

Dear Committee Secretary,

Given the expanding growth and cost of the prison population, and the disproportionate representation of indigenous youth in the prison system, it would be practical to consider an alternative approach. The prison system provides little more than short-term punitive control, and results more often than not in recidivism, its social costs far outweigh its value, which its economic cost is unacceptable compared with other effective approaches which take into account literacy and numeracy, family circumstances, cognitive disability and mental health issues. Better early intervention and rehabilitation measures should surely be tried before imprisoning young, dysfunctional people. Justice reinvestment has a good track record in other countries, surely it would make good economic and communal sense to implement it in Australia.

Yours respectfully,  
Dr. Heleanor Beth Feltham