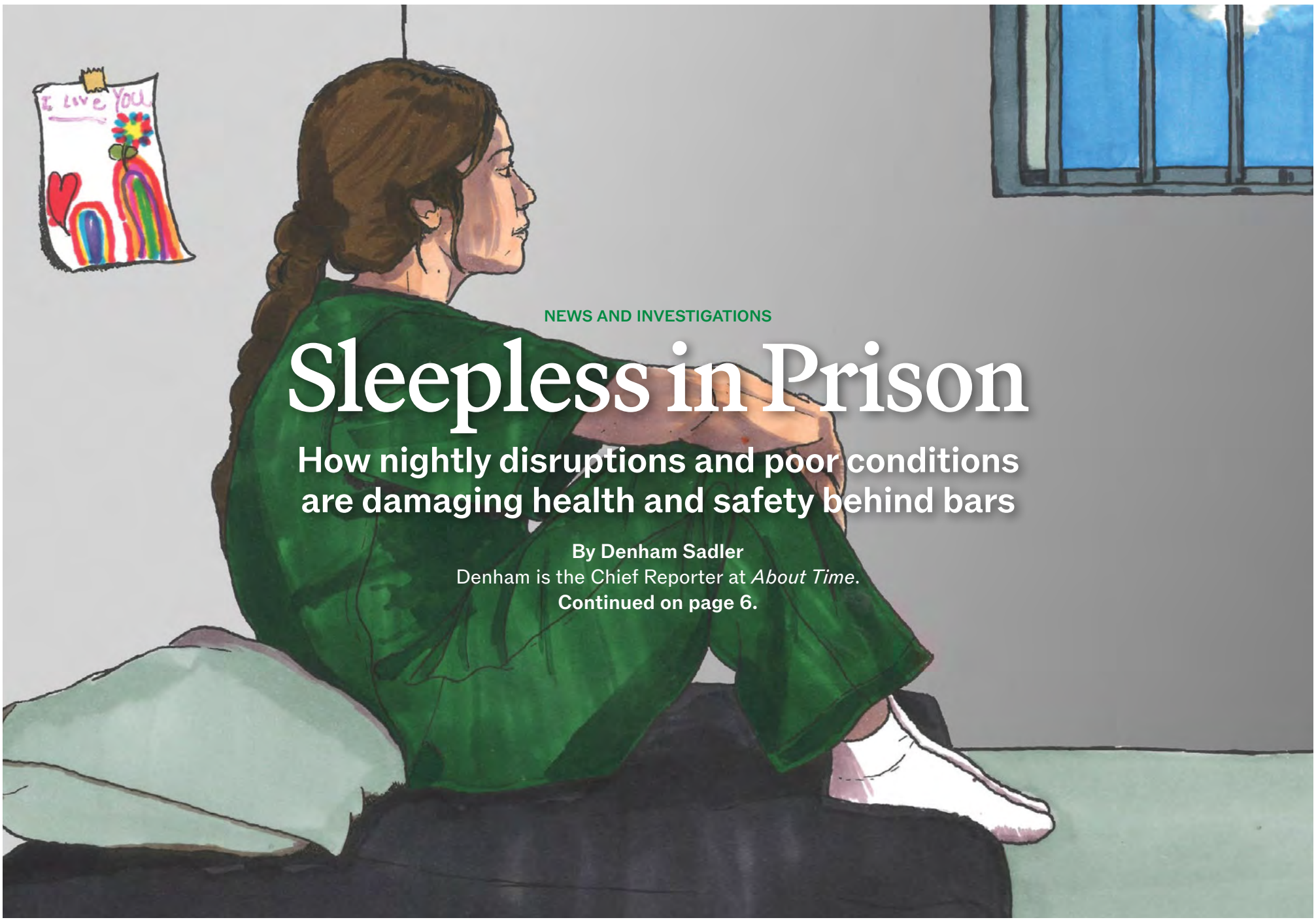

NEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Sleepless in Prison

How nightly disruptions and poor conditions are damaging health and safety behind bars

By Denham Sadler
Denham is the Chief Reporter at *About Time*.
Continued on page 6.

Ike Curtis

Read the Latest Writing Competition Finalists!

We received so many fantastic entries to our latest writing challenge, with the theme of 'Time Travel'. Thank you to everyone who sent us their writing – the finalists are all published inside this edition. We've launched our new writing challenge – head to page 16 to find out the new theme and how to enter.

WRITING COMPETITION WINNER

Information for Prospective Time Travellers

By Anonymous

The author writes from a prison in NSW.

We recommend you revisit only the most positive life events, those that brought you happiness and contentment. Concentrate on events such as the first time your partner smiled at you in that way you love, or that one family Christmas where everybody got along, or holding your newborn baby for the first time.

Even if positive life events have been few and far between for YOU/now, the ingenious design of our transport allows you to revisit them time and again.
Continued on page 16.

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Letters

Your Words Made Me Believe I Am Worth Something

By Anonymous

The author writes from a prison in WA.

To the anonymous writer of 'Embracing the Next Chapter', from the August edition of *About Time*.

I've read a lot of articles in *About Time* this past year, but your article about embracing the next chapter really meant something to me. Your words were real and meaningful.

I just wanted you to know that they had an effect on someone, that you reached someone, that you made a real difference to someone. I am also doing a long stint and have been struggling with the "I didn't think I was going to have much of a future once released from prison", the judgement and the criticism I have received.

I can just imagine what it would be like when I'm released, but your words really made me believe I am worth something and I am in charge of my own destiny. So thank you for giving me that hope that I didn't have before.

A High Security Policy Change

By Nikki

Nikki writes from a prison in NSW.

In June 2025, a new policy was implemented affecting the low classification placement of inmates in Queensland on offences of manslaughter and attempted murder. As a result, a large number of successful inmates were removed from low security facilities and forced back into high security, never to progress again.

So this is how the government promotes positive rehabilitation and reintegration by restricting and isolating long-termers?!

On a positive note, Prisoners' Legal Service (PLS) is gathering those affected by the policy and making a group claim through the appropriate channels. So if you have been affected, don't give up hope and join the fight. Write to PLS with your story or ring them.

Please don't feel like you just have to take this change: fight it and get involved. Have a voice and make a change.

Thank you and stay strong my fellow people.

The True Impact of Lockdowns

By Angela

Angela writes from a prison in VIC.

Today is my daughter's 13th birthday and because I'm incarcerated, I wasn't allowed to call her yesterday.

My sister, who is like my firstborn because of the life we had growing up, welcomed her newest baby into the world. I couldn't be there with her like I should have been.

Today I had a Zoom booked with my sister to meet my new niece who beautifully shares the same middle name as me. It would have been difficult to meet her through a screen but it would be better than nothing. And I would have been able to talk to my sister about missing my daughter's birthday, and a milestone one at that.

I have worn my mask bravely today and the chance to take it off for a moment would have been immensely helpful.

But then we were locked down. Our Zooms were cancelled without a moment's notice and when I asked for family to be contacted, I wasn't told yes or no, I was simply ignored as though I hadn't spoken at all.

Now I am locked down with the weight of the world on my shoulders, no way to ease the pain in my heart and I miss out on the chance to talk to my family on a day that I needed it the most. The worst part is, international Zooms still get to go ahead.

So because I was born here, I miss out. My circumstances don't matter; the family that I love and need around me on these hard days don't matter. I simply do not matter.

'I Cannot Express How Extremely Cold I Am'

By Billy

Billy writes from a prison in NSW.

Hello,

I am 60 years old. This is my fourth time in prison in 40 years.

This prison is on the far north coast where there's a great climate, but I've been in for 7 weeks, all of which have been in segro (solitary confinement), which is south facing and has forced air-conditioning – even the yard doesn't get any sun!

I had no money for the June activity buy-up, and just enough to order thermal underwear (bottom/top) and a beanie for the July activity buy-up. Then I was told it wouldn't arrive till the end of August! Winter will be over!

I've made numerous requests. Everything from asking for second-hand thermals, help from the Salvos, and for my loved ones to drop off a pair. Apparently, family dropping off clothing is a thing of the past.

I cannot express how extremely cold I am – it all just falls on deaf ears. I'm sure I've read that cold exposure is a low-level torture technique.

Yours sincerely,
Billy

Crocheting Helps Me Cope With Lockdowns

By Amanda

Amanda writes from a prison in QLD.

To Darren in Tasmania, responding to 'How Do You Cope With Lockdowns?',

This one caught my eye because I've been thinking the same thing. I've been locked up for about a year and a half now and still to this day find it hard on lockdown days to sit in my cell.

I've voiced this to a few of the girls I know in here and their response to me is either "how haven't you got used to it by now?" or "find something to do".

When I'm locked down, I do a lot of crocheting, which I find is really good for my mental health and your loved ones are sure to love it. With each and every project you send them, it seems hard to learn, but it's honestly worth it on a day you're stuck in your cage.

When I'm not crocheting, I find myself flicking the channels 500 times looking for something to watch or committing to watching *Barbie* on the prison movie channel that repeats all day.

So I really enjoy reading the prison newspaper; keep it up, *About Time*!

Now how do youse cope with lockdowns?

Amanda

The Tim Tam Tax

By Colin

Colin writes from a prison in WA.

I got a copy of the paper with my article in it and I was pleased that some of my village mates approved and wanted me to sign their copy. As a published author, I charged them one Tim Tam per signature.

Why Australia's Prisons Need H. Pylori Screening

By Nigel

Nigel writes from a prison in QLD.

To Australia's best prison newspaper, *About Time*.

I would like to bring to the attention of everyone who reads this newspaper both incarcerated/simply at liberty of a very real epidemic that is Australia-wide, but even more so in correctional settings.

Helicobacter pylori is an infection of bacteria in the stomach with symptoms ranging from mild to severe heartburn, stomach pains, diarrhoea, gastrointestinal problems, duodenal ulcers, stomach ulcers, and possible gastric-related cancers.

About ⅓ of the world's population carry the bacteria and up to ⅓ of Australians have it and it is more prevalent in Aboriginal communities.

Considering the level of incarceration of Indigenous peoples, prisons also carry a very high level of infection. I have had it and was treated with a heavy course of antibiotics which comes with its own side effects, only to begin displaying symptoms of Helicobacter pylori infection again just a few months later.

I have known others who have also been diagnosed with and treated for it.

Not only do I think this is a prison problem, but also an Australia-wide problem with potentially long-term effects both health-wise and financially to the country.

I would love to see mass screening and possible eradication of this disease.

Healthdirect.gov.au/helicobacter-pylori is the go-to web address for all the relevant information.

Why Can We Still Not Buy Protein Powder?

By Joeby

Joeby writes from a prison in QLD.

My name is Joeby – earlier this year I wrote about our gym equipment and our access to supplements. Since my return there has been no update or change at the centre.

Our situation in regard to purchasable products remains the same, although it is now more expensive to obtain protein. We can only purchase protein bars and price inflation has risen to $4.75 per bar. I cannot afford this.

One protein bar costs almost $5. If we consumed one protein bar per day it would cost $35 per week.

I cannot afford $35 per week.

I am asking for the prison to please allow or consider us permission to purchase protein powder as this is more affordable and gives us an accessible incentive to get fit.

All other centres in Queensland are run via Queensland government and allow protein powders. We can purchase protein cups but we're unable to purchase the material to use the cups for their set design. This doesn't make sense.

Thank you.

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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Melbourne VIC 3001

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.



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Prison Q&A With Stephen

By Stephen

Stephen writes from a prison in NSW.

What's been happening at your prison at the moment?
Our frequency of 'lock-ins' is increasing to about 2 per week while staff do training for the handover. Program offerings, schedules and food options remain the same – at least I'm treated correctly on a dairy-free diet.

If you could start a program in prison, what would it be and why?
An engaging opportunity to be closer to nature would help. It gives prisoners a connection to green environments and helps with mental and physical health.

What helps you get through hard days that you'd like to share with others?
Having an opportunity to talk to other inmates who are of a similar age (over 60) and societal background.

If you could interview a famous person, who would it be, why them, and what would you ask?
The spiritual leader Gandhi.

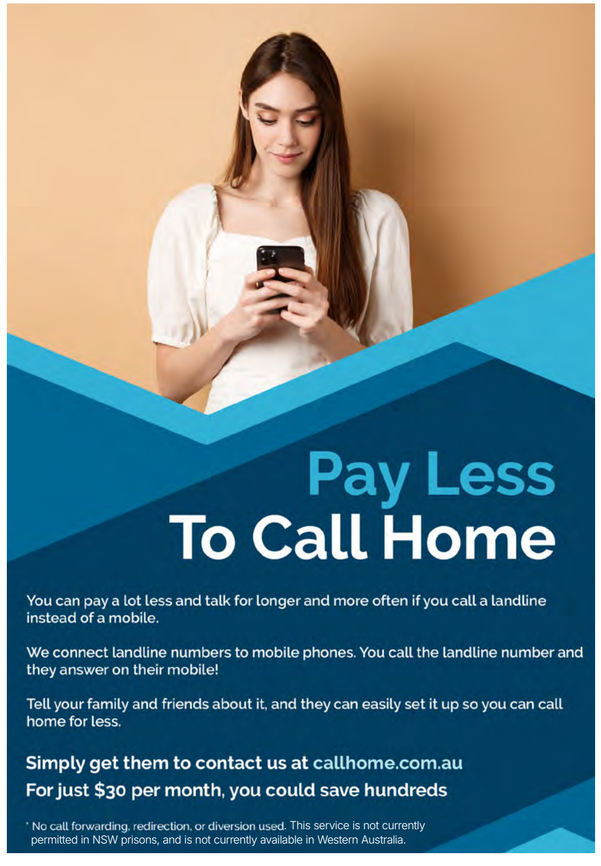
Tell us about a day in your life that you'll never forget.
The day I proposed to my now wife of nearly 42 years of marriage. We were doing an evening walk whilst staying at a relative's house in Tasmania.

What's your favourite TV show right now and why do you like it?
My wife and I would enjoy watching *Hard Quiz*, hosted by Tom Gleeson on the ABC. This show is one of the most witty intelligent comedies on TV.

What song or music artist always lifts your mood? Why?
'Piano Man' by Billy Joel, as my wife and I saw him perform in Sydney and his musical talent amplified the importance to sing clear ballads that tell stories to those who listen to all the words.

What book has stayed with you after reading it?
The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People by Stephen Covey.

We'd love to hear what's been happening at your prison, what you've been reading or watching and anything else you'd like to share. If you'd like to answer the same questions, send them to us and we'll publish your own Q&A!



Does What You Do Wrong Define the Rest of Your Life?

By Marley

Marley writes from a prison in QLD.

So the parole referred me to seek out a security classification to be possibly considered for low security.

The process seemed like a bit of a run around inside of a maze-like haunted mansion, where all the passage ways only seem to lead back to where I started. But eventually, I learnt that before court is finalised/basically the episodes of being on remand, a prisoner can apply for a security classification.

Also after a court decision is reached, like after a sentence for instance, the sentence management make a determination on whether to class a person in prison as either high or low security. Apparently, no max classification is applicable to determine security.

Now, if I remain breach or incident free, meaning no mucking up, for a certain amount of time does this good behaviour then be rewarded with a minimising of security classification reducing from high down to low?

I found out that after 12 months a prisoner's security classification is reviewed. So can I actually be considered for low security for remaining incident free for the 12-month period?

Or am I forever reprimanded a high security classification due to the nature and seriousness of my offences and breach history?

I'm just asking because I don't get breached at all anymore, not because I'm trying to behave but it's like I'm repenting so can I ever be considered for low? And how?

Veterans Behind Bars: 'You Are Not Forgotten'

By Adrian

Adrian writes from a prison in NSW.

There is a particular part of our prison populations that seems to have been forgotten, that gets no mention and yet these people who are the ones that need help and support when incarcerated with a unique set of issues that just aren't recognised.

Those who served in the Armed Forces are already indoctrinated into a routine and can be classed as institutionalised. After this we were prepared to put our lives on the line and if necessary pay the ultimate sacrifice for every single man, woman, and child in Australia.

On the outside within Australia every service member can access free counselling through the Department of Veterans' Affairs with Open Arms and this is fantastic. The problem lies when a veteran comes to prison: he/she is isolated from this help and, given the strain on mental health within the system, often go without any treatment whilst still suffering traumas either attached to PTSD or even just coping with adjustment outside of the routine of the military.

Prison brings on a whole new set of challenges especially with the daily rivalry and seemingly endless chaos that prison life brings.

It becomes increasingly harder on days such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day as many of us have lost colleagues whilst serving and we are forgotten, often locked in our cells.

We watch the dawn service and the procession from our prison cells, reflecting on our service, but it also brings about a reckoning of what we have done to fail ourselves and bring us into this place.

We are a country that is fiercely proud of its military history and those who fought and sacrificed themselves to make Australia what it is today, but for those of us behind these bars and walls we are a forgotten brood.

Upon release we can go back to talk with counsellors but of course our offending is off limits directly as it is not part of service. It's part of who we are and we carry a great shame as we feel we have let down not only ourselves and our family and loved ones but our comrades, the country and everything that those who sacrificed themselves for.

Everyone does it hard in prison no matter who we are or where we have come from, let's not forget those who have served and were willing to sacrifice themselves to make this country what it is.

To all that served I thank you from the bottom of my heart and I salute every single one of you.

You are not forgotten and through the same strength and resolve we showed in service we will battle this war within ourselves and survive these walls as well.

Each Day, I Wake Up Re-Shocked

By Kate

Kate writes from a prison in WA.

Hey there,

My name is Kate. I am 32 years of age and I'm a mum to five beautiful children (I love you so much bubbas). I am currently on remand in WA.

Have you seen the movie *50 First Dates*?

Each day I wake up in here I'm re-shocked, so to speak...how on Earth has life gotten to this point for me? For a while there I was waiting for Ashton Kutcher to jump out and tell me I'd been "Punk'd".

My heart sunk the day I heard "she's a danger to the community" – it still stings to think about. I would constantly think about my abusers and how they've contributed and even gotten away with it all while I'm in here, away from my babies.

I've had to relearn to want to forgive. No longer because I'm being forced to, but because I want to heal.

This is my first time in prison and longest time I've spent away from my kiddos. It's like torture. My heart physically hurts.

Battling thoughts that have haunted me: "Will they remember me? Will they still love me? Do they have good influences around them, are they happy and safe?

I've had to turn my focus to positive thinking – put my words into action.

Instead of fearing the worst, I'm doing all I can from where I am to prevent those terrifying thoughts.

I couldn't have gotten through this time without the strength and encouragement of many women I've served time with.

We all look after each other and offer a listening ear or lend a shoulder.

I want to thank the women and officers who have helped me get through this trialing time in my life.

I will forever be grateful.

May your kindness and thoughtfulness be returned to you 100-fold.



• News and Investigations

Sleepless in Prison

By Denham Sadler

Continued from page 1.

The prison environment does not lend itself to a good night's sleep.

There is now a wealth of research into the impact of poor sleep on our physical and mental health, and into sleep issues in prisons.

Several studies have looked at how the routines and conditions within prisons are preventing people from getting proper sleep and creating more dangerous environments within these centres.

Experts and advocates are pushing for small changes to be made to improve sleeping conditions for people in prison, for their benefit and the safety of the facility.

There are a wide range of factors that make sleeping in prison extremely difficult.

These include regular counts throughout the night that can involve officers shining torches into cells, uncomfortable bedding, stress and overcrowding. A number of prison watchdogs have raised concerns about overcrowded cells and the fact that many people are sleeping on mattresses on the floors of cells, right next to the toilet.

Emily Cooper, who was incarcerated in Queensland, said that these factors combine to make a good night's sleep nearly impossible.

"One person is on the floor next to the toilet, the other person literally has to step on their bed to get to the toilet," Cooper told *About Time*.

If someone is placed in an observation cell due to poor mental health, lights are often left on throughout the night, something that is "possibly the worst thing for mental health deterioration", she said.

Jason Ellis is a sleep expert and a Professor of Sleep Science at Northumbria University in the United Kingdom. He said that loss of control over your sleeping conditions can create difficulties.

"This loss can be in the form of sharing a room with someone we didn't choose to, through to having little or no control over the sleep environment or the timing of it," Ellis told *About Time*.

A lack of proper sleep over a long period of time can have a negative impact on your health in a number of ways. "It'll make you more impulsive, increase irritability and increase risk-taking," Andrew Vakulin, a senior researcher at FHMRI Sleep Health, told *About Time*.

Not getting enough sleep can make it harder to make decisions and make you more likely to take risks, Ellis said. "We know that poor sleep can make people more impulsive, and in a prison environment that adds an additional layer of potential challenge," he said.

"Studies have shown we are more likely to engage in risky behaviour and aggression if we have not slept well."

Little research has been done in Australia on sleeping in prison, but it has been investigated overseas. A recent study by the University of Texas and the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab on the "nightmare" of sleeping in prison looked at how the routine conditions in prisons were "systematically disrupting sleep".

It found that sleep issues led to major impacts on health, behaviour and safety in prisons.

A separate study found that many people in US prisons are getting far less than the minimum of seven hours each night that is commonly recommended by health experts.

Through interviews with 39 formerly incarcerated people, the study found that people were getting four to six hours of sleep each night, with regular interruptions.

The study found that these sleep issues were greatly improved after the individuals were given treatment, including eye masks and earplugs, and rearranging the cells.

Some prisons around the world have made small changes to improve this situation, such as changing when and how counts are done, providing better mattresses and bedding, turning down lights during the night and providing more activities during the day.

In Norwegian prisons, many incarcerated people are provided with proper sleeping spaces, with their cells having proper beds and bedding, windows that let in natural light, climate control and regular changing of the bedding.

In Denmark, changes have been made to give people more control over the lighting in their cells.

In the United Kingdom, one prison gives women who are neurodivergent weighted blankets, noise-cancelling ear plugs, sleep masks and other sensory aids.

Vakulin said that consistency and routine are keys to a good night of sleep. "You want to go to bed and wake up at a similar time period that lines up with the body clock," he said.

"Try to create an environment that's conducive to sleep, with a regular routine that allows enough opportunity to have sleep. And if you think you have a sleep disorder like insomnia, seek clinical advice."

Ellis said that people in prison should be provided with earplugs and eye masks, and that efforts should be made to keep cells cool, dark and quiet.

"Managing noise and light at night would certainly be helpful and simple additions like earplugs and eye masks being available could be quite beneficial," Ellis said.

Conditions in prison and lockdowns often force people to use their bed for much more than just sleeping, something which can make getting to sleep more difficult.

"Only use the bed to sleep, and if that is impossible, designate one part of the bed as a sleep environment and the other part as a daytime environment," Ellis said.

For more tips on getting better sleep in prison, go to the Health section on page 20.



'Care is the Antidote': The Need For a Prison Legal Service

A new report has called on the Victorian government to fund a standalone legal service for people in prison.

By Denham Sadler



Willy Pleasance

A standalone legal service is needed to address the "significant unmet needs" of people in prison, particularly women, trans and gender diverse people, according to a new report.

The Dignity Behind Bars report, a joint project between the Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC) and Flat Out, is based on first-hand accounts of people with lived experience of incarceration and service providers.

It scopes the need for a dedicated legal service for women, trans and gender diverse people in Victorian prisons.

"Every person should be able to challenge mistreatment and hold authorities accountable when their rights are violated," HRLC First Nations Justice Director Maggie Munn said.

"But right now, too many women, trans and gender diverse people in prison are being denied access to the legal help they need. A dedicated legal service would help ensure people can enforce their rights and challenge abuses behind prison walls, starting with critical issues like solitary confinement and parole."

There is no standalone legal service for people in prison in the state, although many legal centres provide some assistance to incarcerated people.

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) provides free legal advice to First Nations people who have experienced harms due to the actions of police or prison authorities through its Wirraway Police and Prison Accountability Practice.

Wirraway provides legal advice, helps with bringing complaints and court proceedings and acts for families in coronial inquests into deaths in custody.

Fitzroy Legal Service has a Prison Legal Service, a statewide program aiming to uphold the rights of people in prison, and Victoria Legal Aid also assists people in prison with some matters.

The only dedicated, standalone prison service in Australia is the Prisoners' Legal Service (PLS) in Queensland, which has operated since 1985 and receives funding from the state and federal governments.

The Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Correction System in Victoria, handed down in 2022, recommended the establishment of a dedicated and independent advice service for people in custody.

The state government has not committed to implementing this recommendation..

"The Victorian government was told four years ago that people in prison need access to dedicated and independent legal support," Munn said.

"It's time to act now."

The report identifies several key issues that the legal service would focus on: solitary confinement and lockdowns, access to healthcare, parole and family and connectedness.

"Any potential dedicated or standalone legal service must grapple with these issues and work towards dismantling the systems that have created them," the report said.

"It is clear that whether a service is dedicated or standalone, it must be guided by principles of decarceration and care."

The report identified "significant gaps" in the current legal support offered to people in prison in Victoria.

"Given the number of women, trans and gender diverse people in prison across Victoria, the number of prison law issues we have identified and the complexity of these issues, we are looking at serious levels of currently unmet legal need," it said.

The Prisoners' Legal Service in Queensland demonstrates the huge level of need for this service around the country.

In 2024–25, PLS provided nearly 7000 services to just under 1500 clients. The community legal centre also operates a free advice line for people in prison, and this received more than 55,000 calls in the same year, an increase of 150 per cent from 2022–23.

Due to a lack of resourcing, more than 53,000 of these calls went unanswered.

The legal service would need to place lived experience at the centre, and would primarily provide assistance via a phone line, along with in-person visits and clinics.

"Care is the antidote," a participant at a roundtable for the report said.

The report acknowledges that the majority of people in prison are men, and that improved legal services are also needed for them.

"Alongside advocacy from men inside, systemic law reform and advocacy efforts centred on the experiences of women, trans and gender diverse people in prison have had some flow on effects for men in prison," the report said.

"However, we regret that the parameters of this project have not allowed us to scope the urgent, unmet legal needs of men in prison. It is hoped that scoping and taking steps to meet that legal need will happen in the future."

The HRLC and Flat Out report also urged the Victorian government to provide dedicated funding for VALS's Wirraway Police and Prison Accountability Practice.



NSW

Major Changes Made to Remand Process
The Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre at Silverwater will begin accepting people from October 24 hours, 7 days a week under significant changes to the NSW remand process.

Currently, the remand centre only accepts people in the morning, with people who have been refused bail held in police cells until space opens up.

The state government said that "allowing police to transfer bail-refused prisoners directly into the correctional system at any time, improves the movement of inmates, reduces pressure on police cells and makes better use of prison capacity across metropolitan Sydney".

As part of the changes, the Amber Laurel Correctional Centre, which currently runs as a small 24-hour intake and transfer facility for those on remand, will shut.

Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre will become a 30-bed facility, while Mary Wade Correctional Centre will return to being a women's prison, with a focus on external leave and work release form custody.

Parklea Correctional Centre will return to public hands from October and will become mainly a remand centre.



TAS

Serial Family Violence Registry Coming
The Tasmanian government is planning to create a public register of serial family violence offenders.

Under the scheme, some convicted offenders will be declared "serial family violence offenders" and will be required to complete a behavioural change or rehabilitation program to have this lifted.

Such an order would apply for at least two years.

A public registry will include these details, but the courts will have the power not to publish anything that may compromise a victim's safety or confidentiality.

If someone is found to have committed further offences after being declared this, they will face at least a six-month prison sentence, under the planned reforms.



VIC

Suppression Orders Banned For Some Offenders
The use of suppression orders to hide the identity of convicted rapists in Victoria will be banned under state government plans.

The Victorian government has announced that it will move to limit the use of suppression orders if it wins the upcoming November state election.

It said it would be closing "every loophole" that is "abused and exploited" to hide the identity of people facing court.

There is an ongoing review in the state looking into the use of interim suppression orders during trials and the grounds on which these can be made.

Prison Open Air Reforms Pass Parliament
A law has been passed in Victoria that limits the right of people in prison to get at least one hour outside in the open air.

The entitlement to be in open air in prison can be limited when weather does not allow for it, and/or "where it is not reasonably practicable to provide based on operational factors", including: the management, good order or security of the prison; the rights, safe custody, or welfare of the prisoner or other prisoners.

Previously this right could only be limited due to the weather.

The legislation was supported by the Labor government and the Opposition, and opposed by the Greens and some members of the crossbench.

Plan for People in Prison to Work on Roads
The Labor government has announced a plan to get people held in minimum security prisons to work on road maintenance.

The pilot program would involve incarcerated people performing roadside maintenance, such as mowing lawns, controlling weeds, removing graffiti and picking up rubbish.



WA

Small Payments for Sleeping on Cell Floors
People in Western Australian prisons who have had to sleep on mattresses on cell floors, near to the toilet, are receiving payments of up to $10.15 per week.

The gratuity is provided to those with "alternative sleeping arrangements".

A WA Supreme Court judge recently described the overcrowding in some of the state's prisons as "significant and inhumane".

Good Character to Be Scrapped in Sentencing
Western Australia has followed in the footsteps of many other states with plans to ban the use of character references to try to reduce a sentence.

The ban will prevent any person convicted of a crime from relying on good character references to reduce their sentence.

Similar reforms have been made in New South Wales and Victoria, while Tasmania is planning to ban character references for "serious offences".

Acacia Prison Expansion Goes Ahead
The WA government has signed a deal with a construction company that will bring 480 new beds to Acacia Prison.

The $238.5 million contract will see three new accommodation units constructed, along with support services and industries.

The project is planned to be finished by 2029.



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NT

New Private Prison to be Built
A 1,200-bed private prison will be built in the Northern Territory as the government grapples with a rapidly increasing prison population.

The new prison, which will sit near the Darwin Correctional Precinct at Holtze, will be built and operated by a private company, delivered under a Public Private Partnership.

Under this partnership, a private company will be selected to "design, finance, build, operate and maintain the facility".

The number of people in prison in the Northern Territory has increased by nearly 60 per cent in the last five years to 2,905 people, as of March this year.

The territory government said that consulting firm Deloitte had concluded a business case and that the government would soon release an expression of interest.

A 200-bed women's prison will also be built next to the new private prison. The women's facility will be run by the NT government.

NAAJA Gets $2m To Help People Leaving Prison
The Northern Territory government will provide $2 million to the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) to help it support First Nations young people and adults released from prison.

The funding will go towards NAAJA's through-care services, which provide culturally appropriate, intensive case management for people preparing to leave prison.

NAAJA works with people in prison to develop individual case plans that identify their needs, goals and risks.



SA

Drug Searches at Yatala
Illegal drugs have allegedly been found after police searches at Yatala Labour Prison.

A joint operation by the Department for Correctional Services and South Australia Police saw a coordinated search of the prison take place.

According to the authorities, suspected drugs were found and seized at the prison, and are now being forensically examined.



QLD

Drugs Allegedly Found in Mail
Drugs worth more than $250,000 have allegedly been found in mail sent to the Brisbane Correctional Centre.

The drugs were found in mail that had been marked legally privileged.

Authorities are able to open and search that type of mail in the presence of the recipient if they suspect that it contains prohibited items.

Bail Crackdown Proposed
The Queensland government has proposed a bail crackdown that could lead to 6,000 more people being put in prison.

The state government is planning to create a new offence of breaching bail by committing one of the 45 crimes listed in its "adult crime, adult time" offences.

This new offence would come with a mandatory jail time, and the government has flagged that it may apply to children and adults.

The state government has conceded that these reforms are in breach of the state's *Human Rights Act*.



ACT

Compensation For Illegal Prison Strip Search
A First Nations woman who was illegally strip searched when she was incarcerated in Canberra has received $100,000 in compensation from the ACT government.

In a civil case against the government last year, it was found that her human rights were breached when she was strip searched in a Crisis Support Unit bathroom in Alexander Maconochie Centre in 2021.

This strip search was in breach of the ACT's Human Rights Act, the judge found.

She then lodged proceedings in Federal Court calling for damages to be awarded, with the settlement reached in early September.

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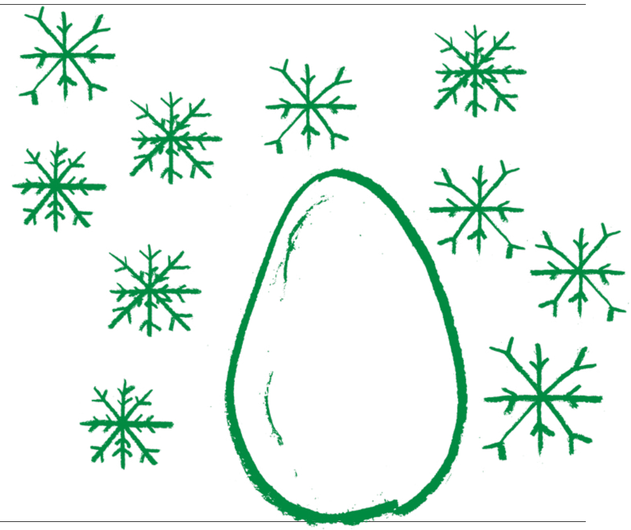
Fight to Freeze Eggs In Prison Goes All the Way to the High Court



The case will test whether an incarcerated woman can be prevented from freezing her eggs, despite warnings the ban could permanently affect her ability to have children.

By Denham Sadler

Australia's highest court will decide whether a woman in prison in Queensland should be allowed to freeze her eggs while she is incarcerated.

The woman has been granted leave to challenge a ban on freezing her eggs while serving a prison sentence in the High Court of Australia.

The case began when the woman, who was then 33 years old and halfway through a 10-year sentence, applied from prison for approval to undergo privately funded egg freezing.

She said she intended to get pregnant when released from prison, but was concerned about the health implications of doing so at the age of 39.

This application was rejected by Queensland Corrective Services, since legislation in that state bans medical treatment that is considered "assisted reproductive technology".

She has launched several challenges to this decision, focusing on whether freezing your eggs should be defined as "assisted reproductive technology" and included in this ban.

Her lawyers have argued that this is a "preparatory step" rather than something directly involved in reproduction, and it can only potentially lead to a pregnancy.

Her first legal challenge was dismissed, and an appeal was also thrown out in early 2026.

The Court of Appeal found that egg freezing does fall into the definition of "assisted reproductive technology" under Queensland law, as this is "not confined to excluding a prisoner from steps which pertain to fertilisation itself".

This ruling will now be challenged in the High Court of Australia, with the woman granted leave in early August.

Dr Molly Johnston, a reproductive ethics expert and Research Fellow at the Monash Bioethics Centre, said the High Court appeal is a "significant and welcome development".

"That the High Court will hear this case signals that there are genuinely important legal questions at stake," Johnston told *About Time*. "What is particularly notable is that six judges signed off on her request for special leave – it is unusual to have so many signatories, and it may indicate that the court sees merit in the appeal."

The case will test whether egg freezing should be counted as "assisted reproductive technology", and whether the woman should be allowed to undertake this procedure while she is incarcerated.

It may also have implications for other people in prison looking to access this form of medical procedure.

Johnston said she would be looking for the High Court to find that people in prison do have a right to undergo an egg-freezing procedure.

"I hope that her appeal succeeds, and that the Court recognises that there is a meaningful legal and ethical distinction between restrictions that apply within prison and harms that extend permanently beyond it," she said.

"No Australian court has ever prescribed loss of reproductive capacity as a legitimate sentencing objective. The High Court has an opportunity to confirm that no policy should produce this outcome by default."

Egg freezing differs from other forms of assisted reproduction and should be treated as such, she said. "It doesn't result in pregnancy nor does it result in a child being born or raised in custody," Johnston said.

"It simply preserves the future possibility of having genetically-related children. The concerns courts have historically raised about assisted reproduction in prison such as child welfare, resources, the conditions of custody – they don't apply here. What we're really talking about is a time-sensitive medical procedure and refusing it may have permanent consequences."

In Victoria the Supreme Court ruled in 2010 that fertility treatment should be available to those in prison if it is privately funded.

The Supreme Court found that the plaintiff, Kimberley Castles, was entitled to undergo IVF treatment under the Corrections Act.

This was based on the established human right that people in prison should not be subjected to hardship or constraint other than what necessarily results from being incarcerated. It found that the Corrections Act allows incarcerated people to "do more than remain in a 'holding pattern' with respect to their health while imprisoned".

The Court also found that IVF was a "legitimate medical treatment for a legitimate medical condition".

Recently, a woman was granted release to undergo IVF treatment, but she did not end up going through with this treatment.

In 2024 the Victorian Opposition introduced a bill to Parliament that would ban people in prison from undergoing any assisted reproductive treatment; this is similar to the ban currently in place in Queensland.

The bill was voted down in the Victorian lower house.

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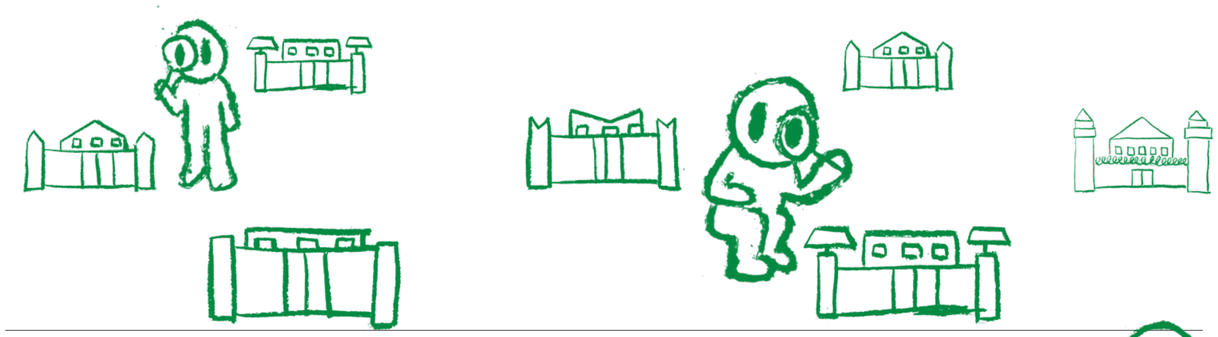
Inspector's Corner

Your monthly review of prison oversight



There are many 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.

This is what they've been up to in the last month.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Report on Conditions at Roebourne Released

The WA prison watchdog has released its report on inspections of Roebourne Regional Prison, focusing on the impact of overcrowding and understaffing, and difficulties in accessing healthcare.

The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) report identified a "challenging regional environment", with workforce problems, poor infrastructure and pressures on delivering day-to-day services.

The inspections found that cells at the prison had been changed to allow more people to be held in them.

The OICS also found that many people were sleeping on mattresses on the floors of cells.

The report found significant issues in accessing a psychiatrist, even via telehealth.

It also said that women who are incarcerated at the prison are a "disadvantaged minority".



VICTORIA

Coronial Hearing Held Into Death of Tarsha Golightly

A directions hearing for the coronial inquest into the death of an 18-year-old at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre has been held.

Tarsha Golightly died at the women's prison in late July.

Golightly was on remand and died just five days after being moved from a youth detention centre.

The inquest into her death will focus on her time on remand, whether she made an application for bail, the conditions of her detention at the youth facility, the health and support services offered to her and why she was transferred to the adult prison.

It will also look at whether she was subjected to lockdowns at the prison before her death.



NEW SOUTH WALES

Report Looks at Transfer of Health Services at Parklea

The NSW Inspector of Custodial Services has looked at the transfer of health services at Parklea Correctional Centre from the private operator to Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network.

The operation of the prison returned to public hands at the start of September.

The investigation found that the main healthcare clinic at the prison was "unsuitable", and was recently described at a coronial inquest as "filthy and putrid".

This clinic looks after the most acute and unwell patients at the prison, but the inspector found that it does not provide safe or hygienic accommodation.

It also found that access to mental health services at Parklea is still a "significant clinical risk".



ACT

First Nations Teenager Wrongly Arrested at Gunpoint

A 17-year-old First Nations boy was wrongly arrested at gunpoint on a bus, with the Commonwealth Ombudsman finding he was also searched after police realised they had made a mistake, potentially in breach of the law.

The Ombudsman released a report on ACT Policing's mistaken arrest of the First Nations teenager, known as Jay, in late August.

Jay had got on a bus and sat at the back, before the bus was stopped by police.

Police officers boarded the bus with their guns drawn and told Jay to get off. He was then brought to the ground, handcuffed and arrested.

The Ombudsman found that 90 seconds later, police realised that they had the wrong person.

Despite this, the police officers still searched Jay, something the Ombudsman found was "inappropriate as well as seemingly contrary to law".

After releasing Jay, police did not ask for his name, confirm his age or ask for details to contact a family member.

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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."

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• Experiences

‘I’m Ready for This Next Chapter’



By Andrew

Andrew writes from a prison in TAS.

I finally finished my VPP (Violence Prevention Program) in late June. It was one of the wisest decisions I ever made.

I have learnt so much about myself; I was shown CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), DBT (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy), emotional regulation and Wise Mind.

These skills have been the key to my rehabilitation. I have struggled with my anger for my whole life.

CBT has shown me how to not react to situations with violence and to use my thought process in a totally different way. Not reacting out of emotion has been the key for me.

Once I practised CBT on a daily basis I then saw how we use it each and every day in life. It has changed my life.

The course also focused on core beliefs. My core belief for more than 20 years was “extreme violence solves everything”. Now I know that is such a stupid belief. But in my world of prison life and being on the streets, the more violent, the more fear and more control over the situation. But that’s not what is needed to survive in modern-day society, you can’t stand over the local real estate agent, you can’t treat people with such violence.

I just bought my first ever house with my class action payout and I learnt a lot of lessons. I was on a supermax division 23-hour lockdown on 7th March, and I had to be patient. I could not demand results; I made an offer, put down deposit and then it was a stressful four weeks.

I had no control over what went on, I had to wait to be told yes offer accepted, then I could get the ball rolling, because ya know it is all done ready to be paid in cash in full, yes outright no mortgage, no stuffing around. But I realised that this is how life is: I can’t control everything the way I can living this lifestyle, so I was like “stuff it, this is how I need to be – focused on the future and stopping using emotions to solve all my issues”.

Now all said done, I just sat for parole and was lucky to get a successful outcome.

All my hard work has paid off. The board was impressed with my turnaround and said that I have shown great things since starting and completing the program. After five years, it’s now time to put all the things I have learnt into action out into the community.

Three and a half years I’m on parole for. Yes it’s a long time but I’m ready for this next chapter.



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Prison Dentistry Through the Years

By Jonathan

Jonathan writes from a prison in VIC.

When I was first transferred to PPP in 2000, I was warned about the dentist colloquially known as ‘The Butcher.’ I attended the dentist for a sore molar. The ‘dentist’ had to put his arm across my chest to hold me down ‘til he gained the tooth, which looked perfectly good to me.

Apparently this so-called dentist has been at the prison since it opened and never fixes teeth, just pulls them out. He has had hundreds of letters to various government departments describing his slack treatment.

I travelled the gamut of prisons until I landed at Loddon and met the nice dentist in residence. She was brilliant and fixed a couple of teeth with no trouble. When I told her about my dental experience at PPP, she was flabbergasted and firmly stated that molars are never to be pulled, just repaired.

In or around 2018, I was transferred to another prison and applied for an appointment with the dentist. I had knocked out one of my front teeth when I stumbled onto the concrete. Subsequently, the dentist said she could not fix it. After a conversation with the doctor, he told me to try again next week. As ordered, I went up to the dentist surgery and was surprised to find a different Australian lady. When she examined the space where my tooth was, she said “no worries” and fitted me with a ‘cosmetic’ replacement, which was fantastic.

I was soon transferred to another prison in 2019, where I asked about fixing another tooth, which I had again knocked after a fall. A dentist appointment ensued and once again the dentist would not touch it. So, I wrote to Justice Health, Corrections and the government prison minister. A few weeks later, I was transferred for a day appointment at the Royal College of Dentistry. It was all very professional, but they informed me that they do not do cosmetic tooth replacements and offered me a partial dental plate.

Over many years on the outside, I have seen many people playing with plates, taking them out for fun, and many more disgusting tricks with plates. Anyway, I wanted the teeth fixed, not left to rot.

Currently, I am domiciled at a Victorian prison. I once again made a dentist appointment. This was another dentist who once again refused me a cosmetic tooth (I had to explain what and how it can be fixed). She refused, but she offered to clean up several stumpy teeth and clean them all. I am dubious about accepting; however, I will do it sometime in the future.

Facing Release With Nowhere to Go

By MJ

MJ writes from a prison in QLD.

I was born and bred in Brisbane. I’ve been here my entire life besides three years in Moree between 89–92.

I’m 41 years old now and have spent roughly nine years in custody over 11 episodes. At the end of the year I will be released on court-ordered parole for 16 months.

So here’s my yarn.

Every previous time I’ve been in custody I’ve nearly always promised myself and others that I would be better next time. That I would do better and strive harder to not come back in a hurry especially for misdemeanour dumb stuff.

I did manage to overcome the pressures that were mounting and my sentences reduced and so did the frequency of my incarcerations. I actually spent about eight years in jail between 18 and 30.

During my 30s I did less than six months. I put that down to anger management, family support, starting my own business and having realistic, achievable goals. I managed my life better and great things began to happen.

The things that I have achieved over the passed 8–10 years are amazing to say the least. I’ve travelled for work, seen almost forgotten family, been to music festivals, saved money, built possessions, made memories and maintained my health.

Some would say I still have a lot to look forward to. Hmm, I disagree.

When I get released at the end of this year, I am faced with a massive uphill climb with barely a rope to save me.

Firstly I’m court-ordered release, so basically kicked out of jail. I have registered for Men’s Reintegration Service but at this point I’ll have no house and no job.

Both my car and motorbike are in different locations, both unregistered and seized/block by SPER. Which means I can’t sell them or register them until I pay a significant portion off my bill.

I will be on weekly reporting, parole and will be expected to do programs and urines. I am finding it increasingly difficult to see any light through this dark tunnel.

I know it pays to attack one problem at a time and try to prioritise what’s most important but in building towards the main goal and my main goal is to be totally free man with access to my kids future and immediate wellbeing.

How can I remain upbeat and positive knowing that at any time I can be removed from the community and placed back into the cesspool of prison?

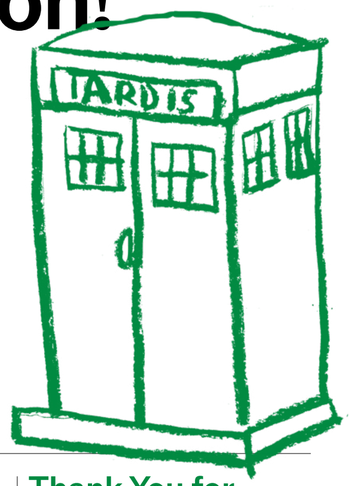


Writing Competition!

Time Travel







WINNER

Time Travellers, Don't Change the Past

By Anonymous

The author writes from a prison in NSW.



Peter's comments: In this dry, satirical, experimental piece, we have a series of five short bureaucratic instructions to 'prospective time travellers', urging them to revisit only the most positive life events. Some of these are poignant: 'the first time your partner smiled at you in that way you love' or 'holding your newborn baby for the first time'. The author balances the satirical and the personal with impressive poise. ChronoCab Inc. values our safe patronage, but in the end the future is in our hands.

Continued from page 1.

Information for Prospective Time Travellers:

1. Please do not visit YOU/past at points of crisis in an attempt to change your life for the better. Due to Paradox Police safety mechanisms, YOU/now cannot alter the outcomes of YOU/past. To do so would create a paradox horizon large enough to annihilate the local timelines of not only YOU/now, but also every individual you ever interacted with, from that point onwards.

2. ChronoCab Inc. instead recommends to revisit only the most positive life-events, those that brought you happiness and contentment. Concentrate on events such as the first time your partner smiled at you in that way you love, or that one family Christmas where everybody got along, or holding your newborn baby for the first time. Even if positive life-events have been few and far between for YOU/now, the ingenious design of our ChronoCab Inc. transport allows you to revisit them time and again.

3. In your travels, YOU/now may on occasion observe YOU/alt, one of the countless alternate versions of YOU/now created where your timeline splits around key events in your life (see point 1, above). Should you chance upon YOU/alt whose life seems vastly superior to your own, we suggest you remember that, on the balance of probabilities, YOU/now do not in point of fact exist. That YOU/now constitute a valued ChronoCab Inc. patron in your current timeline is therefore a major achievement in itself.

4. Unfortunately, ChronoCab Inc. cannot offer YOU/now transit services to your future. Although your limited perspective prevents you from seeing them, there exists an infinite number of YOU/futures. The laws of thermodynamics prevent ChronoCab Inc. from even computing a destination, as this would consume more energy than your timeline contains. However, be assured: all of your choices matter. Your future is in your hands.

5. Please do not attempt to remove any of the paradox safeguards, and keep your extremities in the transport at all times. ChronoCab Inc. values your safe patronage; however, ChronoCab Inc. is not liable for the destruction of your timeline, nor any loss of life or limb resulting from misuse of our vehicles.

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Thank You for Your Contributions to the Writing Challenge!

We're so happy to publish extracts of the finalists.

The next prompt is:
My Best Friend

This can be a made-up story or something about your best friend. It could be about someone else in your prison, someone from the outside, a family member or a loved one. It could also be about a furry friend or imaginary friend! We look forward to reading your stories.

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Comments From Special Guest Judge Peter Rose

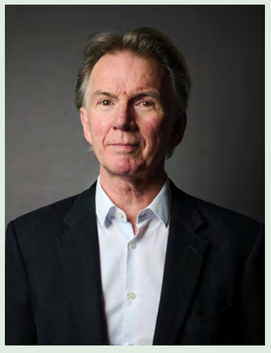
Clearly you only have to nominate 'time travel' as the subject of a writing competition to get people thinking.

Here we have a series of original and thoughtful responses to the topic. What comes through in many of the entries is an endearing sense of freedom, a willingness to play with the form – a plastic sense of possibilities.

These are reflective engagements with a subject that exercises all of us, but especially those who find themselves in trouble, disrupted, on the outer.

Still, there is humour here – mostly dry humour, plus little peeps of biographical information. There is a speculative openness about what life does – to ourselves, to those around us, to this endangered planet. Mostly, though, there is a spirit of intent, a stubborn yearning – despite everything that has happened to us or been done to us – to play a greater role in determining our place in the continuum.

I commend all the entrants and wish them well. I've been impressed by the spirit of playfulness and experimentation. Writing, however long one does it, is never easy, never fully mastered, but the more humour and lightness one brings to is, the easier it gets.



About Peter Rose:
Peter Rose is a poet, novelist, memoirist, playwright and critic. Since 1990 he has published seven poetry collections, most recently Attention, Please! (2025). His poetry has won and been shortlisted for numerous literary awards, including the Prime Minister's Literary Award, the Victorian Premier's Prize for Poetry, and the Age Book of the Year. His family memoir, Rose Boys (2001) won the National Biography Award. Rose also writes and performs short plays with The Highly Strung Players. Throughout the 1990s Rose was a publisher at Oxford University Press. From 2001 to 2025 Rose was Editor and CEO of Australian Book Review, the country's premier literary magazine. During this time he worked with more than 1500 writers around Australia.

FINALIST

Would You Travel Back in Time?

By Tanya

Tanya writes from a prison in VIC.

If you could travel in time, would you change anything? Or would you simply see for yourself how life has evolved? How far in time would you travel back or forward too?

Would you travel back when Earth was a hot ball of gas? Watch it expand. When the sun shone down on earth and clouds gathered and water fell to the ground, cells multiplied and grew. Land moved on tectonic plates, oceans formed, animals grew, earthquakes happened and volcanoes erupted.

Would you travel back to the exact year, month, week, day, hour, minute, second when you decided to commit your crime?

Would you travel to 2036? You are 10 years older from now. Will you have finished your sentence? Will you still be in custody?

Would you travel to 2046? You are 20 years older.

What will Earth look like then? Will robots take over? Will cancer be cured? Will there be another disease that has taken over?

Will we finally know the answer to life?

What do you think you will look like? How will you feel? What do you hope to be doing? Who do you want in your life? Who do you hope will still be in your life?

What do you think you would have achieved? How do you think your health will be?

Or do you think you will be doing the same thing you did back in that year, month, week, day, hour, minute, second!

FINALIST

Retribution Day

By Byron

Byron writes from a prison in QLD.

It was late afternoon when he opened his eyes. The blanket of clouds had broken in several places, and beams of golden light planked the valley floor, illuminating the tops of the ruined buildings. Though the valley still looked cold and wet and unwelcoming, the light gave it a newfound majesty.

For the first time, he understood why he had chosen to risk losing the timepiece.

Almost all the buildings were damaged, some more severely than others. The damage seemed to radiate outward from a single point near the southern edge of the ruined city, where a wild crater sank deeply into the ground. A gumtree had taken root in the depression, and their silvery leaves shook in the gusts of the directionless breeze.

He uttered several lines in forgotten language: there is an invisible poison here, in the air you breathe, in the ground you walk upon, and in the food you may eat and the water you may drink. "What a poison?" asked his accomplice, her thoughts as slow as her heartbeats.

He continued in a gloomy, upset voice, "During the war of worlds, one of the Nation's great fuel plants was destroyed. Whether by design or by accident has never been clear, but the result is what you see and what you cannot see, for the resulting explosion rendered the world unfit to live in."

He then turned to look at his watch: the timepiece. "January 1st 2027," he said and before she could say anything he vanished with a loud crack as the sound echoed down the empty city streets travelling faster and faster until he vanished beyond the horizon.

He was going to stop all of this from ever happening. He was going to prevent the extinction of life itself, but there was a problem he could not fit into his plans. He was the one who caused the energy plants explosion, he was the one who destroyed the world, he was the one who designed the reactor.

FINALIST

'If I Could Go Back, I'd Change My Life'

By Tarei

Tarei writes from a prison in NSW.

I wish I could go back and change my life.

My record would be clean, I wouldn't have hurt so many people, done so many burgs, or maybe I wouldn't be raised by gangsters and by feds, but then who would I be?

I wouldn't even be me.

Maybe change things more recent, more specific?

"Oh, so like *Hot Tub Time Machine*?"

I could never change the past nor want to. It makes us who we are. It's 2026 and I've been single since, but since coming to jail I wish I could call someone mine.

Well if we're still talking 'bout time travel, have you seen *The Butterfly Effect*? Maybe if I didn't protect my cousin and get charged with affray and ABH, maybe my cousin would be dead or we all would be arrested, not just me and Choppa Reggie. Maybe Trump wouldn't be re-elected, maybe World War 3 would come to Sydney. I ain't even sentenced but I'm here where I'm meant to be, don't know what the future holds but it's already written. I wouldn't think I regret.

Back time in jail, first time I seen the jail paper. Imagine I never seen this challenge, I would have never sent this letter. Time travel has been talked of for centuries, just look at Nikola Tesla.

FINALIST

‘From Baloney to Poloney’: A Time Travel Tale

By The Rooster

The Rooster writes from a prison in WA.

I am or “was” a journalist – I was tasked with documenting and reporting advancements in technology. Recently a form of time travel was discovered. It was used to send audio messages but it was still early (only one way).

Also the messages were jumbled but what was discovered was that if organic matter (like food) was passed through, it had the probability to mutate and self replicate but only in the past and most times it would be one half of the machine – then production – then sending the food. Nine times out of 10 the resulting mass would be unusable scraps – but that’s when the true product came in.

“From Baloney to Poloney” was their slogan, a not for profit meat company/producer. “Uncle Sams ‘Hams’, because obviously the Americans would be the first to mass produce cheap meat. The principle was: one cow (alive) fed into the machine, then several years of cheap canned spam sent to third world countries.

I was ecstatic documenting the process, and since you only needed the “bi-product” end they could claim it was “100 per cent ethical” and cruelty-free. But the more I researched the more I found, this meat from out of time would stretch the cow over a dozen wormholes. The only reason the meat would be fresh is because the cow would be alive.

It wasn’t long before animal rights activists learned and meat production continued, but as if one’s actions could imprint on future events, production halted several years early. The corporate figureheads figured that the protesters may have somehow cracked real time travel and saved the cow. The only move now was to build the second half of the machine; feed the cow into it and see how they saved it. An army of animal rights activists stormed the building before the cow was due to arrive.

Without a floor plan, who was to guess they’d entered the beginning of the meat process.

Who’d have guessed salvation would taste so...human.

FINALIST

The Time Traveller’s Strife

By Shea

Shea writes from a prison in VIC.

Our time machine doesn’t take the form of a Tardis, or DeLorean, yet it does represent an equally large figure in pop culture and science fiction (at least those forced into hard labour on a mining planet colony usually got a spectacular view of the galaxy around them).

We enter into this system, become largely invisible for a long passage of time, and later exit to a world unprepared for our sudden arrival.

In the months before I came to prison, a big novelty at the time was an app that could procedurally generate pictures of cats and dogs with often nightmarish results. The output was crude, and looked like a hybrid between a music visualisation and the hallucinations of an android. As someone who grew up with Microsoft Paint, Adobe’s new Content-Aware Fill tool was making Photoshop look like some form of advanced witchcraft.

Several years later [SpongeBob Voiceover].

I’m watching a trailer for a film that has been generated entirely through the use of AI, being entered into consideration for an international film festival. I see a short segment on *Gruen* exposing scam ads on social media, using AI generated video content to market mass-produced mechanically swimming manta ray statues as unique handmade articles. An elderly man cries fake photo-realistic tears as a passer-by at a local market picks up one of his creations and smashes it forcibly into the asphalt.

It’s hard to see much distinction between these fictitious *Black Mirror* style dystopian futures, and what I’m seeing daily on the news, and I’m not even halfway through my sentence yet. Will I be granted release before the Morlocks rock up to begin consuming humanity? Have we already become them; hidden out of sight and never spoken of, so that the Elon may peacefully frolic and feast in peace, oblivious of our sporadic excursions into their relative paradise of freedom.

We share the familiar burden of many a fictional time-travelling compatriot: a painful inability to affect the past, however often we attempt to revisit it. Our actions have consequences; we fork reality with every decision made.

Learn from the past without getting stuck in it, and focus on a positive future for yourself. Shape your final act, develop the closing chapters of your own story. Reject tragedy as an ultimate certainty, and firmly embrace your destiny.

FINALIST

‘Free From Time Itself We Escape’: A Meditation on Dreams

By Rain

Rain writes from a prison in WA.

The decay of an atom indicates that time itself has passed, it is the origin of our concept of time.

However time is relative, for me it ends every night once my mind is set to rest, upon my pillow where my head lays.

A place in which all my emotions, my thoughts, my feelings, my memories and moments fade, into a tranquil darkness I travel through time I drift away.

In this place I hold as sacred all my problems and worries die, even the identity I so dearly nurture no longer confines me, I see places I have not been, people I have not met and form memories I know well have not taken place.

For are we not all just bears of a dream we’re too frightened to live or wake,in a world upon which time holds us to age waiting ever so patiently to cast our ends in judgment.

For is not life but a memory of a moment waiting to be forgotten in a time we are yet to forget.

Like a dream upon which one travels through in a place one claims to know.

No hands of such a beast can be tamed nor can such burden be held in one’s heart.

So let us not confuse the time one has traveled with the places one has not.

For in the memory of death we wake to a dream of a life we are yet to live.

For in the memory of life we sleep in a dream of a death we are yet to wake.

Until that time one will travel, in a place you can not escape.

Where time is the owner of souls so shy they would travel to their graves.

In the slumber of life they dream of a love they can not forsaken for my heart beats in a dream time travels to take.

FINALIST

A Short Story About Time

By Jaivien

Jaivien writes from a prison in WA.

Have you ever found yourself at the bottom of a well?

Never would I have thought I’d find myself in this kind of situation. At the bottom of a well, not a literal well but as a metaphor – an imaginary one, given the reality, it’s not too far off.

A paradox is what it’s called, but I like to imagine a well or limbo, gives more space for the physical and spiritual. Hope for a way out by climbing a rope or by repenting or praying hard enough.

I was part of an experiment, one that tested what déjà vu was/is?

It wasn’t even a year in when they found that with electrodes they could cause déjà vu, but it was some years later that they realised the “time dilation” in effect could send messages. More importantly thoughts were able to be sent through time, but as soon as they were sent there was no telling the effect they’d have.

Time-Travel of the mind, in the experiment I was both researcher and lab rat. They sent a thought, “you’re in an interview room”, but they didn’t account for “when”.

I’m still there, whenever I sit, go to stand, even whenever I blink. A virtual PTSD, of artificial thought, but who is to say an artificial memory carries less weight than a real one?

A paradox of déjà vu, until I experience that moment, the room is real. To me it’s real, until time is proven finite or infinite, it’s real, until the probability over time is proven pre-destined or random – to me it’s real.

Have you ever found yourself at the bottom of a well?

FINALIST

A Redefined Form of Time Travel Within a Prayer

By Marley

Marley writes from a prison in QLD.

Time, for me, was at first just “the clock on the wall” at high school. When is lunch? When will this test finish? And when is home time?

But since prison, I only ever wonder about time in this regard: When is court? Or when is parole due? What time are programs? Even how long until my full-time custodial end date?

May... May... 9:30am... 2028

Things have changed from playgrounds to the confines of a prison yard, though something reassures me that maybe just maybe this isn’t all time has in store for me.

Just a breath; speck of dust, there’s plenty of present moments to make amends,

“What should I do now?” Focus on repaying your debts!

Thank you Lord, maybe one day I’ll be perfect, maybe is this amen!

Amen!

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For up to date centre visit days and times please see our website for more details.

Prison Transport Group · Call us Mon–Fri 9am–4pm · 1800 334 379 · Or Book on Our Website · www.prisontransport.com.au

• Health

How to Get Better Sleep in Prison

Some practical tips and advice for getting a better night's rest on the inside.

By Alison Cullen

Alison is a Forensic and Clinical Psychologist.

Sleep is one of the most important parts of our physical and psychological health.

Although you cannot control every aspect of your environment in custody, there are many strategies that can improve the quality of your sleep. Sleep hygiene refers to the habits and routines that prepare your brain and body for restful sleep. Consistently practising these strategies can improve your mood, concentration, emotional regulation, physical health and resilience.

Why Sleep Matters

While you sleep, your brain and body are actively repairing themselves. Good quality sleep helps:

- Improve memory and concentration; reduce stress and irritability
- Strengthen emotional regulation
- Support physical healing and immune function
- Improve decision-making and self-control
- Reduce cravings and impulsive behaviour
- Increase motivation and energy throughout the day

Poor sleep has the opposite effect. Even one night of bad sleep can make you more emotionally reactive, increase anxiety, reduce frustration tolerance, lead to bad decisions, and make everyday problems feel much larger than they actually are. When poor sleep continues over weeks or months, it can contribute to depression, anxiety, hopelessness, aggression and difficulty engaging in rehabilitation.

Understanding Your Body Clock

Your brain follows a natural 24-hour rhythm known as the 'circadian rhythm'. This internal clock tells your body when to feel alert and when to feel sleepy. Regular routines help strengthen this rhythm.

Although life in custody often involves fixed schedules, maintaining consistency where possible can help your body recognise when it is time to sleep. Going to bed and getting up at similar times each day, even on weekends, helps train your brain to expect sleep.

It is also important that you only use your bed for sleeping so that your body learns this connection (bed = sleep). Try to avoid eating and/or watching television in bed if you have other areas available to you.

Develop a Consistent Bedtime Routine

Your brain benefits from predictable signals that sleep is approaching. Develop a routine that lasts around 20-30 minutes before falling asleep. This might include:

- Completing personal hygiene
- Reading a book
- Gentle stretching
- Slow breathing exercises
- Quiet reflection or prayer
- Mindfulness meditation
- Writing in a journal

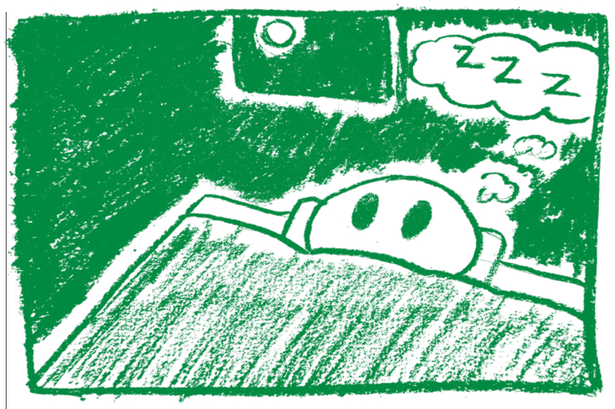
Calm Your Nervous System

Instead of trying to force yourself to sleep, focus on calming your nervous system. Helpful techniques include:

- Slow deep breaths to your belly.
- Progressive muscle relaxation.
- Body scan meditation.
- Thinking about a peaceful place.
- Counting slow breaths.

Manage Racing Thoughts

You may notice that worries about court matters, family, finances,



relationships, or the future often appear once the environment becomes quiet. Rather than trying to stop these thoughts, acknowledge them without engaging with them.

You might quietly remind yourself:

"I don't need to solve tomorrow's problems tonight."

If journalling is available, write your worries down earlier in the night. This tells your brain that these concerns have been acknowledged and can be revisited tomorrow.

Mindfulness also teaches us that thoughts are mental events rather than facts.

Be Careful with Daytime Napping

Even if you have a bad night's sleep and are tired, it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same – don't avoid activities because you feel tired; this can reinforce the insomnia.

Although daytime naps can feel tempting after a poor night's sleep, long naps reduce your body's natural sleep drive. If you do nap, keep it short (around 20–30 minutes) and avoid sleeping late in the afternoon. Building enough sleep pressure throughout the day helps you fall asleep more easily at night.

Stay Physically Active

Exercise is one of the most effective natural sleep aids available. This may include yard exercise, walking, strength training, or stretching. Regular movement reduces stress hormones, improves mood, and increases the body's natural drive for sleep.

Watch What You Consume

Caffeine (found in coffee, tea, cola/energy drinks) can remain in your body for many hours, so try to avoid caffeine later in the day. A healthy, balanced diet will also help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep.

If You Cannot Sleep

Almost everyone experiences occasional sleepless nights, and trying too hard to sleep often keeps people awake. Watching the clock also increases anxiety and makes sleep even harder. Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed. If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again.

You may wish to try focusing on your breathing, relaxing your muscles one body part at a time, or practising mindfulness on the floor.

Resting quietly is still good for you, even if you are not asleep.

Sarah's Story: From Custody and Chaos to Healing and Purpose







I never expected to walk into prison carrying hepatitis C, and I definitely didn't expect to walk out with a purpose. But that's how my story goes – messy, painful, and somehow still full of hope.

When I first came into Mulawa, I was already falling apart. I had no support on the outside. My family was split; Mum was deep in alcoholism, and my dad loved me but we clashed constantly because we thought so differently. I was more westernised; he was old-school, and we just never met in the middle. So, when I hit custody, I hit it alone.

They put me straight into the fishbowl for observation. I was withdrawing from speed, heroin, pills, everything. My celly was withdrawing from alcohol. What a combo. She'd been in plenty of times before, so she took me under her wing. We were both sick, scared, sweating, shaking, and trying to hold each other together. That tiny cell felt like the whole world closing in.

I remember pushing the intercom because she was worrying me. I asked for Valium, something, anything to take the edge off. They refused. We kept calling because we were getting worse, and no one was listening. That's when the riot squad came in, it was one of the scariest moments of my life. I was so sick I spewed on one of them when he got too close. I'll never forget the look on his face.

This was my introduction to custody.

I got put into the main part of the jail, after being on the run from police for years, for fines. They raided my house, and I went straight to jail. I was living side by side with murderers, robbers, violent girls! There was an altercation one day, and I was jabbed with an implement. I didn't know it yet, but that was going to be one of my darkest days ever! That's how I got hep C. I didn't tell anyone. I didn't get tested. I didn't get treatment. I didn't even get information. I just carried the fear, the shame, the not knowing what it was doing to my body.

People think prison is loud, but the truth is it's full of quiet suffering. You learn to keep things to yourself. You learn to survive.

One day, I saw a pamphlet about hep C treatment. Just a little folded piece of paper stuck on a wall. But it hit me, that "aha" moment. It said treatment was simple now. Curable. No needles. No hospital trips. Just tablets for a few months. I remember thinking, if this is real, maybe I don't have to live like this forever.

But inside, nothing happened. No one followed up. No one asked. No one checked. So, I held onto that pamphlet in my mind like a tiny bit of hope.

When I got out, I pushed to get tested properly. I was terrified they'd need to dig around for veins – anyone who's used knows that fear. But it wasn't like that at all. It was just a finger-prick test. Quick. Easy. No judgement. For the first time in years, someone actually listened to me.

I started the hep C treatment expecting the worst, but honestly? I had no side effects at all. None. Some people get them, though, like tiredness and headaches. After everything I'd been through, the treatment was the easiest part. And when I finished it, it felt like I got my life back. Like I could breathe again.

That was the turning point.

Today, I'm living a life I never imagined for myself. I'm a peer worker with NUAA, and I sit on the Justice Health LEAP advisory group. I use every part of my lived experience – the withdrawals, the fear, the riot squad, the silence, the hep C – to help people who are still inside or just coming out. I get to be the support I never had. I get to walk beside people who feel alone, ashamed, or forgotten, and show them that change is possible. That healing is possible. That they matter.

I can't change what happened to me in custody. I can't rewrite the trauma or the mistakes or the moments I thought I wouldn't make it. But I can use it. And I do every single day.

If someone inside reads this and thinks, "Maybe I can get help too," then everything I went through has meaning. I want people to know that hep C is treatable if they chat to a nurse or doctor. That they don't have to carry it alone. That there are people out here fighting for them, even when they feel invisible.

I walked into prison with hep C and no hope.

I walked out with a second chance.

And now I use that chance to help others find theirs.

Developed by Sarah and Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network NSW, the provider of healthcare services to people involved with the criminal justice and forensic mental health systems in NSW.

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

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

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

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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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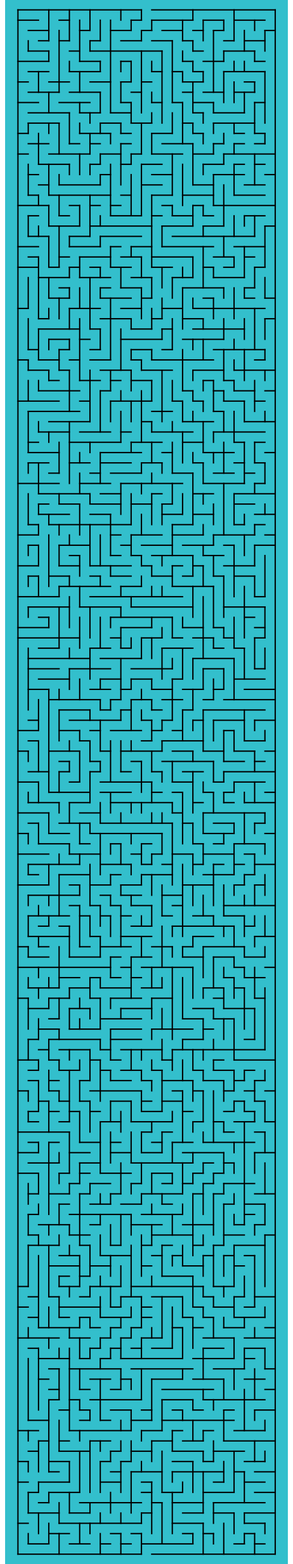

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• Reintegration

Ask Stacey! What You Need to Know About AI and Dealing With Uncertainty



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.

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.

Welcome to another exciting instalment of Ask Stacey!

Question 1: How can I remain upbeat and positive knowing that at any time I can be removed from the community and placed back into prison?

I totally understand this feeling; I struggled every day with this. Every time a police car stopped in my street, every parole day, every urine test.

Even now that I've finished parole, it can still be stressful. Here are a few concepts I use to get through hard times.

Mindfulness
Humans have a negativity bias. We focus on the bad stuff. This is a survival instinct from when we got eaten by stuff. So, try to intentionally think of the positive stuff each day. Unless you are about to be eaten...then yeah...you can be negative then. Freedom has the potential to be better than jail. Sleeping in, video games, girls/guys, whatever your vibe is.

When something good happens now or a fun day, I put a mental pin in it and think, I have this beautiful memory now and the police can never take it from me. I'll cherish it forever and think of it when I'm sad.

The Dichotomy of Control
Distinguishing between what is within our power, such as our thoughts, beliefs and actions, and what is not, such as external events and other people's behaviours. By focusing on what is within our own control and accepting what is not, I feel more empowered.

Impermanence
Everything changes, and this will too. Do you remember how it hurt when you hurt yourself really badly? I mean, really remember. The feeling has gone and now it's a vague memory, isn't it? How about when you last got super drunk and spewed and promised to any god that is listening that you will worship them more if they make you feel better? See how the moments passed and that misery passed with it. You just need to get through that moment of sadness each time.

And another important thing that helps me hold my head up high is I know, in my heart, that I have not brought more sadness into the world intentionally since I was released.

And I know my god can see me, and I'm happy for my god to judge me. Can the police and the judges say the same? I mean, I'm on a *Loki* season two redemption arc, and that is considered one of Disney Plus's best series. It got 83 per cent on Rotten Tomatoes. And you can too.

Question 2: I've been inside for two years and I'm getting out soon. What new technologies do I need to know about?

AI, all day long, AI. It's pretty crazy to think they are talking about building data centres in Australia. I mean, I remember watching Sarah Connor sneaking into them as a sci-fi movie plot!

I'm reluctant to make too many jokes here – obviously I can think of heaps because I'm hilarious, but I've legitimately had friends hospitalised for thinking we were replaced with robots, and I wasn't the real Stacey.

I mean, as if a robot can be as strange as me. So, some facts instead. AI is a part of everyday life now; it just is. The younger generation is using it to write their schoolwork. It's in the courts, hospitals, every smartphone. It's here to stay.

There is a term now: AI slop. AI can produce very real and very convincing pics and videos. It can quirkily come up with content as well. Many content creators will use it. So don't get out of jail and believe stuff on social media; it's probably not true.

How It Works
ChatGPT, for example, is a generative artificial intelligence chatbot. It is based on the GPT-3.5 large language model (LLM).

LLMs are advanced AI models designed to understand, generate and manipulate human language by gathering heaps of text from sources such as books, websites and social media. They then analyse the collected data to identify and learn patterns in the text, like word associations and contextual relationships.

It creates images with a process called diffusion. It's a similar process: it learns what a face looks like by studying millions of faces, and then gets good at creating a face, or a certain person, certain place, car – anything really.

It is important to remember that AI can inherit biases from the data they are trained on, leading to biased or unfair outcomes. And it is not a real AI like in the movies. It is not Skynet. It is not your friend or a doctor; it is not a replacement for a real person.

What it is, is great at making fake images of you being arrested again to send to your parents, that never gets old.

But seriously, it's super helpful. I ask it questions all the time. I just asked it: What are you good for? It said, "writing, editing, coding, data gathering, research, language translation, daily planning..."

I told it to stop and said it was being too general and to please limit the answer to an everyday person's use. It said, "drafting emails, explaining difficult concepts, summarising large documents, brainstorming ideas such as gifts..."

• Mob

'Your Past Doesn't Have to Get in the Way of Your Future': Rethinking Criminal Record Checks



A new resource is helping First Nations people find employment after being released from prison.

By Rethinking Criminal Record Checks

The Rethinking Criminal Record Checks project is working to make employment fairer for Aboriginal people, by changing how police checks are used, understood and talked about.

If you apply for a job, you might be told to complete a criminal record check. This provides a document summarising any criminal history that can then be given to a potential employer.

Too many First Nations people are missing out on work and even volunteering roles because of these police checks. It might be shame that stops you from applying, or sometimes the rules don't match the job. Sometimes it's just not knowing your rights.

That's why the Rethinking Criminal Record Checks project was started. It is easy to understand information, real support and practical tools to Mob about looking for work after you're released from prison with a criminal record.

The project was funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board, and involved researchers, First Nations community contributors, VACCHO, Woor-Dungin, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and other partners.

The resources have been shaped by First Nations voices, and are available now online.

We've included some useful resources here for Mob in prison who might be approaching release. You can also keep the QR code in the top corner for when you're released to access the full resources.

The main message from this is that your past doesn't have to get in the way of your future.

Your Lived Experience is a Strength
A police check is a piece of paper; it is not your whole story. It doesn't show who you are today – your lived experience is a strength.

Mob with lived experience bring something real to the workplace: honesty, resilience and a deep understanding of what Community members are going through. They know the struggles, the recovery and the healing journey, because they've lived it.

People with lived experience often connect better with Community and with young ones. Many are loyal and committed because someone opened a door for them. When one person is supported, their whole family and Community feel it.

Don't Let Shame Stop You
Shame and stigma are stopping Mob going for jobs.

When Mob see "police check required", shame and fear might kick in straight away. Some people freeze, walk away or avoid applying because they're worried about judgement.

For many First Nations applicants, having to disclose or explain a criminal record can trigger feelings of shame, fear and distress.

Including criminal checks in employment advertisements can cause distress and sometimes self-exclusion, particularly when there is no support to navigate the questions, or to negotiate disclosing what might be an irrelevant record, or to address the feelings it brings up.

Shame can make you quiet. It can make you step back before anyone even listens. But things can change when you open up and let your story be heard.

A Yarn Beats an Interview
A good yarn brings out the real story: what happened, what's changed, and what support you've got. It builds trust. People open up more when they feel heard and not judged.

Elders, family and respected Community members know who you really are, not what's written on a form. They understand your journey, your struggles and the changes you've made. Their support can help employers look beyond a police record. When Community is involved in hiring decisions, things are fairer, safer and more culturally right.

Formal interviews can feel scary, judgmental and cold. Yarning helps you relax and speak in your own way and your own time.

If an employer offers you the chance to yarn rather than do a formal interview, take it. If they don't offer it, it's okay to ask. When employers make space for yarning and involve Community voices, safer and fairer decisions follow.

Spent Convictions
After you've been out of prison for a while, you might be able to get your convictions "spent". This means they are removed from most police checks, and you do not have to tell employers about them. You legally cannot be discriminated against because of them.

In Victoria, minor offences like traffic infringements and most offences committed when you're under 15 years old, are spent straight away.

Many other offences are spent after a crime-free period, often 10 years, without you having to do anything.

For more serious offences, you can apply to the Magistrates' Court for them to be spent.

If you're in Victoria, Legal Aid Victoria or Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service can help you prepare your application for this, and you can also ask for a Community Elder to be involved with this.

For Mob in the rest of Australia, you can contact legal aid or other Community legal centres to get information on how to get your convictions and how to get this process underway.

If you're able to access it, the full resources can be found at:

rethinkrecordchecks.org.au

Legal Corner

How to Apply For Victim of Crime Compensation

Every state and territory offers financial assistance to victims of crime. Here's who may be eligible, when to apply and where to get help.

By Prisoners' Legal Service QLD

The Prisoners' Legal Service is an independent, not-for-profit community legal centre dedicated to helping people in prison.

This article is intended to give general information as at 4 September 2026 and does not constitute legal advice. If you have a specific legal problem, you should consult a lawyer.

If you have been the victim of a crime, you may be able to apply for financial assistance through a government-run victim compensation scheme.

These schemes give people compensation in recognition of the harm, hardship and expense experienced by victims of crime.

Each state and territory in Australia has its own agency that manages applications for victim compensation.

For example, in Queensland, victims of crime can apply to an agency called Victim Assist.

Victim Assist can provide two types of financial assistance.

It can provide money to recover costs (medical expenses, loss of earnings, etc.), or it can provide a lump sum in recognition of hardship.

You can apply for financial assistance through Victim Assist if you:

- have an injury from an act of violence which occurred in Queensland, and
- have, or someone else has, reported the act of violence.

And you are:

- the victim of an act of violence; or
- the parent of a child who was a victim of an act of violence; or
- a witness to an act of violence; or
- a close family member of a person killed by an act of violence.

You need to apply for financial assistance within three years of the act of violence. If you were under 18 when the violence happened, you have until you are 21 to apply. Extra time can only be given in special circumstances.

In most cases, you need to report the crime to police. There are some exceptions, but you will need to tell Victim Assist the reason you couldn't report to police.

There are different rules and schemes which apply to people in other states.



To find out more, you can contact the relevant agency in your State or Territory:

State	Agency	Contact Details
NSW	Victims Services	Locked Bag 5118, Parramatta NSW 2124 vs@dcj.nsw.gov.au 1800 633 063
VIC	Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme	PO Box 21060, Little Lonsdale Street, VIC 8011 1800 161 136
QLD	Victim Assist	GPO Box 1452, Brisbane QLD 4001 victimassist@justice.qld.gov.au 1300 546 587
WA	Criminal Injuries Compensation	GPO Box F317, Perth WA 6841 criminal.injuries@justice.wa.gov.au 1800 818 988
SA	Victims of Crime Scheme	GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001 (08) 7322 7007
TAS	Victims of Crime Service	GPO Box 825, Hobart TAS 7001 victims@justice.tas.gov.au 1300 300 238
ACT	Victim Support ACT	GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601 1800 822 272
NT	Crime Victims Services Unit	GPO Box 1722, Darwin NT 0801 1800 460 363

HANNAY
CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Domestic violence order discontinued - challenging a domestic violence application – Previously dealt with in their absence.

Our client was involved in a Family Court dispute, when his ex-partner made an application for domestic violence with the Court.
The Court made an ex parte order without our client being present or served with the application. Luckily, the client engaged Hannay Criminal Defence as soon as he was made aware of the domestic violence order.
In our client's absence or knowledge, the Court made orders for an ouster, which forcibly removed our client from his home, placed 100m distance between him and his ex-partner, his children and led to the loss of his weapon's licence.
At the next Court date, our office advised the Court that not only was our client not served with the application but the application contained frivolous and vexatious claims of domestic violence that we wish to challenge. Our office sought that the application be heard before the same Magistrate for re-determination, a process that can be allowed and was made.

After we filed a response, the Court appreciated our client's side of the story and on balance, having had regard to our filed sworn affidavits challenging the accuracy, truth and details omitted from the Aggrieved's domestic violence application, the Court decided to undo the temporary protection order.

This then led to a level playing field, so much so that the aggrieved eventually discontinued the application, and it led to our client's emotional return with his children and moving back into his own home.

When you're served with an application for domestic violence, you often have a very short period of time before the next Court date, it is important to ensure you understand the application and get legal advice as soon as possible, otherwise the opportunity may be lost.
We were pleased to have assisted our client obtain a fantastic result in the domestic violence Court.

Author: Farshad Sarabi

Brisbane (07) 3063 9799
Sydney (02) 7255 1222
Gold Coast (07) 5571 2555



Learn

Learn How to Draw Cartoons!

Have you ever wanted to learn how to draw cartoons or make your own comic strips? It's easier than you think, and lots of fun. In this first edition of a new series, Melbourne-based artist and cartoonist Brett Cardwell shows us how to get started with cartoon faces.

By Brett Cardwell (Cardytoons)

Brett is a Melbourne-based artist, author and illustrator, and has been sharing the joy of cartooning for more than 30 years.

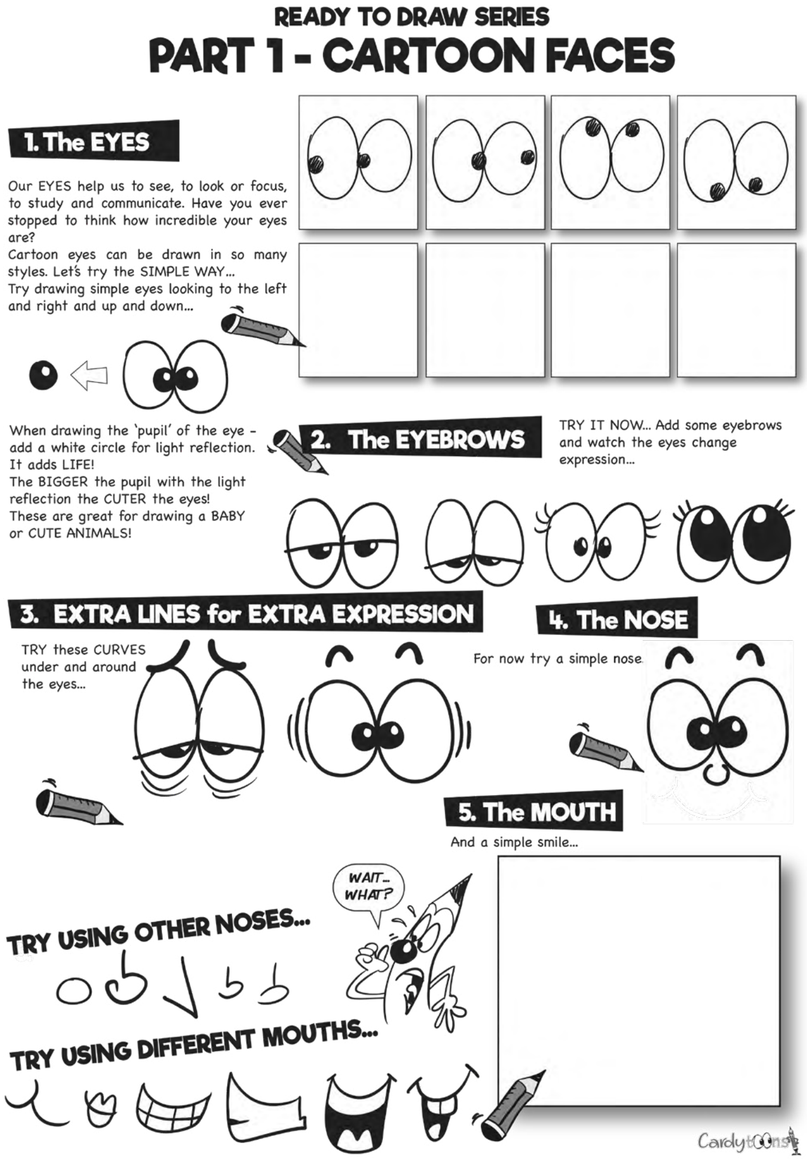
Create and Send Us Your Own Cartoon!
We'd love to see your creations using these lessons! Please send us your new characters and drawings and we'll publish some in the next edition of the newspaper.

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

About Time
Reply Paid 94762
Melbourne VIC 3001

Or, if you have access to email, you can send them to:

contribute@abouttime.org.au



Culture

'We Don't See You as Numbers': The First Nations Stories Behind *Facing the Numbers*

By Edith McLellan

Edith McLellan is the Operations Manager at *About Time* and a Masters of Criminology graduate, with research focusing on abolition in hip-hop music.



Matthew "Bubba" Coe as Matthew Coe, *Facing the Numbers*, 2026, Kieran Satour and Tyson Perkins, GARUWA

Facing the Numbers is a new film that explores the injustices First Nations people face in Australia's legal system.

Grounded in truth-telling, the film showcases the remarkable strength and resilience of First Nations people who are still here protecting Country, culture and community, despite what the numbers may say.

Facing the Numbers recently premiered at Melbourne International Film Festival and will air on NITV at 8pm on Sunday 15 November.

About Time sat down with writer, director and executive producer Kieran Satour to talk about the film.

Kieran is a Gurindji, Pertame and Worimi filmmaker who makes films to create opportunities for healing and truth-telling. He draws inspiration from his ancestral heritage to produce documentaries that hold depth, sensitivity and meaning, and celebrate the beauty, strength and resilience of First Nations peoples in the face of colonisation.

Edith: What is *Facing the Numbers* about?

Kieran: *Facing the Numbers* is the personal testimonies of First Nations people that have had experiences with systems of oppression here in Australia. It's a hybrid documentary series; we've got an anthology of five different stories which make up the larger feature film. It was really a way to help people platform their stories in a different way to perhaps the way that these types of stories and these types of issues have been told in the past.

Was there a standout moment in the film where you feel you represented someone's story particularly creatively?

Kieran: In terms of the way that we represented people's stories, I think dealing with some of the more traumatic, violent and aggressive events and reinterpreting them through movement, dance and music. I think they're some of the strongest creative interpretations of those vicious moments.

Do you think storytelling can be healing?

Kieran: I think it can be. The thing that we lose sight of, especially in extractive industries approaching storytelling, is that storytelling can actually be really traumatic. I think that's really important when you're approaching storytelling in some of these contexts, you need to be cognisant of that...and that needs to define the way that you approach storytelling.

So, I think for us with *Facing the Numbers*, it was always going to be a really fine line and I'm not saying that we got it right all the time....going into the making of these films and doing it in close collaboration with the storytellers and their families was the way that we've alleviated some of those issues of re-traumatising people.

What role do you think that stories can play when faced with injustices?

Kieran: When we're talking about some of the bigger issues that we're facing in this country and all over the world, numbers and statistics are thrown around, and that allows people to switch off from the fact that there is a person behind every one of those numbers. I think we lose sight of that.

The act of turning someone into a number is an act of dehumanisation, and what it means is that people that are exposed to those numbers and can switch off the fact that that's a person.

Stories are a way to be able to present a different way of being that's based in humanity and care.

That's the crux of the film and why we wanted to present these stories in this way.

Is there anything you want to say to people inside?

Kieran: I just saw 3% perform a couple of nights ago, and rapper Nooky said what they wanted to do for their first tour was a tour of prisons and they were able to do a tour down in Victorian prisons. His sentiment was is that we haven't forgotten about all the Mob that are locked up. They're still in our hearts and in our minds and I really want to echo that message, and just say we don't see you Mob inside as numbers, as statistics, and we haven't forgotten about you just because you're locked up.

We were talking about what impacts we wanted this film to have, and the primary impact goal that we spoke about was abolition. One thing the film talks about is the police, state organisations and state policies like the Stolen Generations that have led to the cycles of trauma and incarceration that our Mob are facing. I just want people to know that we see that. We understand that. We know that. These places are continuing to perpetuate those cycles of our Mob being institutionalised and we're out here trying to figure out ways that we can help change what's happening in this country.

Is there anything else you want to say about the film?

Kieran: It's airing on NITV, please watch it. These are five different peoples' and families' stories. We weren't in a position where we could tell everyone's story unfortunately, but we're hoping that these stories do resonate with Mob and are somewhat representative of what our people are facing across the country. We hope that you find some strength and pride in these stories and can connect with them. So please tune in. Talk to people about it. Get the word out there. And tell us what you think.

Facing the Numbers airs on NITV at 8pm on Sunday 15 November.

Creative

My Reflection in a Metal Mirror

By Kelli

Kelli writes from a prison in QLD.

My life confined to a white sack
They dress us all the same
The sack is heavy, dragged around
But weighs less than my shame

They tar us all with the same brush
As we shuffle through the dorms
But each sad smile is so unique
Behind the uniforms

Always under watchful eyes
Of those who keep the score
Daily routines reminiscent
Of Orwell's "84"

The landscape never changes
You stare at trees of steel
Monotony, intrusive thoughts
Emotions lose their feel

The windows with the
sweetest view
Show sunsets made to mesmerise
The other side now views
floodlights
As the consolation prize

My reflection in a metal mirror
My eyes feel lost and sore
Mirror mirror, who's the fairest?
My conscience or the law?

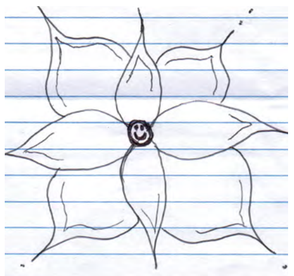
Muffled cries throughout the night
A hundred whispered prayers
A desperate search for guidance
From wide-eyed ceiling stares

A hundred solemn faces
But so lonely in the crowd
Finding comfort in the basics
When the fear, it gets too loud

Trudging an invisible line
Purgatory and parallel universe
Some days you wonder, this or
death
Which outcome would be worse?

Time becomes a concept
The saddest campfire tales to tell
The hope I clutch, it threatens
To dissolve forever into hell

Forward plans with good
intentions
Glimpse freedom through the
curtain's sheer
We all together, share a goal
Of never ending up back here.



Don't Let Life Dim Your Beautiful Light

By Eleanor

Eleanor writes from a prison in WA.

My beautiful people!

Life is what you make it,
my friend.
The only opinion that should
matter is your own. Why?
Because beauty is in the beholder's
eyes and in the end, the grass isn't
always greener on the other side.

It's just a matter of perception,
And at times we need to look
through those rose-coloured
glasses,
At least till the storm cloud passes,
Cos in the end it's only you who's
gotta live with your reflection.

So always try to be the best you
that ya can be,
As there are always new
opportunities just round the
corner, you'll see.
Just don't let the expectations or
pressures of life
Drain the colours from your spirit
or dim your beautiful light

Love from me.



Dave draws from a prison in QLD

Vengeance

By Prabhpreet

Prabhpreet writes from a prison in VIC.

Today I went down the
solitary lane,
to seek revenge from who owe
me pain.
What I saw was horrifying,
people gathered there too
were crying.

No one can find true happiness by
letting the other down,
we all have to live here whether a
common or a crown.
Either I have to ask or to me you,
clemency is the only answer to end
the blue,

nothing is lasting what to fight for,
every bit would remain here
for sure,
one should just gather good deed,
for a healthy tree good should be
the seed.

These were the words said by the
sorrowers,
we all once have to pay as we all are
the borrowers.
Here I sit now quiet with a
disheartened face,
I came to know we all are of
same race,
now you can only weep for what is
forever gone,
this world is a cycle, dear, it goes
on and on...

Dave's Drawing

By Dave

Dave writes from a prison in QLD.

Long time reader first time writer. I'm sending a drawing I have done – I've only been drawing for about eight months now and I'm happy with my progress, as before I could only draw stick figures.

About Time, keep up doing a great job, you're helping get our stories out to others, helps us all. To my fellow crims/inmate men, women and juniors, stay strong and keep fighting the good fight and also always remember that our friends, family and others are out their and they love us.

I hope your day to walk out that front gate comes soon!

No-Bake Woodford Pasito Cheesecake



By Timothy

Timothy writes from a prison in QLD.



Ingredients

- 8L lite milk / 6L full cream $0
- 3 bags of Choc chip Cookies $13.35
- 25-30 sachets of equals or sugar-less $0
- 3 Cans of PASITO $6.90
- 100g-150g of margarine or butter $0
- 2 tubs of yoghurt (Yoplait Vanilla 600g Tub) $0

Total: $20.25
Makes 24 pieces

Equipment

- 2 x rulers
- Old bed sheets
- 2 x large bowls
- 6-8 towels
- 1 x brown bag
- 1 x Scrabble box and board

Step 1

Add yoghurt to the milk bottles and then put them in a warm/ semi-hot water bath for 2 hours making sure to keep changing the water so the milk holds the heat.

Step 2

To make yoghurt, the milk mix needs to be at body temp for 8 hours to form into yoghurt. Fold a towel long ways and place it in the brown bag so you can sit the bottles in the middle.

Stand two hot water bottles up in the bag, then lay the milk bottles sideways (against the hot water bottle).

Cover with the towels and store somewhere dry and warm!

Step 3

After 8 hours, using old bed sheets or a pillowcase, drain the whey off by hanging it somewhere you can catch the whey.

Step 4

Now, once you have cleaned up, you can start on your base.

Crush the 3 bags of choc-chip cookies, then melt the margarine/ butter.

Cut open the brown bag down the seams and line the Scrabble board box (36cm x 26cm).

Step 5

In the large bowl add the Pasito, then microwave for 1.5 hours making sure you don't burn it towards the last 5 mins.

Once reduced down to a syrup, put a small bit aside for a garnish at the end!

Step 6

In the large bowl add the choc-chip cookies and ⅓ of the margarine then start mixing, adding more margarine as it's needed.

Once the cookies start forming like wet sand, add the mix to the Scrabble box and press the base out with the Scrabble board and then refrigerate until needed.

Step 7

Now to speed things up with the curd.

Wrap the sheets up with towels only after the curd has dropped by at least ⅓ or ½ of its original size. (Have 6-8 towels on hand for this part).

You must wash everything with disinfectant to stop any bacteria growth in the sheets and towels, and make sure to clean where your sheets were hanging!

Step 8

Once the curd is somewhat dry and creamy, lay the sheets out on your kitchen bench or your table!

Using a ruler, scrape the curd into the bowl with the Pasito syrup, then start mixing until most of the lumps are gone.

Add the sugar sachets or sugar syrup! And then whisk until it's nice and smooth.

Step 9

Finally, bring the curd and the base together, and level the curd out with a ruler as best as you can!

Using a fork, make a wave pattern on top of the curd, finish with the Pasito syrup as your garnish, then refrigerate for a few hours (the more time in the refrigerator the better it sets).

Step 10

Once done, cut into 6cm x 6½cm slices for you and 23 of your friends.

This fruity Pasito cheesecake will have you wanting more and more, until there is no more!

Now sit back and enjoy this wondrous snack.

Send Us Your Creative Pursuits!

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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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 27th 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.

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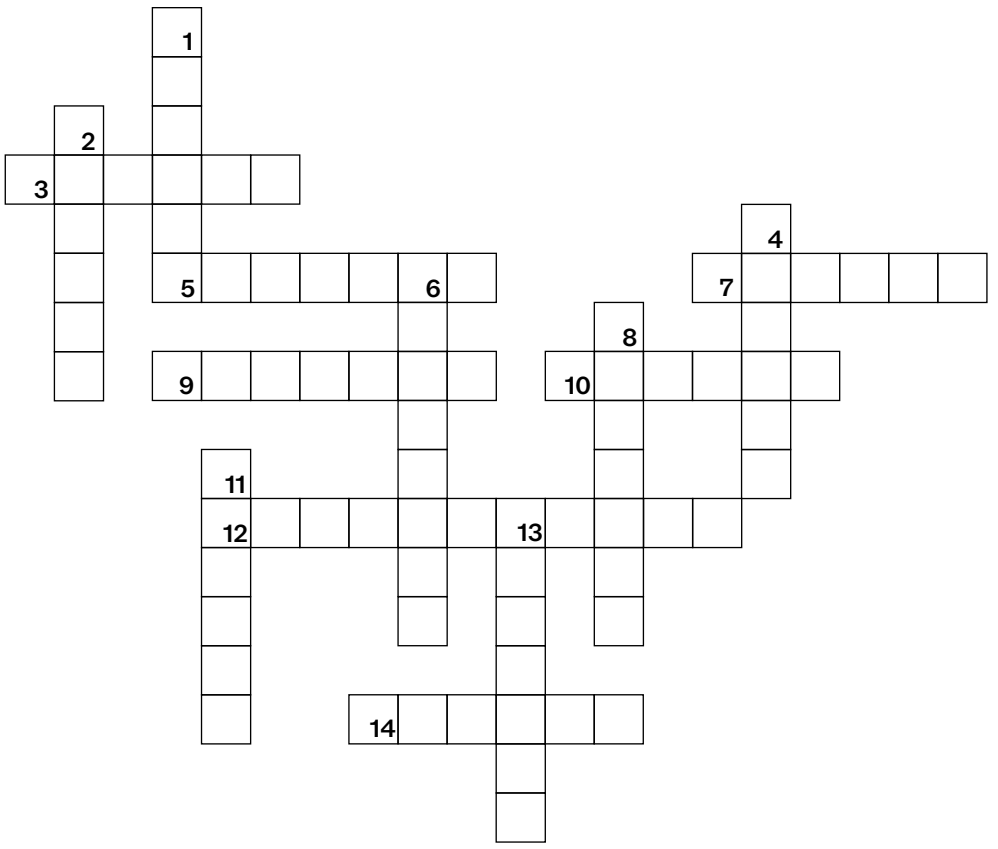
Play

Crossword



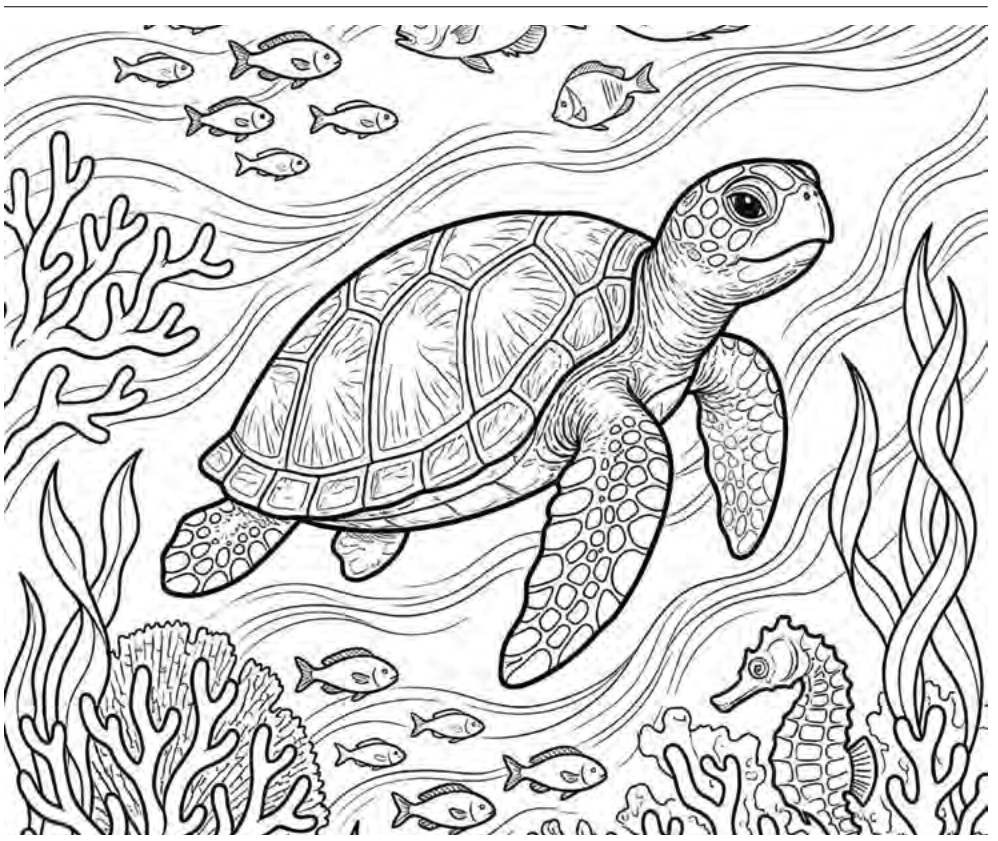
ACROSS

3. A fortified home built for royalty (6)
5. A colourful arc sometimes seen after rain (7)
7. Humour used to expose foolishness or wrongdoing (6)
9. Instrument whose needle points north (7)
10 A secret system of writing in code (6)
12. A chain or group of islands (11)
14. Earth or Mars, for example (6)

DOWN

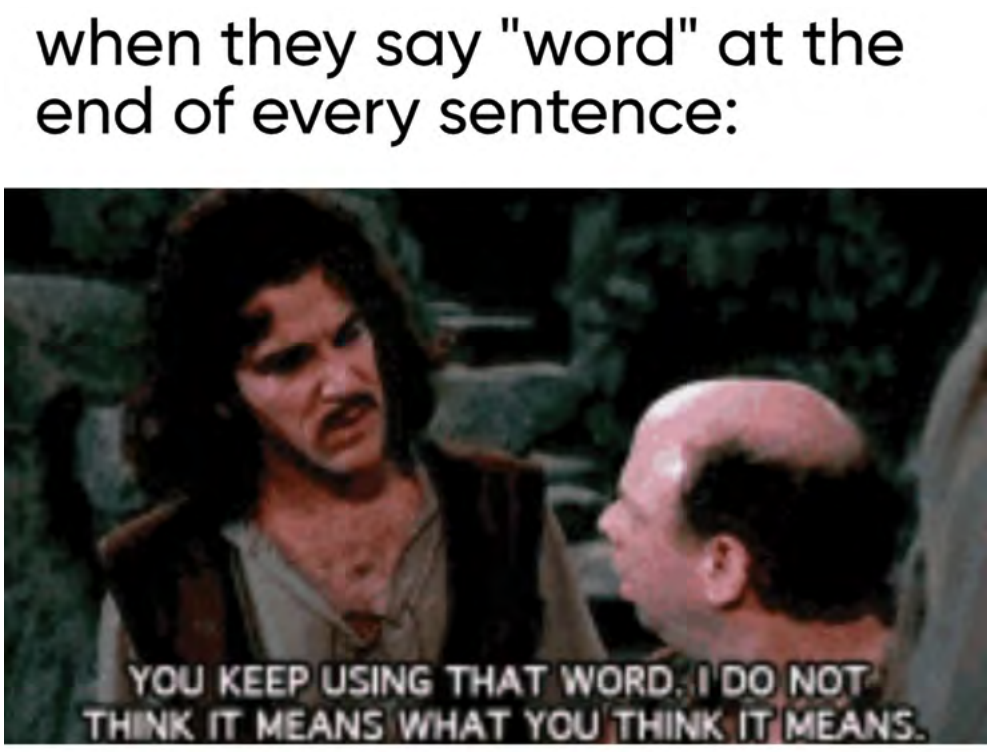
1. A musical instrument with six strings (6)
2. A short coat worn on the upper body (6)
4. A device used to take photographs (6)
6. Dark volcanic glass (8)
8. A place where you can borrow books (7)
11. A place where goods are bought and sold (6)
13. A day when daylight and night are nearly equal (7)

Colouring In



Meme of the Month

By Meicho Meicho writes from a prison in QLD.



Trivia

By Gadjet

Gadjet writes from a prison in VIC.

1. What are the elaborate hats that women typically ware to the races called?
2. If someone turns up to a party in their birthdays suit, what do they turn up in?
3. What is the largest desert in the world?
4. Which two animals appear on the Australian coat of arms?
5. What is the removable protective cover of book referred to as?
6. Which animal is often used to describe a gentleman's evening suit?
7. Epaulets are worn by military and naval officers where on the body?
8. Is Foxglove a synthetic fabric, a mitten designed for canine paws, or a poisonous European plant?
9. What kind of wearable item would you give a cobbler to mend?

Sudoku

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

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

Trivia Answers

1. Fascinators
2. Nothing
3. Antarctica
4. Emu and Kangaroo
5. Jacket
6. Penguin
7. Shoulder
8. Poisonous European plant
9. Shoe

Crossword Answers (ACROSS)

3. Castle
5. Rainbow
7. Satire
9. Compass
10. Cipher
12. Archipelago
14. Planet

Crossword Answers (DOWN)

1. Guitar
2. Jacket
4. Camera
6. Obsidian
8. Library
11. Market
13. Equinox