About Time

Australia's National Prison Newspaper

Impact Report



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Designed and created by our internal team. Illustrations by Ike Curtis and Ethan Cassidy.

Message From the Founders



Joseph Friedman



Rosie Heselev

When a person's words appear in About Time, that person is recognised again as fully human.

These are the words of a man named David, an incarcerated man in Long Bay Correctional Centre, New South Wales.

David wrote to us after *About Time's* very first edition in July of 2024, when just a few prisons received the paper and just a few people wrote back.

Nearly two and a half years later, Australia's national prison newspaper goes into every prison in the country. David has never stopped writing. And since he started, more than 1,000 others have joined.

About Time gives people in prison a voice. It is an outlet for expression, an opportunity for connection, a reliable and trustworthy source of news and information.

As one reader told us:

The paper enables folks to survive on the inside and then reimagine life beyond it.

About Time challenges mainstream narratives about people in prison. The paper's stories inspire our incarcerated population to build meaningful lives, and they offer the public a window into the concealed and misunderstood world of incarceration.

Almost every single person incarcerated in Australia will be released, and most within three years. How can we help them retain dignity and hope?

Five years ago we began this work – as volunteers with full-time jobs, sneaking in a call with a prospective funder or a board member at lunchtime or late at night.

Today, About Time *is* our work, and so too the work of our employees, volunteers, directors, writers, artists, designers and members of our lived experience network. We are delighted to publish this Impact Report – our first – to share our progress and our plans for the future.

Every month, *About Time's* free, 32-page colour newspaper is published, printed and distributed to every prison in Australia.







The paper commenced as a pilot in Victoria and New South Wales in July 2024.

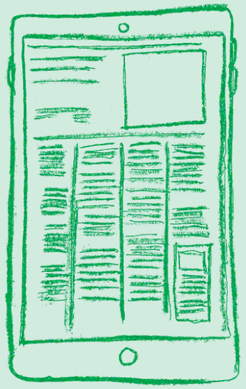
Two years later, the Northern Territory became the final jurisdiction to approve distribution. *About Time* is now wholly national.



109
prisons



15,000
physical copies



14,000
digital copies



Up to 50,000
incarcerated readers

Every month.

What Our Readers Say



87%

Say *About Time* makes them feel more connected

83%

Say *About Time* makes them feel less isolated

79%

Say that writing for *About Time* makes them feel valued

88%

Say that *About Time* accurately reflects life in prison

Data from a six-month impact survey developed by an external impact evaluation specialist and conducted by *About Time* with respondents from 31 prisons across seven jurisdictions from May to October 2026.

Within the next three years, we aim to provide access to *About Time* to every adult in every place of confinement in Australia.

We aim to support young people in youth justice centres with a tailored publication or through other means of communication.



The Paper



Letters



News and Investigations



Experiences



Learn



Health



Legal Corner



Mob



Reintegration



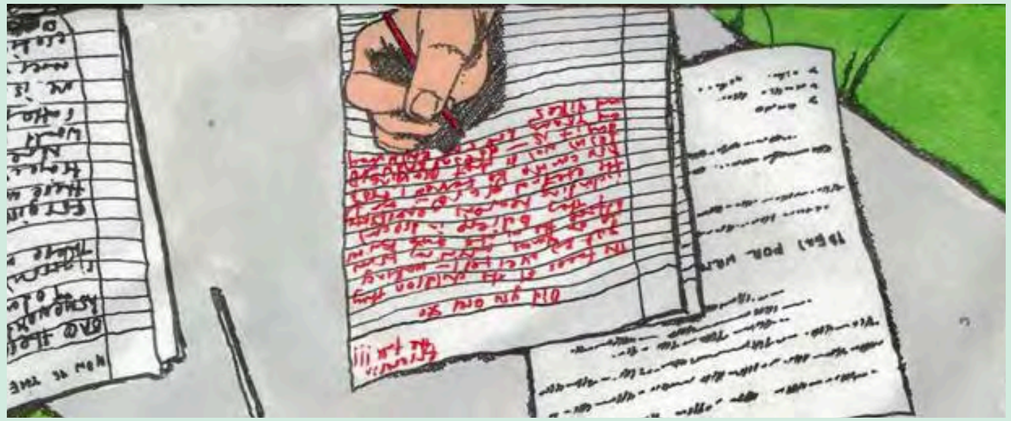
Culture



Creative

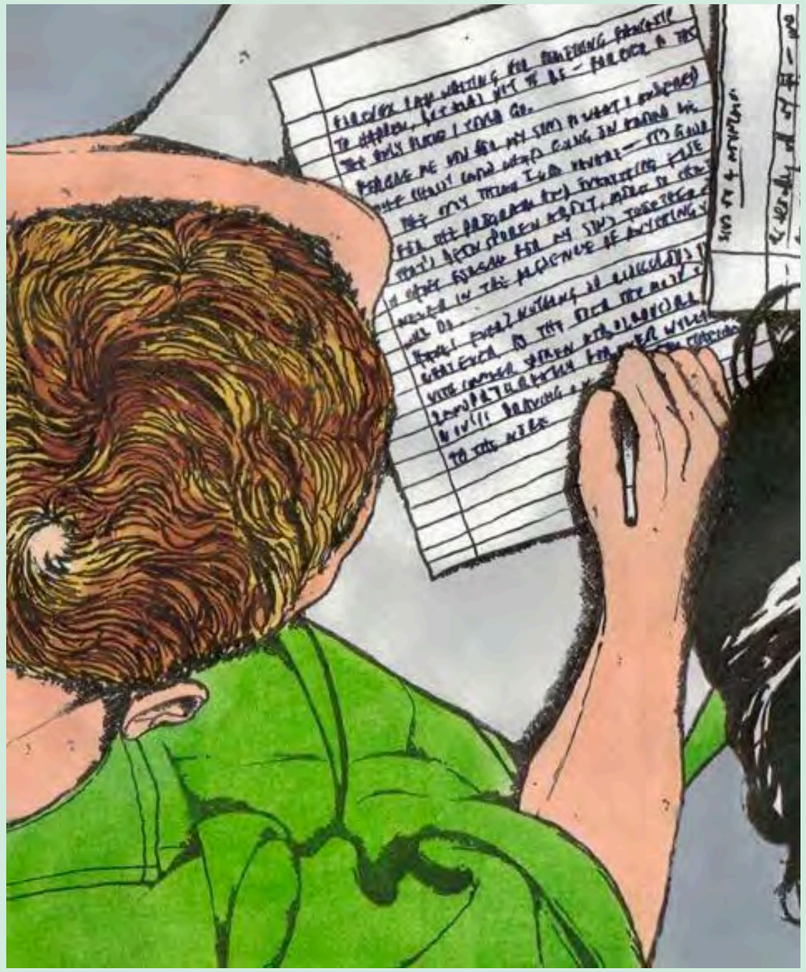


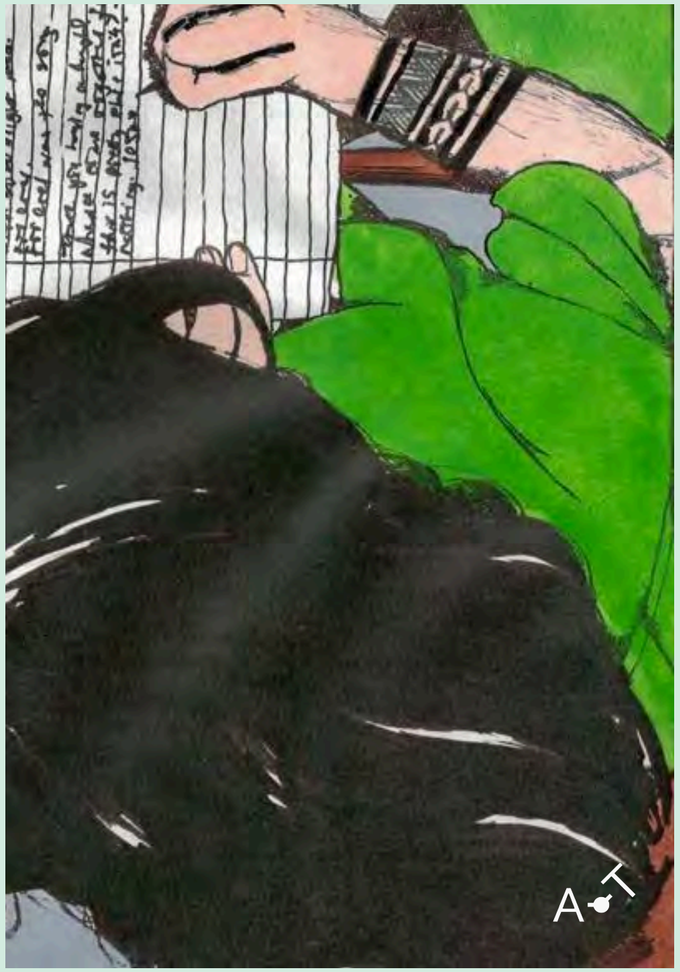
Play



The paper's centrepiece is the Letters section: stories and experiences from people in prison across Australia.



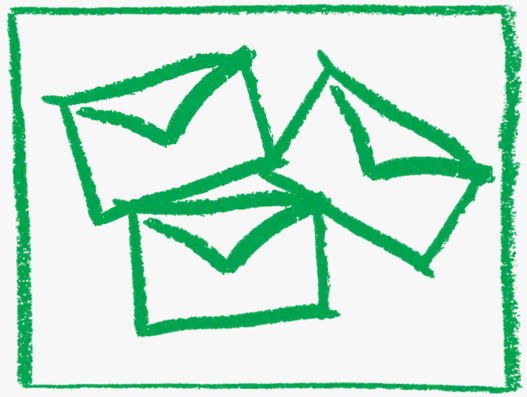




People in prison usually earn less than $2/hour.

Letters are a tool to share stories with the outside world, but the cost of a stamp can be prohibitive.

Since January 2026, we pay for every letter that readers in prison send to *About Time.*



three per day



20 per week



We are on track to receive 1,000 letters this year.



to about tim
uled be able to
to find pen pals
thank you again

Dear About time,
I wanted to write to
help others and give some
as far as that seem
I've had a problem with alcohol probably
and got in a bike with my dad at a footy
I ended up getting into weed. Spending two
for the years even. Spending two years
nothing with gut walk episode. I was in
mental health episodes. I went on
weeds, tried to work in a
and started drinking heavy
guess this time was that
I got a three year
some pictures of
the competition for jobs
my driving did continue
in 2019.
upto of 18
sentences
her out

Kal

Sat 7-6 2021

DAD'S IN PRISON

To About Time

My name is Tim and I have been incar
which time I haven't been afforded
once. I am just one of many peop
having children on the outsid
to deal with, for a start, I
serving a sentence in the
and my rights taken f
Dad I am restricted for
absolute world to
their protector, t
who will always
an ear. Regret
led me to be incan
people that others mig
having face-to-face co
every couple of days at leas
that I get to talk to them. Tw
during my calls
good
me.
decisi
this p
both t
of me
specific
do of m
Positive
Programs.
education
to help be
no I.V.O's
can not see
them face-

I grew up around drugs alcohol and dom
selling, both made my older Dad his last
at the age of 13 my mum was left to
by drugs & alcohol, and out of
in the Brisbane Children's Court system in
look at things differently in
to our life may see
angry or life may
I turned take it
upon need help
in speed me
family
Australia

and can't do his own terms! Why?
Why are jails & privatised by
are unmedicated? What is
of courts and
to need process of
around people in
the education
problems! In schools?
As
a community
if crimes who
(really)
are damaged
afraid
when being
are) afraid
serve what
politic
in
electronic

THERE'S THE ANKLE COSTS, IS THEY DO DECIDE TO
EVEN DO SUCH FAVOURITES - THEY WILL BE OF FOR THE
DIFFERENCE IN PAIN OF THE OFFENDER SHOWS AND NEW PRISON
BEFORE WE CAN USE THEM
THIS WOULD BE A NO WIN SITUATION
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS HAPPENS IN ALL JAILS,
I GUESS IT DOES

ON A GREAT MAGAZINE, JUST HOPE YOU
THANKS ABOUT DOG FINANCIAL
IN PAIN OF PRISONS
APPRECIATED
WITH REVIEW OF

Dear About Time,
I wanted to write to you to help others and give some thoughts as far as that seem
I've had a problem with alcohol probably
and got in a bike with my dad at a footy
I ended up getting into weed. Spending two years around
for the years even. Spending two years
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To About Time

hi there first of all I would like to say what an
awesome magazine keep up the good work my name is
Matthew Braithwaite I'm 34 years old and
currently incarcerated at Brisbane Women's
NSW (currently doing my parole in
Charges to be sentenced on (Saturday
at 33 years inside a total of
would say I am serving
I would say that of
I hate to say that
the younger generation
dead when I'm
stupid a day
mum and
of

page 1 of 2

Dear About time

I am a first timer
would like to thank some
for making my first time
posible and I would like
About time for the p
got me through this
Reading other prisoner
me to keep my head
going now four month
all who share your
of wisdom. Now I kn
bad as some people
be and I'm so glad
are positive and motivate you
better version of yourself so thank
again and thank you About time.

LUV YA BRO!

ON THE "INSIDE" AND THE OUTSIDE!

RARELY HAVE I HEARD MEN, REAL MEN, EXPRESS
"LUV" FOR ONE ANOTHER ON THE OUTSIDE SO REGULARLY AS I
THE YARD, OR IN THE YELLING FROM THEIR CELLS AFTER MUSTER.

IT TAKES TRUST, COURAGE AND FEARLESSNESS FOR "REAL" MEN
TO BE SO OPEN IN THEIR EXPRESSION OF "LUVING" ONE ANOTHER.

THIS SEEMS TO ME TO INDICATE THEY SENSE A BELONGING
NOT OFTEN ENJOYED BY MANY MEN ON THE OUTSIDE.

WHAT WOULD YOU THINK THIS IMPLIES?

WOULD IT SHOW THAT MANY INCARCERATED MEN DO
THE CAPACITY TO TELL ONE ANOTHER HOW MUCH THEY ARE APPRECIA
BY SHARING THE PRACTICAL THINGS OF LIFE - MILK, BREAD, COFFEE
TOILET PAPER, MEALS, JAM, "MUNTIES", AND OFTEN ASKING EACH OTH
THEIR ANYTHING YOU NEED, BRO?"

AT LAST, THEY HAVE A SENSE
THIS BELONGING

ARE WE REALLY BROKEN? OR IS THE SYSTEM BROKEN?

I AM RAISING THIS ISSUE IN THE HOPE THAT
WILL SPARK CHANGE IN THE FUTURE. HI MY
I AM CURRENTLY INCARCERATED AT THE
I'VE BEEN IN & OUT OF PRISON
EARS OLD. I AM NOW 29
ERENT PRISONS IN THE LA
N WHY I SAY "SO FAR
N & JUSTICE SYSTEM
E OF ENDING UP B
W FOR A FACT THA
ISICALLY, MENTALL
POINT WHERE M
E & I DONT THI
PERSON ON THE
EVERY SING
DRUG ADDIC
I CONTRIBU
SYSTEMS
UST OR TRUELY
I WOULD CALL INSTITU
JR THINKING TO MYSELF
O PRISON'.

MUCH LOVE TO:

ABOUT TIME
THANKYOU GUYS ***

I UNDERSTAND NOT EVERYTING INSIDE
WONT BE PUBLISHED AT ONCE. I'VE MARKED
EACH PEICE, HOPEFULLY ITS NOT TOO COMPLICATED

YOURS TRULY

ALREADY MEN IN MY POD ARE TAKING UP THE
TO WRITE OF THEIR HONEST EXPERIENCES
THEIR MANY TALENTS GRATEFUL TO BE GIVEN A VOICE. TO BE RESPECTED.

WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM

YOUR INITIATIVE WITH THE SUPPORT OF CORRECTIONS, IS
OFFERING MANY THE "THERAPY" NECESSARY TO EARN BACK SELF-RESPECT A
ENABLING THEM TO CHOOSE TO FIND A PURPOSE FOR GOOD, WHILE THE
AMENDS DURING THEIR INCARCERATION.

THEY SAY: "THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN
TO SEE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS IN PRINT WILL BE THE FIRST
THAT THEY HAVE BEEN "HEARD" AND MAY ENABLE THEM
TO TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES - TO HONESTLY REHABILITATE

THE PAPER IS!!

ON FALES KNOWING SOME

ABOUT TIME

SUMMER

I am a prisoner
become available
newspaper

OF LIVING MY LIFE IN FEAR, SU
ING ON THE GENEROSITY & KINDNESS OF COM
ERS TO GET BY."
LITERALLY, DONE A PETTY CRIME ON PURPOSE. JUST SO I
OULD A SAFE PLACE TO REST & SOME FOOD TO EAT. EVEN IF IT
T I WOULD HAVE TO SACRIFICE MY FREEDOM FOR IT.
FELT LIKE I WAS A PRISONER OF MY OWN MIND.

Time Alone is not a Privilege:

...ay we inmates are... The old government
...e, new, state of the art facility in the
which will focus everything on rehabilita
nat's what the propaganda machine wants you
...ay inmate serving years, the fact is muc

...t they don't say, is that the government
(rehabilitation around a two courses
...y being used in other centres
developed for those
...ning up for rele
...simply

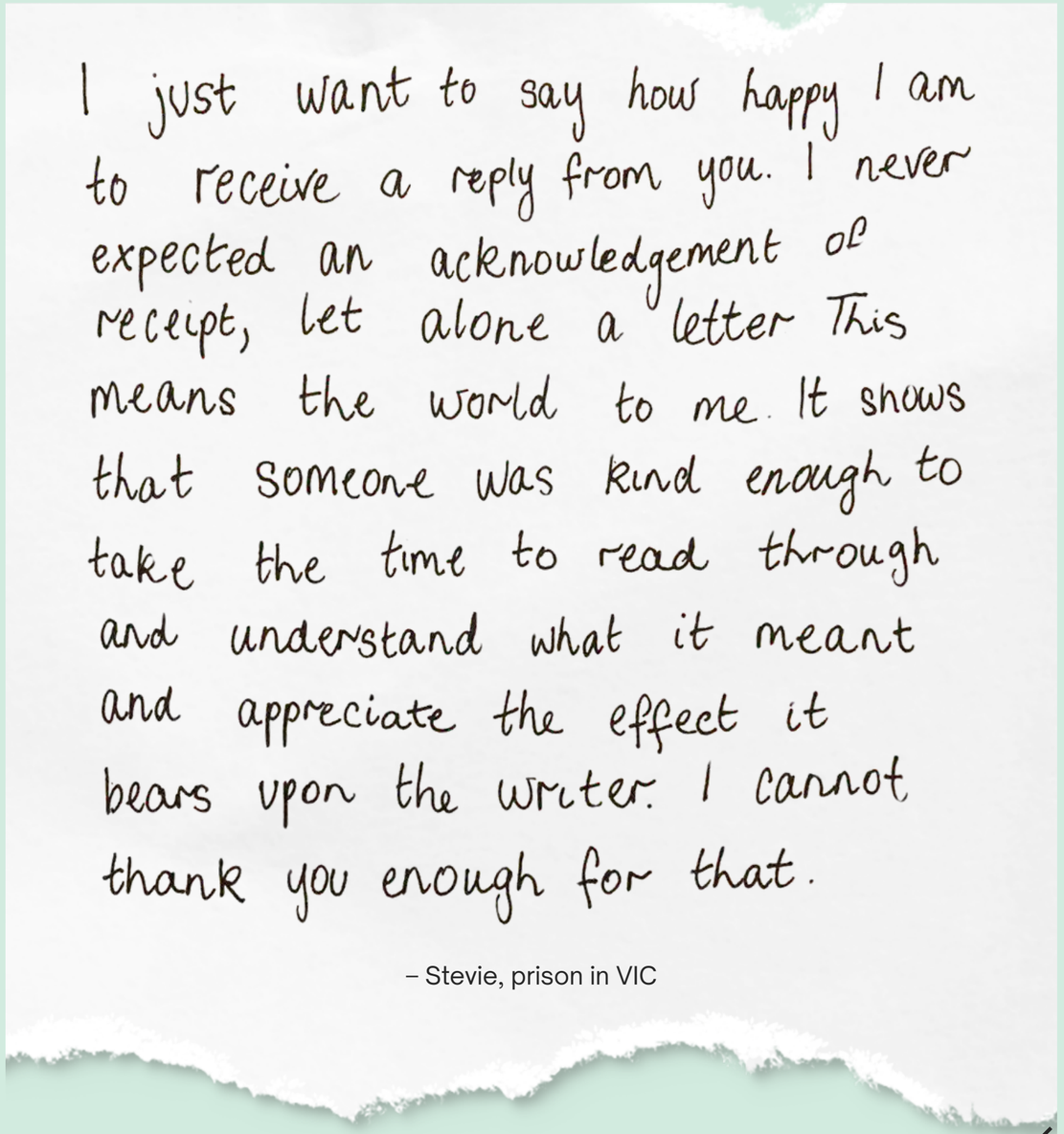
It's "About Time" Thank you

we say

Fostering Connection

With no access to the internet and very limited and monitored communication with the outside world, prison is one of the most isolating places on Earth.

We reply to every letter that we receive from prison – to keep the relationship going.



Accessibility

The vast majority of people in prison did not graduate high school. Many struggle with literacy and require accessibility supports.

In 2026 we increased the font size of the paper and the spacing between lines, we shortened the length of our articles and we emphasised plain and clear writing. We regularly include legal definitions and explainers to improve legal literacy.

Compared to a mainstream publication, *About Time* is significantly more readable for a wider population.

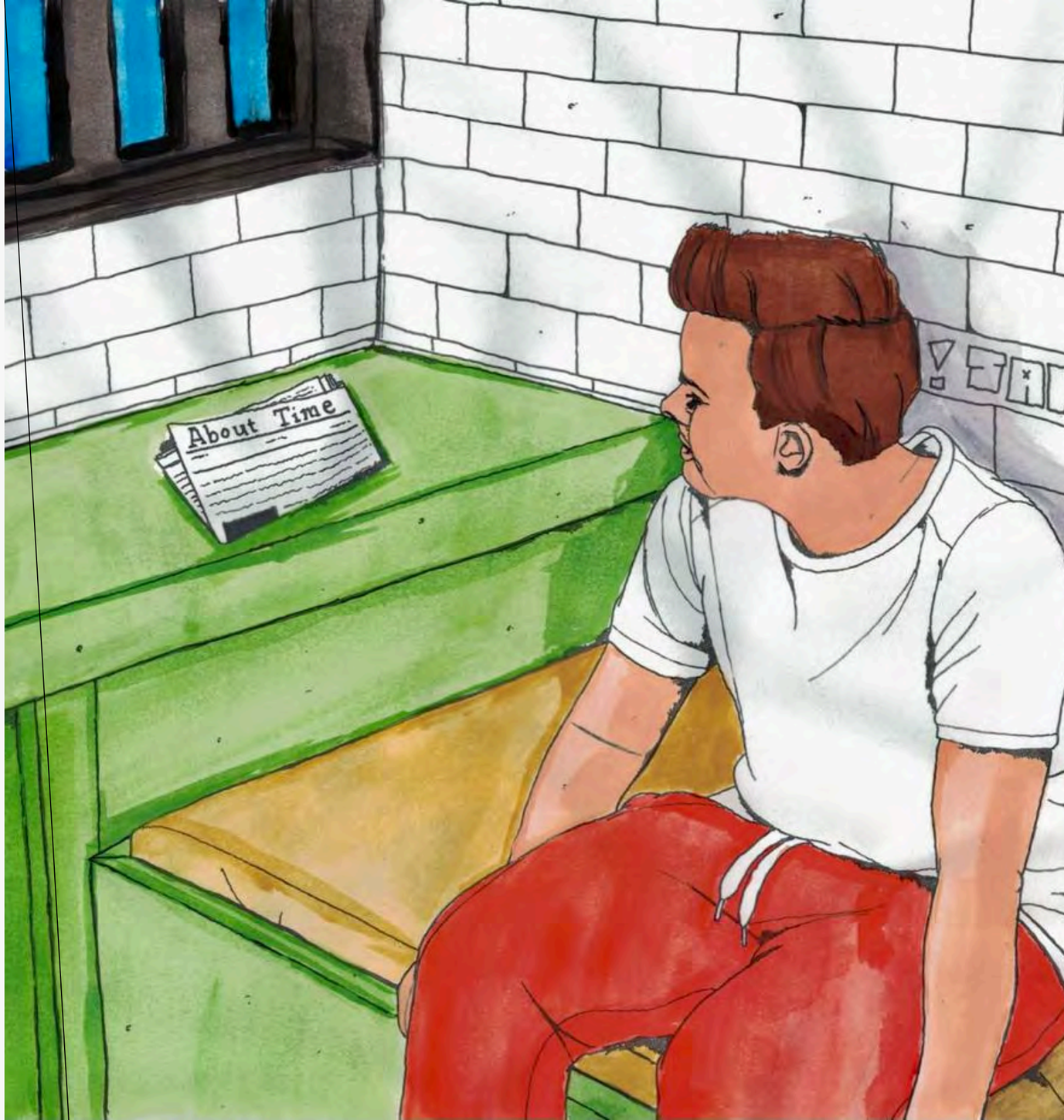


Vision Australia Radio

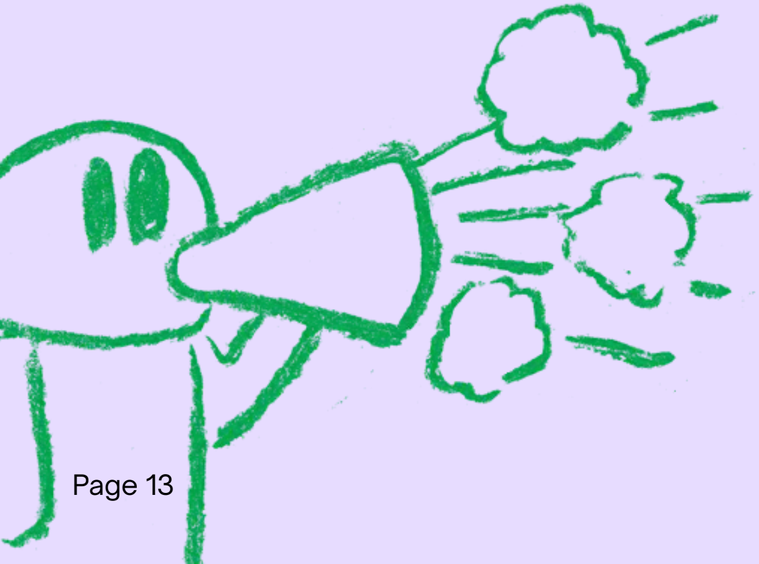
INSIDE VOICE.

And for those who cannot read, every week *Vision Australia Radio* broadcasts a radio show in prison, reading aloud articles from *About Time.*

- # Our Impact
  - ## In Prison



Voice



FINALLY A VOICE FOR THE UNSEEN AND UNHEARD.

– Hoani, prison in WA

Before I started submbitting, I didn't read or write. Since then, I have improved greatly. Writing letters to you helps me improve every time. You give us prisoners a voice when normally we wouldn't have one.

– Matthew, prison in QLD

I submitted to feel seen and heard, in an environment where we're not. Had over a dozen people say they read and enjoyed my writings after they were published.

– Shea, prison in VIC

THANK YOU ABOUT TIME- THE PRINTED VOICE OF THE PRISONS.

– Leslie, prison in QLD

Community



I read your paper the night previous, and a part of me that was dead or dying suddenly felt alive and connected to others with similar struggles and trauma.

– Zayne, prison in VIC

I feel the letters are written to me and that makes me feel part of something bigger.

– Rich, prison in VIC

JUST BECAUSE WE'RE IN PRISON DOESN'T MEAN EVERYONE SHOULD FORGET ABOUT US. WITH ABOUT TIME, WE ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

– Anonymous, prison in AUS

To understand that my experience is actually a shared experience with thousands of people across the country makes me feel a connection.

– Frank, prison in VIC

Education



It's an amazing opportunity to read everyone's thoughts, feelings and experiences, as well as educate ourselves around the system and available resources.

– Naomi, prison in WA

Keep this paper going, it has heaps of info for people like me, who know nothing about the system.

– Kim, prison in TAS

ABOUT TIME GOT MY FRIENDS INTO READING AND DOING WRITING COURSES. PLEASE CONTINUE TO WRITE ABOUT THINGS THAT PEOPLE IN GAOL REALLY WANT TO READ AND LEARN ABOUT.

– Michael, prison in NSW

LETS US KNOW WE DO HAVE RIGHTS AND WE DO HAVE OPTIONS.

– Anthony, prison in QLD

Entertainment



I can distract my mind and take it outside these walls, it's very comforting.

– Justin, prison in NSW

It helps break up what can be a boring existence.

– Steven prison in WA

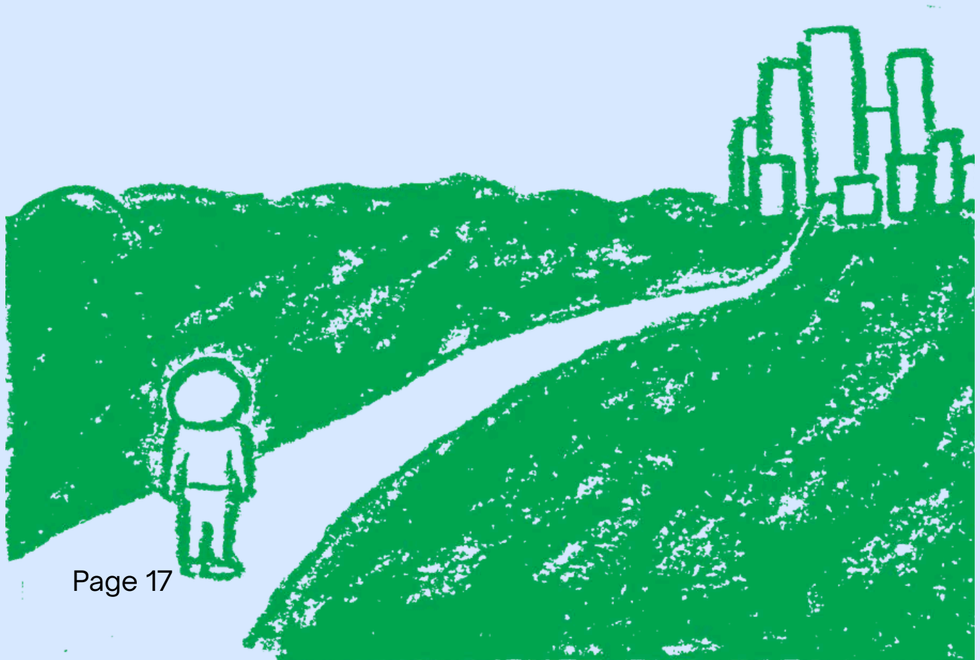
FUN STUFF TO DO TO KEEP US OCCUPIED, ESPECIALLY WITH SO MANY LOCKDOWNS.

– Jai, prison in QLD

Wow, I won the caption comp for December. I've never won anything and the whole jail is congratulating me.

– Rachel, prison in QLD

Hope



About Time has been a lifeline. When I was inside, it gave me a sense of purpose and feelings of camaraderie. Without About Time, I don't know where I'd be.

– Mark, prison in VIC

It's the first time reading your paper, and it's already given me HOPE.

– Luxe, prison in QLD

A BIG IMPACT. IT MAKES ME FEEL LESS LONELY, MORE COMFORTED, AND I HAVE HOPE FOR MY FUTURE.

– Lexus, prison in QLD

it helps me relate to my problems knowing others are also dealing with similar struggles and trauma. I can see a light at the end of the tunnel.

–M, prison in TAS

Our Impact

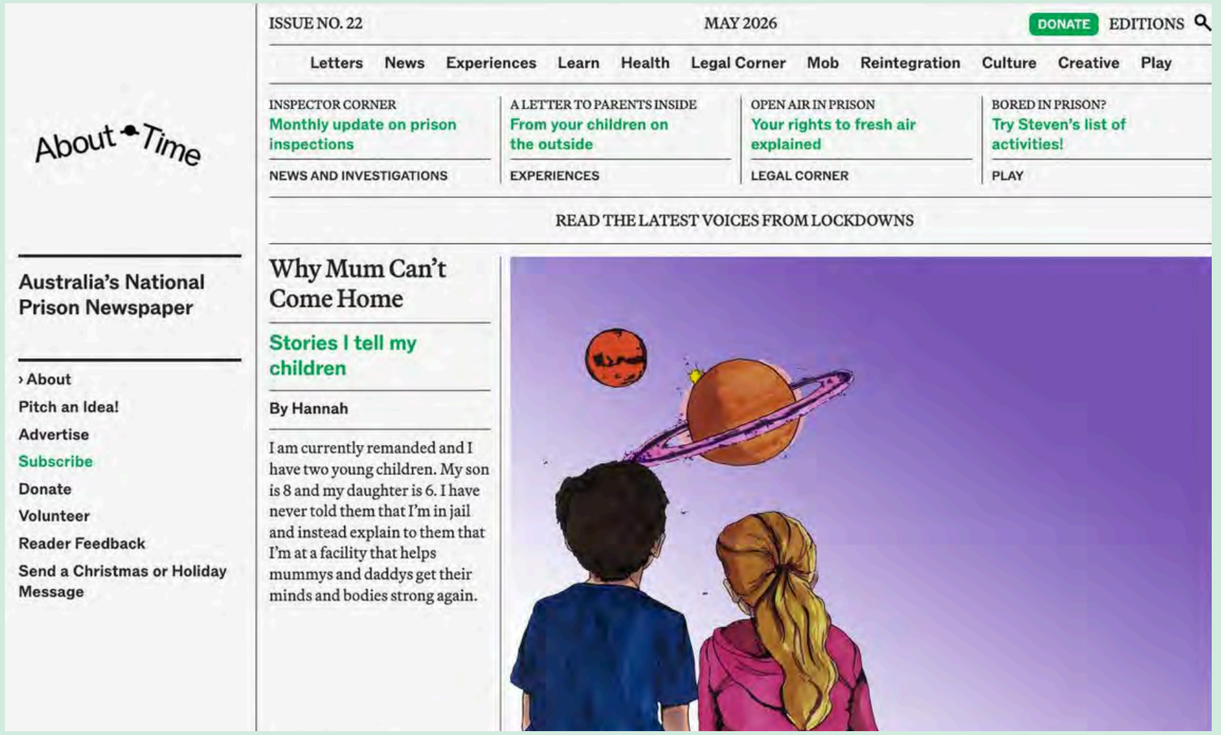
On the Outside

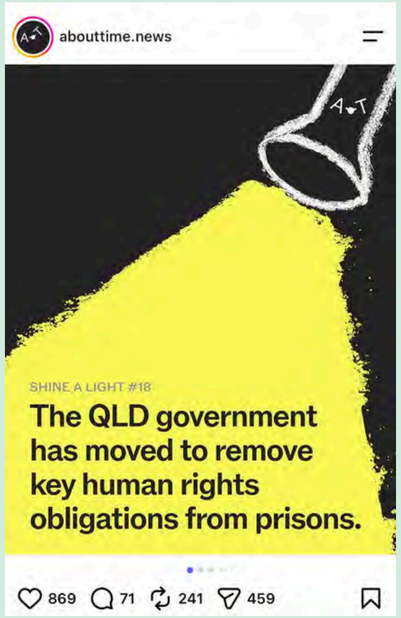


About Time continues to increase its audience outside prison.

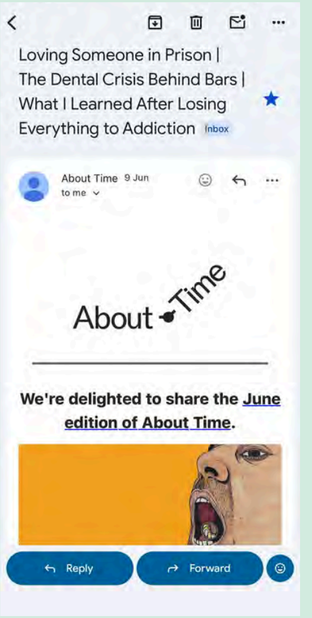
Every word published in the paper is freely available on our online platforms.

Each month, tens of thousands of people visit our website, read our newsletter and engage with our content on social media.









Supporting Our Contributors

Since January 2025, we have paid competitive freelance rates to every writer and artist who has contributed to *About Time* from outside prison.

Regulations prohibit remunerating people in prison in the same way.

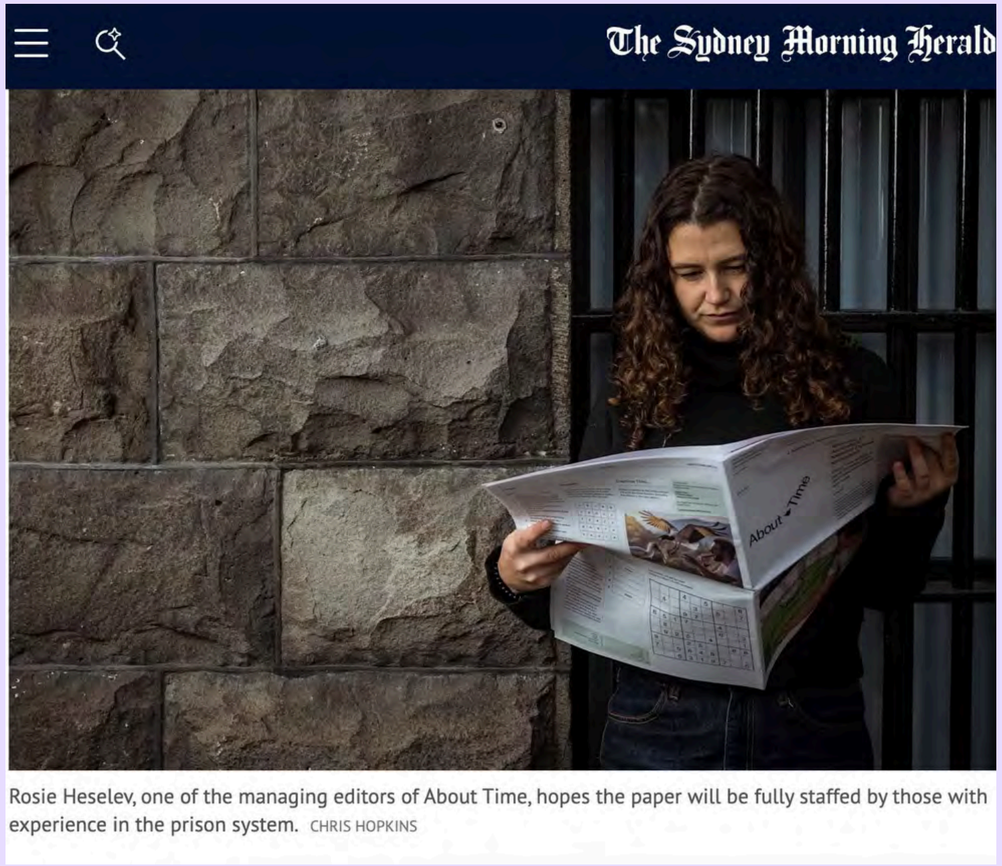


Guided by Our Lived Experience Network

- 10 formerly incarcerated writers from across Australia
- Fortnightly writing workshops
- Training in journalism skills
- Providing opportunities for published writing and public speaking
- Influencing *About Time*’s values and monthly content.



In the Media



Rosie Heselev, one of the managing editors of About Time, hopes the paper will be fully staffed by those with experience in the prison system. CHRIS HOPKINS

ABC — Getting the information you need isn't easy for prisoners in Australia. One newspaper hopes to change that.

7NEWS — Prison newspaper shedding light on mental health toll of costly prison phone calls

THE AGE — Prison newspaper brings legal advice, yoga tips to the incarcerated.

FINANCIAL REVIEW — Setting up Australia's first regular prison newspaper

The Monthly — A captive audience

7am podcast — Australia's first national newspaper – for prisoners, by prisoners.

ABC listen — Radio National Breakfast: Changing Australia: Joseph Friedman and connecting inmates with About Time.

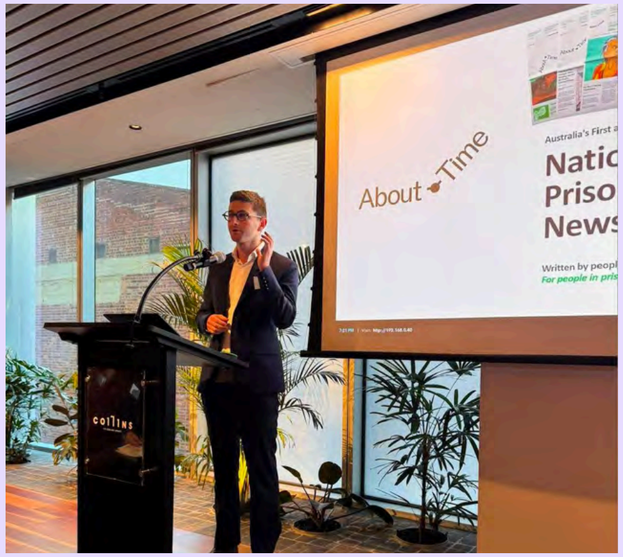
THE BRIEFING — What's in Australia's first national prison newspaper? Hopes and dreams

THE DAILY AUS — Australia's new national prison paper and what it hopes to achieve

In the Community









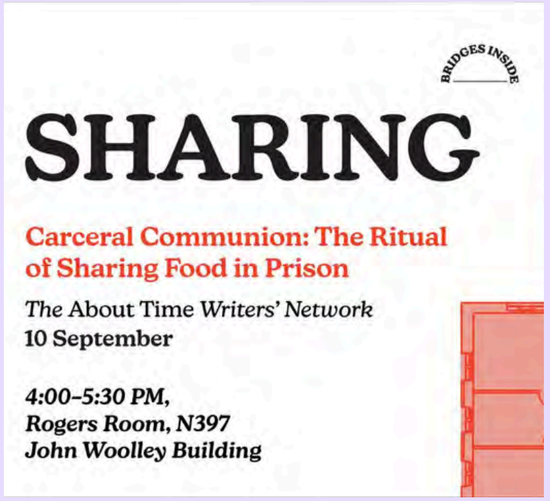






Collaborating with Universities

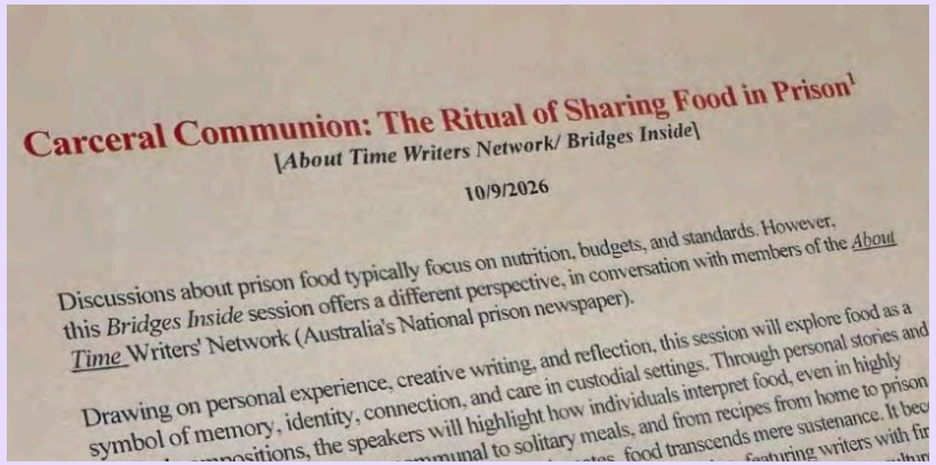








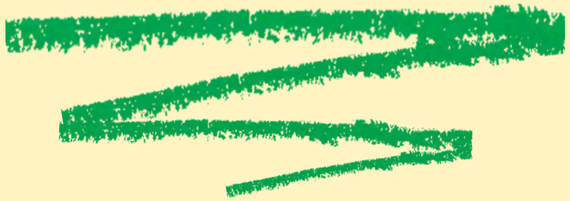






Changing the Narrative

About Time aims to change the narrative: to combat some of the dehumanisation of and misinformation about Australia's prison population and to educate free society about life behind bars.



Our reporters' tireless work has contributed to governments lowering the price of phone calls and making it easier to vote in prison.

It has exposed a wider audience to the harsh realities of life inside.

And it has demonstrated how other countries implement innovative policies to best reduce the chance of recidivism.


The Campaign to Make Prison Phone Calls Free
The high costs of making a phone call from prison are preventing many inmates from remaining in contact with their support networks, damaging their prospects for successful reintegration post-release.
By Denham Sadler
Letters From Home Lost to the Photocopier
The Ongoing Fight to Vote in Prison
Why the battle to have a say motivates people inside
By Denham Sadler
Denham Sadler is a freelance writer based in Naarm/Melbourne, focusing on criminal justice reform.
'It Feels Like Part of the Punishment': The Dental Crisis Behind Bars
By Denham Sadler
Denham is the Chief Reporter at About Time.
Prison Voting Sees Dramatic Rise Across Australia
'Nowhere Near Enough': More Housing Needed for People Leaving Prison
By Denham Sadler
Denham Sadler is the Chief Reporter at About Time.
• News and Investigations
'Question Everything': Rethinking Wrongful Convictions in Australia
By Denham Sadler
Continued from page 1.
A key issue in Australia is the level of underfunding for legal aid across the country, with Ruyters saying these organisations are stretched so thin they are unable to spend enough time on each case.
"They are all in absolute crisis, and so are the prosecution bodies," Ruyters said.
"Everything is stacked against a legally-aided accused."
Racial disadvantage and police misconduct also "permeate everything", Ruyters said.
There has been a long-running push in Australia for the establishment of a criminal cases review commission, which would investigate claims of innocence and have the power to refer cases back to courts of criminal appeal.
Similar commissions have been established in New Zealand, Canada and England.
New Zealand's Criminal Cases Review Commission allows anyone convicted of a crime who believes they have suffered a miscarriage of justice to apply for an independent review. The commission is independent of ministers, the courts and the government.
Sweltering Behind Bars: 'Stifling' Heat in Australian Prisons
Continued on page 6
Should Prison Mean No Human Touch?
Shedding More Light: Phone Call Costs in Prison
Mental Health Services in Prison Successfully Billed to Medicare
By Damien Linnane

After Release

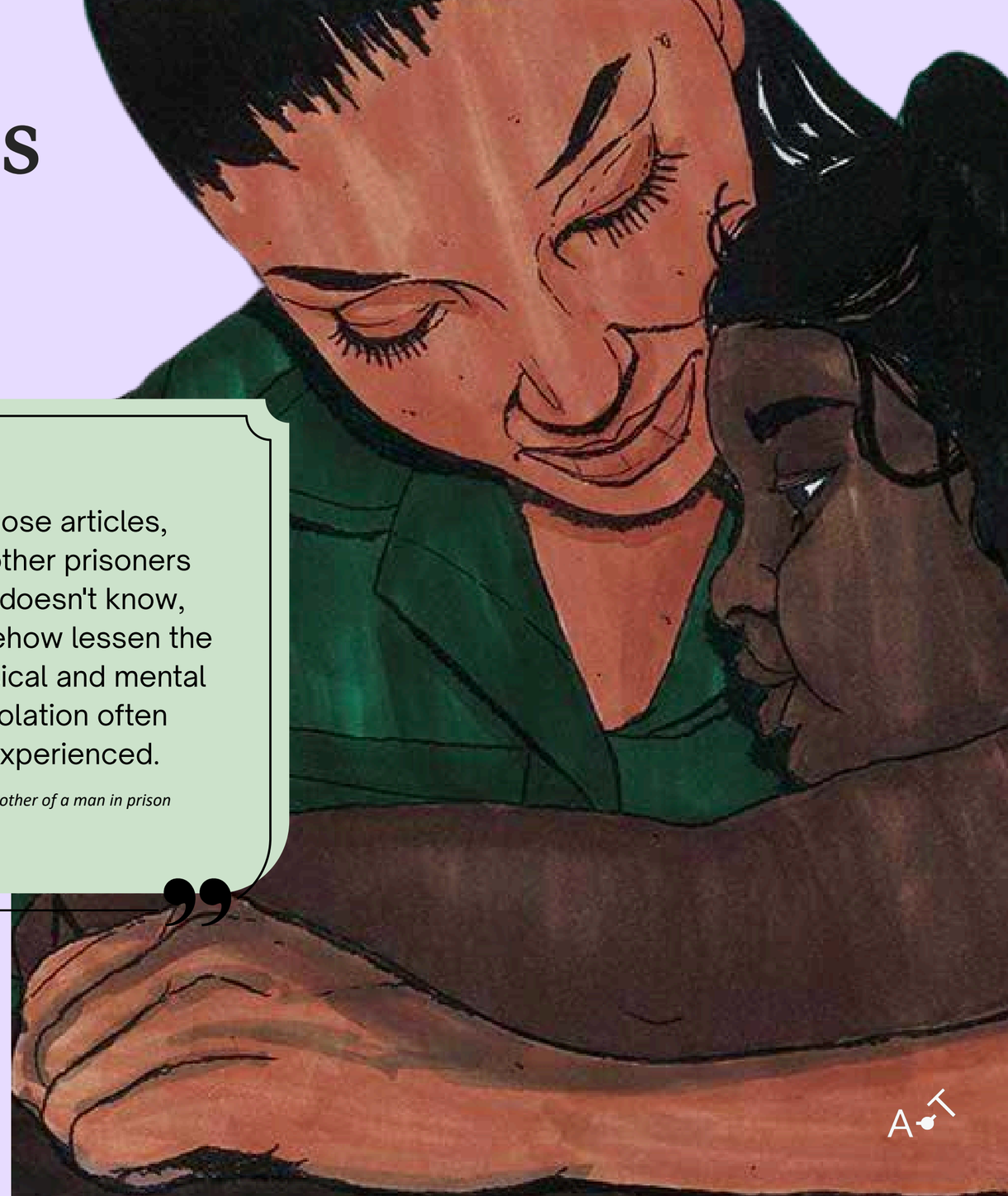
> Thank you for all you do in putting together *About Time* and sending it into prisons. I certainly found it helpful and informative while I was inside.
>
> *– Neale, formerly incarcerated, NSW*

> I am so proud that I get to welcome our NT people in prison to your very first issue of *About Time*. This is your newspaper, so please write in and send pictures, stories, poems and whatever else fits.
>
> *– Rocket, formerly incarcerated, NT*

> Thank you so much for giving us all a forum, a platform to externalise our experiences. The hope is that it helps people inside to feel seen and validated, and humanised.
>
> *– Steve, formerly incarcerated*



Families and Loved Ones



I have no contact with my brother who is in prison and the newspaper gives me great comfort knowing I have some small insight into his life, a way I can connect with his world.

– Sister of a man in prison

I know it would mean a lot to my partner if he saw it in your paper. He reads it religiously. Inside and out.

– Partner of a man in prison

Those articles, by other prisoners he doesn't know, somehow lessen the physical and mental isolation often experienced.

– Mother of a man in prison

People Who Work Inside

I gave paper copies out to inmates today and got a round of applause for it. One guy said it's the best thing anyone has done for them. Inmates said it was like being reconnected with the world again.

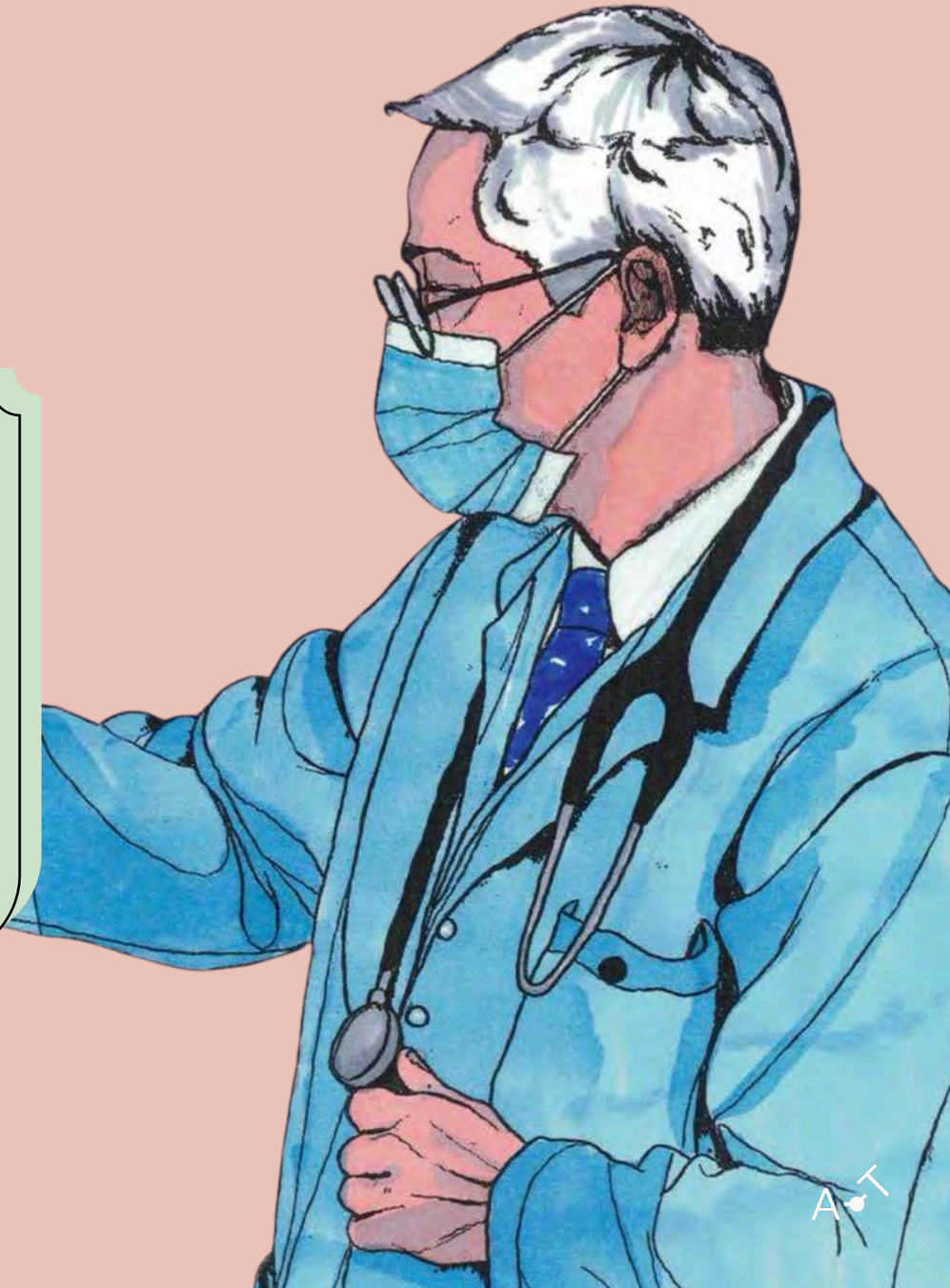
– Staff member, prison in NSW

One of my clients was recently published in About Time and I just want to add that he was so proud. And he brought a copy to our office to stick up on our wall.

– Psychologist working in Victorian prisons

I write to you, as a Victorian prison officer who reads every issue of *About Time*. Taking the time to read each issue and consider the content (with an open mind) makes me a better officer.

– Prison officer, VIC

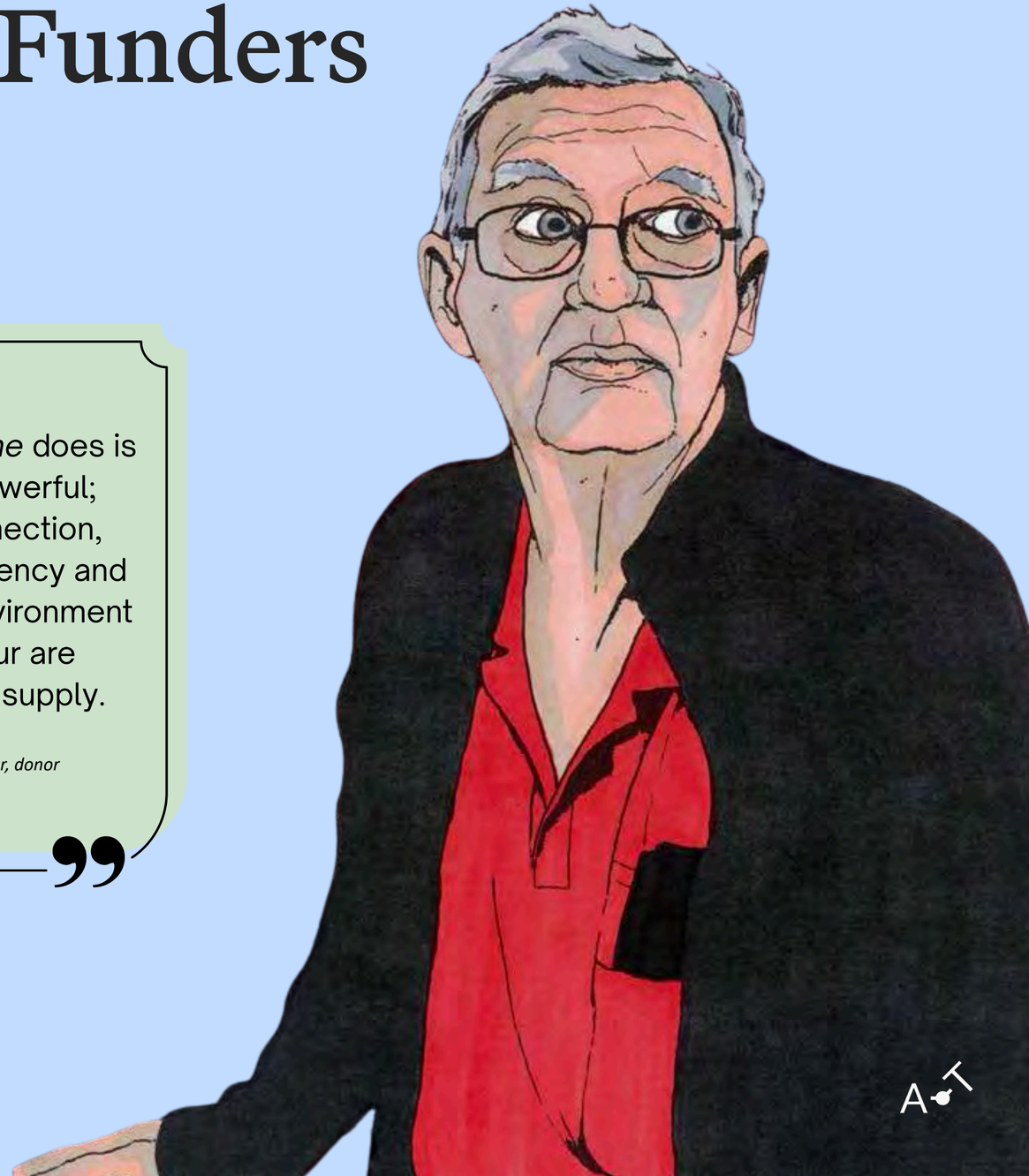


Subscribers, Donors and Funders

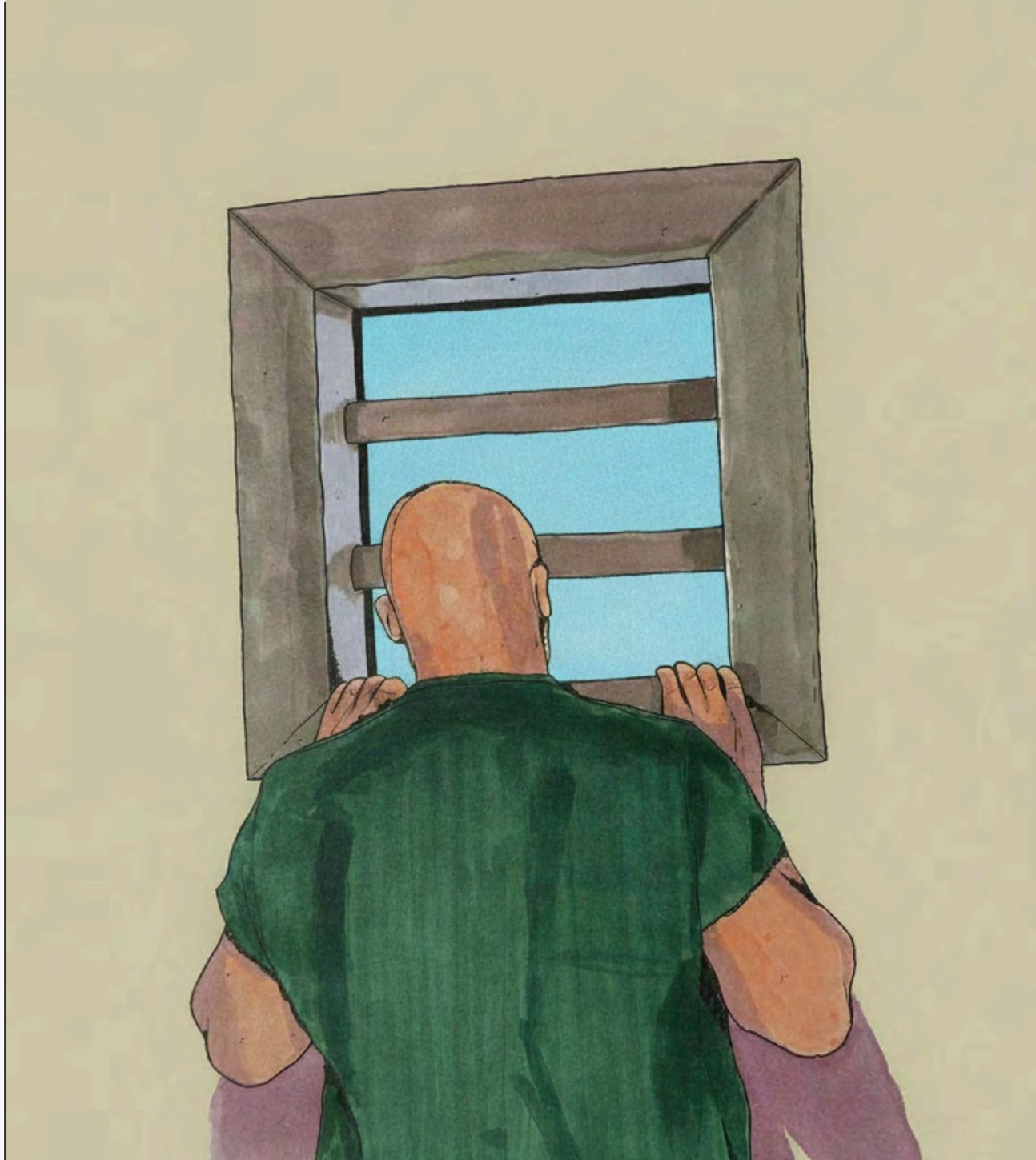
> The paper is a remarkable achievement, a rare and valuable 'good thing' in a difficult and draining system.
>
> *– Tom Battersby, criminal barrister*

> Thank you for providing a platform for connection and creative expression for the most marginalised cohorts in our communities.
>
> *– Rachel, subscriber, ACT*

> What *About Time* does is incredibly powerful; creating connection, information, agency and dignity in an environment where all four are often in short supply.
>
> *– Peita Burton Taylor, donor*



- Beyond the Newspaper



Workshops in Prison

We are inspired by the US Prison Journalism Project to train incarcerated writers to tell powerful stories and get published.

In 2026, led by an author and creative writing academic, we ran an 8-week writing workshop for 13 women in Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria.



Within three years we aim to run regular writing workshops in every jurisdiction in Australia.

Youth Justice

There is a growing population of young people in Australia in youth justice centres.

Our system relies heavily on punishment, with limited effective early intervention and rehabilitation.

Young people in detention too often end up as adults in prison. Although we cannot change this ourselves, we can provide an outlet for creativity, a distraction from the boredom, a space for self-expression and an escape from distress.

Within the next one to two years, we aim to introduce a new project dedicated to young people in prison, which may incorporate a tailored publication, letter writing, pen pal relationships and additional initiatives.



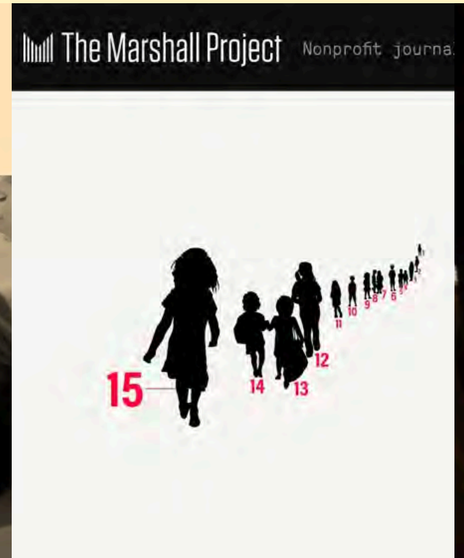
In the Future

We are inspired by the wealth and variety of different forms of prison journalism projects overseas.

From 24/7 radio stations that broadcast into prison cells, to award-winning podcasts hosted by formerly incarcerated journalists and huge organisations that build libraries inside prison wings.

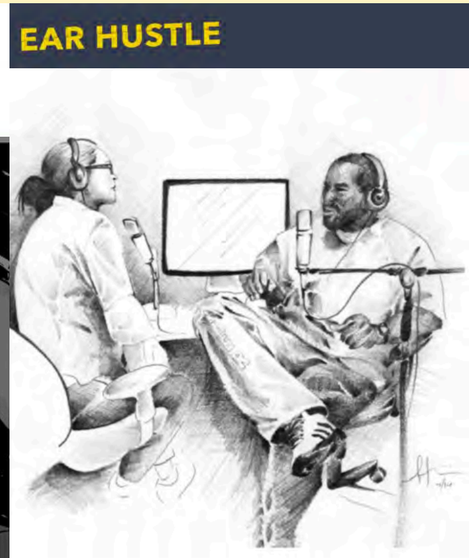
About Time is a young organisation in Australia seeking to emulate much of what has proven to succeed overseas, one step at a time...











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Jailing Is Failing

About Time

Australia's National Prison Newspaper



Designed and created by our internal team. Illustrations by Ike Curtis and Ethan Cassidy.