

JUSTUS

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PRISONERS NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 2005 VOL.2 ISSUE 1

TIME FOR BLUE AND GREEN TO COME TOGETHER OVER HEP C

Australia's government and community health organisations have reason to be proud over how they faced the threat of HIV/AIDS together in the 1980s. Officials, health workers and activists worked to provide harm minimisation resources to the stigmatised, vulnerable communities most under threat from the disease. Thousands of healthy Australians are living testimony to the success in bringing down HIV transmission rates.

Prisoners also benefited, eventually, from the public health revolution sparked by the AIDS crisis. NSW was first to introduce a prison methadone program in 1986, with all states except the NT to follow suit. The provision of condoms, dental dams, bleach for cleaning syringes and, most importantly, peer education programs encouraging prisoners to take responsibility for their own sexual and injecting health would follow over subsequent years. In most cases these innovations were met with initial resistance by prison staff, but their benefits to health and good order would eventually win over the skeptics and attract broad support from officers.

Although the prison harm minimisation measures of the 1980s and 90s seem to have prevented a major outbreak of HIV in the prison system, they have not stemmed the spread of another serious bloodborne virus, hepatitis C, which can survive outside the body on microscopic specks of blood and can even withstand bleach sterilisation. As needle syringe programs (NSPs) had been shown to reduce hepatitis C transmission by 80 to 90% among injecting drug users the next step was clearly the provision of clean injecting equipment to prisoners.

But in July 1991, NSW prison officer Geoffrey Pearce was stabbed by a prisoner wielding a HIV infected needle.

"there has never been a documented case of a needle being used as a weapon in any prison which provides them, nor has there been any increase in drug consumption or injecting"

Seven years later, Mr Pearce died of AIDS. If resistance to prison NSPs among prison officers had previously been strong, it was now implacable. The NSW parliament reacted by passing the Prisons Syringe Prohibition Amendment Act of 1991, effectively outlawing clean injecting equipment in prisons and condemning thousands of prisoners to hepatitis C infection.

Hepatitis C is rampant in prisons. Over one third of Australian prisoners are estimated to be infected, with rates much higher for women prisoners. There is about one chance in seven that an uninfected NSW prisoner will contract Hep C in prison, with upwards of 1000 new infections behind that state's bars every year.

Almost all of those prisoners will eventually be released to carry the virus back to their communities.

Many of those with the disease will suffer from nausea, fatigue, depression, abdominal pain and flu like symptoms, with some going on to develop life threatening liver damage or cancer.

Although the symptoms and progress of the disease can be controlled with careful diets, lifestyles and herbal therapies the only real cure is a powerful combination drug therapy that is expensive and can have severe side effects on health and behaviour. The medication does not work in all cases and some variations of the virus are resistant to it.

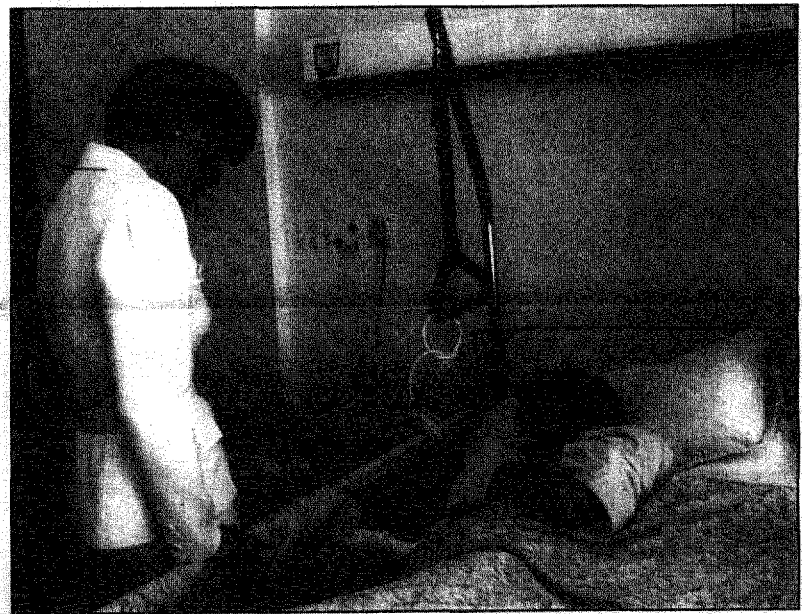
Hepatitis C cannot be transmitted in semen or saliva but is well adapted to spreading through blood to blood contact and lives for long periods outside the body. It can spread in invisible blood specks in syringes, on spoons, filters, swabs and tourniquets. It has also spread in prisons through fights, barber's shears and tattooing equipment. Some studies have cast doubt on the effectiveness of bleach sterilisation in killing the virus, especially when carried out in haste on old, pitted, reused injecting equipment.

As a result, prisons have become incubators for the hepatitis C virus, accounting for a disproportionate number of the 16,000 new infections in Australia every year and facilitating its spread through the country - at a cost of many millions of dollars in healthcare and lost productivity. Prison needle syringe programs would be an extremely cost effective way of reducing the long term cost of hepatitis C.

While harm minimisation in Australian prisons has barely progressed since the 1990s, other governments have bowed to humanity and sensible self interest by introducing their own prison NSPs.

Following Switzerland's pioneering 1992 program, prisons in Germany, Spain, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus now have needle syringe programs serving tens of thousands of prisoners. A New Zealand parliamentarian recently told an audience at NSW Parliament House that a pilot program would soon commence there.

Contrary to the tears of critics, there has never been a documented case of a needle being used as a weapon in any prison which



Diana, Princess of Wales visited Richard Lynott shortly before his death.

provides them, nor has there been any increase in drug consumption or injecting. Instead, there has been decreases in HIV and hepatitis C transmission, decrease in risky behaviour such as needle sharing, decreases in overdoses, abscesses and injecting related infections and increased use of other drug rehabilitation and harm minimisation services.

After their introduction, prison NSPs have also won the strong support of prison officers.

In 2003 the provincial governments of Berlin and Lower Saxony closed the prison NSPs that had been operating successfully for many years. Among the most vocal critics of the government decisions have been the prison officers' organisations, which have collected petitions and lobbied parliamentarians calling for the programs to be reinstated. They have come to realise that clean needles are not only important for the health of prisoners, but also to the occupational health and safety of prison staff.

But in Australia, around a quarter of prisoners continue their furtive injecting and hasty cleaning of the hundreds of reused, resharpened, dirty, pitted needles that circulate around the prisons. Some of those needles will inflict accidental needlestick injuries upon the prison officers who eventually discover their hiding places.

Eight years ago Professor Nick Crofts wrote in the Medical Journal of Australia that "prison authorities and governments must realise that

the responsibility for the infection of a prisoner with a bloodborne virus, because means for prevention were not available within the prison, rests with them". He might have also reminded authorities of their responsibility to prison staff.

Late last year ACT Parliamentarian Kerrie Tucker warned it was "just a matter of time" before an infected prisoner who had been denied access to clean injecting equipment sued a government for breach of duty of care. It was similar legal action by the HIV infected ex-prisoner, Richard Lynott, which finally forced Australian prison systems to provide condoms.

And in early July, Federal Court Justice Ron Merkel recently added his own voice to the chorus of legal professionals, health workers, human rights advocates and prison activists calling for the introduction of prison needle syringe programs.

The political will to move forward on harm minimisation in prisons is unlikely to come from the top in this country. Even if it did, it would not succeed without the support of prisoners and prison staff.

The death of Geoff Pearce was a tragedy that was only deepened with the passage of the Prison Syringes Prohibition Act. A more fitting memorial would be a prison needle syringe program that would serve to protect prisoners, staff and the community as a whole from the scourge of bloodborne disease.

LETTERS

NORTHERN TERRITORY

I read your December 2004 issue with mixed emotions. I acknowledge the importance of prisoners having a voice outside the prison walls. As a resident of such an institution in The Northern Territory (continuously since mid 1963), with the bleak prospect of dying in a prison cell defining my future, any publication dealing with prisoners rights inevitably evokes images of Dorothy of Yellow Brick Road fame. Her three stalwart companions individually lacking of courage, a mind, and a heart. Not dissimilar to the current Australian political forum.

Somebody much wiser than I claim to being, once noted that the great drawback of politics is that, no matter who you vote for, you always get another bloody politician. Labor, Liberal, National or Green, the only

substantive differences are numbers and/or seating arrangements in both houses of government.

For myself, reality is that no matter who rules Oz, or the success or failure of justice action groups, I always end up admiring the Cheshire Cat's pearly whites. Of all the reform debated in our Southern Climes, does anybody recall even one migrating to that part of the Top End located just slightly off center?? You'll never know, if you never, never go!

Each political party has a law and order platform. Government enacted legislation rendering it illegal for a parent to spank their misbehaving child. Next came financial aid enabling a child to leave home if they dislike being required to conduct themselves as a member of that family. In the Northern Territory debate arose as to whether or not parents should be held financially accountable for the criminal behaviour of a child who had been legislatively deprived of parental guidance. Curfews. Making it an offence for a child to be outside during certain hours came into being. The latter-day equivalent of a lawful punishment for stealing a loaf of bread....

Mandatory sentencing of juveniles for property crimes. Zero tolerance; how I wish society would apply that principle to our bloody politicians.

Throughout this negligent social experiment, parents across the country were emasculated and a generation of Australia's youth deprived of a stable home environment. Our politicians had fulfilled their promise to do something about the crime problem. Figuratively speaking crime statistics went through the roof. Yet Australia continues to vote for Frankenstein in the vain hope that he may know how to control the very monster he created.

Anybody who has spent the past twenty or so years in prison knows well the price now being paid as a consequence of allowing politicians to erode the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary until it exists largely as an outmoded concept. We prisoners are not alone in breaking the social contract 'Dawn of the Civil Dead'? Wake up Australian! Prisoners are in some ways better off without the vote! Able to watch as our ignoble politicians daily prostitute themselves without even having to get into bed with them. We do have some pride left us. Vote for them? I should be sharing a cell block with them! Anyway I'm late for a very important date!!

Martin
Alice Springs

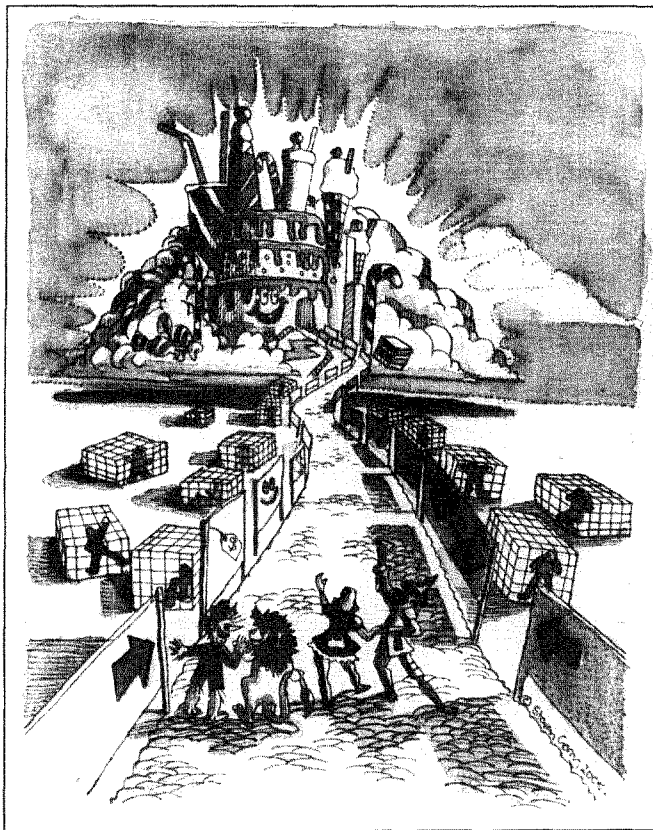
QUEENSLAND

HUMAN CARGO AND UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICES: THE VIEW FROM HERE

Finally we're in agreement that Governments take the easy and politically safe approach to prisoners. They lock us up with no hope for the future and tell each other what a great job they do. It took a decade for the turn around in the way society and the system treats us and vote buying politics and pandering played a role. Here in Queensland we rarely see representatives from the PLS or a newsletter, least of all obtain real advice and help with regard to the unlawful way in which many of us are detained.

If psych reports for the public were so clearly affected and biased as those generated for use against prisoners there would be outcry around the nation; but because of the closed system and the way prisons and prisoners are viewed, these reports are accepted and upheld even at judicial reviews, to the detriment of men and women inside.

How they get away with it is easy. The entire system is geared to not properly investigate frauds, fabrications and errors! It pretends to, but does not. This is clearly supported by the thousands of cases before judicial reviews, support groups and misconduct commissions, and the endless stream of complaints to Corrective Services. Little or nothing is achieved by complaints to the perpetrators of



these abuses. In my experience it's only served to draw unwanted attention to the individual or have him labelled troublesome.

The support groups say their hands are tied. Yet with so much evidence and so many cases of fraud and error uncovered in psych reports, why hasn't one departmental head or perpetrator been brought to justice? The answer is obvious as some within the system (in a rare moment of truth) will tell you, "it's the only system they have and the only way to maintain it" and that, apparently, clears their conscience.

Some crime "types" almost invite the system to "screw a man over" and some prisoners themselves applauded it. In Queensland the system changed remissions to "deal with some sex offenders" and then applied it broadly to everyone. Those inmates who cheered the punishment to other offenders have fallen strangely silent, knowing they blindly supported their own fate. The powers that be must appreciate prisoners expending energy on each other and not the system that detains them unjustly.

With just the stroke of a pen we are denied this or that. We live in the age of political prisons where unaccountable practices against inmates don't see the light of day. We must ask if the legal system is aware of this and if so why is it being condoned.

Yes, prisoners put themselves in this situation, but that doesn't condone the abuses of power. The psychs don't have crystal balls and they often guess at, and manufacture their reports. These self-proclaimed professionals must be held legally responsible for lies and errors that cause inmates to be detained unlawfully. Then they might stop.

Prisoners and their families are the human cargo upon which some politicians, with nothing else to offer, make a grab for power. Can we really trust them to regulate themselves when human lives are the currency upon which their careers and futures are built?

Steve
Palen Creek Prison Farm

MINDLESS HAZE

*My life goes by as I rot in this hell
Alone with my thoughts, in a lonely cell
My freedom I've lost but my pride will remain*

For I will never give in to heartache or pain
My eyes transfixed in an empty gaze
For I must be strong if I wish to survive
To walk out that gate my head held high
Remember the things you loved so much
For one day they'll return. They're not far
to touch

Ankles
Maryborough CC, QLD

Having just read the first edition of "Just Us" and its great that inmate can be heard from prison to prison, I'm writing in regards to transferring from one prison to another, I'm 24 y/o and currently serving a 41/2 year sentence and have 18 months to go and having spent a majority of my time in a Central Qld prison, have a good support network of friends there and feel comfortable there. I am being transferred around Brisbane jails and I am over 799km away from where I want to be, the Prison claims that it is difficult to transfer, yet I am being transferred everywhere but where I want to be?? Isn't Corrective Services Job to keep us in the right State of Mind by keeping us closer to family and friends and those that we love?

Our families are doing it hard enough why make it even harder? Does anybody have these problems with getting transfers?? If so write to the Prisoners Newspaper, I want to read about it.

Aristocrat.
Woodford

Here at the Palen Creek CC we welcomed the first issue of 'The Trashy Dodger' - Sorry (!) 'Just Us'. Some of the men in the unit I live in have had their contributions printed in it but I was particularly interested in the appraisal of the Queensland Judicial system as portrayed by the American, Duane.

For too long the courts and the judicial system in which they are cocooned, have considered themselves to be untouchable and bulletproof - and the type of treatment that I have experienced shows very clearly the degree of arrogance under which they operate - in Queensland at least and, no doubt, world wide.

NEW ZEALAND

GETTING TOUGH ON CRIME IN NEW ZEALAND

We live in strange times. The crime rate in New Zealand has been steadily falling since 1996 but numbers in prison have continued to rise from 4,500 in 1996 to 6,700 at the end of January 2005. And more prisons are being constructed to house still more prisoners.

New Zealanders sometimes joke about the prisoner origins of early Australians but in 2002/2003 the imprisonment rate in New Zealand was 146 compared to Australia where it was only 113.

Yet the United Nation's crime statistics for 2000 show that for murder, robbery and rape New Zealand has rates a great deal lower than those of Australia.

So why are numbers in New Zealand's prisons rising?

The main reason is the popularity of the 'law and order' political agenda in New Zealand. Pressure groups like the Sensible Sentencing Trust push the 'get tough on

crime' message and the media and many politicians appear to be listening.

Legislation has meant prison sentences are longer and parole is harder to obtain. Remand on bail is also more difficult to obtain.

Organisations like PARS need to constantly push the message that crime rates are dropping and there are more constructive and less expensive ways of responding to crime.

GETTING TOUGH ON CRIMINALS IN NEW ZEALAND

An example of the political eagerness to be tough on criminals was the response to the recent award of compensation to some prisoners because their human rights had been abused at Auckland Prison. It is believed there are hundreds of other cases in the pipeline.

The Government has introduced a Bill to Parliament designed to reduce the possibility of prisoners being awarded compensation for breach of their rights.

Prisoners will need to show they have

made use of existing complaints mechanisms and no other remedy would be effective, and awards will be placed in trust so victims can make claims on the compensation.

The question must be why these prisoners needed to go to the High Court to obtain recognition of their complaints. NZPARS has long advocated for an independent prison inspectorate as they have in the UK and now Western Australia.

I recall about 10 years ago on a visit to Holland how it was explained to me that prisoner complaints were dealt with by a community panel. A prisoner judged to have been unjustly placed in a punishment regime was entitled to \$50 per day compensation from the prison. It should be easier not harder for prisoners to obtain financial compensation from the Department when their complaints are upheld.

NZ Prisoners Aid &
Rehabilitation Society
PO Box 625
Wellington
Phone: (04) 472 4385
Fax: (04) 472 4386

Those people sit in judgement of others but they, also, are fallible fault-making human beings, and should be required to be accountable for their actions in the same manner in which they consign others, rightly or wrongly, to prison.

My concern is for the many, I am sure, who have been – and those who are now the unwitting victims of the prejudicial and vengeful, rather than corrective and rehabilitative 'climate' in which the judiciary and corrective services operate in Queensland, this is mirrored in contributions to 'Just Us'.

Barry Rathdowney.

WHAT CORRECTIVE SERVICES WANT

they want us to have self worth so they destroy that very self worth they want us to be responsible so they take away all our responsibilities they want us to be part of the community so they isolate us from that same community they want us to be positive and constructive so they degrade us and make us feel worthless they want us to be non-violent so they put us where violence surrounds us they want us to be kind and loving people so they subject us to hatred and cruelty they want us to quit being the tough guy so they put us where the tough guy gets respect they want us to quit hanging around losers so they put all the losers under the same roof they want us to stop exploiting them so they put us where we exploit each other they want us to take care of our own lives and problems so they ensure we totally depend on them

ankles
maryborough cc, qld

TASMANIA

I don't see why the Risdon kitchens can't be used with inmates working under supervision of qualified chefs, cooks and get some type of education on the preparation and cooking of basic meals. I wonder how many of those that work in Prison kitchens have done the "Safe Food Handling" Course. I was catering on the outside and any one I had helping in my kitchen had to have done it. Certified by Council Health Inspectors and they did regular checks on my kitchen. I don't know if they do here. Maybe they don't know we exist, or even have a bloody kitchen

"Lucky"

COMPLAINTS TO TASMANIAN ATTORNEY GENERAL JUDY JACKSON SINCE THE SIEGE AT RISDON ON MAY 7 & 8:

Thomas is 73 years of age and was sentenced to 3 months jail for contempt of court. On the day of the siege he blacked out in the store rooms...when he regained consciousness he heard officers telling inmates to go to their cells...he had restricted movement with one of his arms and legs but managed to get himself to his cell. He remained in his cell for six days before receiving any medical attention. On the sixth day two nurses visited with him in his cell, he was then taken by wheel chair to the prison hospital then transferred to the Royal Hobart Hospital where he was hospitalised for six days. On his return he was sent back out into mainstream prison D.6.

I spoke with M this afternoon as discussed with you. She informed me that her partner was remanded under the Relationships Act Her story (like many others) is sad. Her partner suffers from Bipolar Affective Disorder and prior to coming to prison had his medication changed. She stated that this made him paranoid. On the night he was taken into custody he was paranoid and talked about the neighbours and other people

coming to harm his family. M contacted the CATT Team (crises, assessment, treatment team – mental health) who in turn contacted the police. M was surprised when the police took her partner into custody and found out that they charged him with using foul language to his pregnant partner. As it turned out police prosecution must have opposed bail and he was remanded.

Attached is yet another letter of complaint... this man talks about attempting to end his life a number of times.....he still has a bit of time remaining of his sentence and by the sounds of it, if his living conditions don't improve he might not make it..... so I thought you should be aware of it just in case.... and of course for the record.

It is a great concern that prison officials have put a relation of the victim in the same yard as the perpetrator. It is completely irresponsible...it is placing the relation, his mates and the perpetrator in a very dangerous predicament.

I am totally against violence but I do know that I couldn't be trusted in the same room with the one's that harmed my son.... In all honesty who could? It doesn't make those feeling any less just because you're a prisoner.

People are sent to prison as punishment not for punishment.... brutalisation is not part of the sentence.... and it certainly doesn't fix people.

RESPONSE FROM THE TASMANIAN DEPT OF JUSTICE:

All of the matters contained in your email have been notified previously by Prison Action and Reform. They were forwarded to Mr Graeme Barber, Director of Prisons, for appropriate action and have been investigated. It is not our policy to respond to queries/complaints from outside the Tasmanian Prison Service concerning individual inmates, therefore, no response will be provided to you for your publication.

Regards,
Virginia de Groot, Adviser
Office of the Attorney-General

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Thank goodness there is finally something like your paper! I'm an ex prisoner now (out almost 6 weeks) and was hoping to be put on your mailing list. Although I'm out, I will never forget my staunch friends who are still in the system. I also want to keep my finger on the pulse of the prison system and hopefully get better treatment for Prisoners!

Thankyou
Michelle xx
South Australia

ELIZABETHITIS SICKNESS

To sink or to swim,
or to stay and to meddle
Get the army armed
I've got a score to settle.

see there's a new sickness out there,
not just a "buyer beware"
But a terminal perhaps even fatal disease
So to put your mind at ease,
Here follows a little prose which I wrote
in hope that prior knowledge may act as an
antidote

The bastards,
They come and they go,
and it's with tears,
that they start their show
Telling sad stories of their lives
That are better than soapsies you know

The bitches, they haggle
One goose now a gaggle
They will come to take pictures,
Steal your pride, Fuck your missus
All the wraughts and the hock
The ketone or red rock,
All they want is a hit
They'll swap their mother for a fit
and then you turn around.
The bastards nowhere to be found.

ICOPA·XI

The 11th International Conference on Penal Abolition

Justice Action has accepted the responsibility to coordinate this conference, and will be working with others around the world to ensure that it is an historic, inclusive and accessible event. We want prisoner, ex-prisoner and victim involvement to be a feature. Let those most affected be heard and let us share the future!

Each ICOPA asks these questions:
What is wrong? What are we doing? What can we do?

The agenda and the form of the conference is now open. Please send us proposals and pass this notice to others. Some suggestions for strands are:

- * The Politics of Imprisonment Northern Ireland, Palestine and the Middle East, (Post) Colonial Justice Nigeria and West Africa, South Africa: ANC, Brazil, USA, Canada.
- * Contemporary Forms of Penal Custom Human Rights & Imprisonment: a Global Perspective, International trends, Imprisonment of Women, Marionization and Political Dissent in the USA, Refugee and Immigration Prisons, Prisons under Occupation.
- * Post Carceral Resettlement Organising Inside: Prisoners' resistance and the Outside Community, Writing and Art as Resistance, Barriers to Reintegration, Surveillance, Organising in the Community - Exprisoners' Organisations, Convict Criminology.
- * Action Now: Proposals for the future.

Justice Action: P.O. Box 386 Broadway NSW 2007
icopa@justiceaction.org.au

They've run to the hills,
Taken your phone and your wheels,
Out scouting for their next victim,
Who they can befriend, get their claws in
All the pretence that they're something they
are not,

All a charade, a scam for a shot.
You see, Elizabethitis it's a sickness
hurts you most when you are weakest
So don't listen to the stories they yarn,
'coz they will just bring you down.
You might feel used up, hurt, angry and
empty,
and payback and revenge might be
tempting
and although it's you who has been
wronged

Stay calm, keep your morals and stay
strong.
Just shut your windows, lock your doors,
Sort out your true friends, from the meth
whores.

By seeing through the lies and deception
you will find peace, harmony and protection
And when all is said and done,
to NOT learn from your mistakes is dumb.
And if there is one thing I have learnt,
trust is not given, it's earned,
what goes around, comes around
So be staunch, just stand your ground.
Try to rise above it all,
Keep your eyes on your goal,
To achieve in life, to really succeed,
Just believe in yourself and follow your
dream
ELIZABETHITIS IS A SICKNESS

Donna
Adelaide Womens' Prison

BLEEDING FROM THE HEART

Two strangers brought together locked in a
cell
Guilty or innocent, who can tell
For in our heart we silently sob,
for in our minds we wonder, who done the
job.

lets get tot he bottom of this
lets get to the core
But what hope have we when we're against
a crooked law
We're whisked away like air through a vent
Because people who don't know us make
Judgments, lost and in a whirl,
We have to survive in a whole new world
locked up and fed like animals in a cage,
Half the time is spent controlling our rage.
if there's an angel or god in sight
Please come forward and put things right
Through the night with the rattles of the key
you lie in bed and wonder why me?
We would sell our soul to be free.
To be home with a kiss from my baby.
We pray the lyric lawman gets their dues.
For we are being unjustly accused.

Baby I love you and shall be home soon.

Amanda
Adelaide Womens' Prison

NEW SOUTH WALES

THE RODENTS

They scurry through the darkest holes,
Seek the warmth the earth does hold.
Eyes of red like burning fire,
Senses peaked through sheer desire.
Their fur is matted, torn in fights,
Crude, efficient, even bright.
They take the food to keep alive,
Dodge the traps that man provides
With all odds against their race,
Even nature shows her distaste.
Dogs and cats kill on sight,
Birds and snakes show their delight.
But even rats do their share
To keep the balance in nature's lair.

Mr. Trevor Carter
Bathurst

Unique as we are,
Filled with uncertainty,
Pin-holes of self-destructive violations
Suffering in the never-ending web to
healing.

Forever loyal to the need of life
Lost in a search for tender happiness.
A comfortable understanding of uniqueness.

Dejected from the normal,
Vulnerable to a need.
A strong undeniable need.
Trapped in a misery, isolated loneliness.
Alone with our pain, personal pain.
Irritating resentfulness.

Faced with a knowledge,
To open old wounds, to unleash old pain.
To love this soul who has suffered so much.
Take care of "you".
Love "you"
You're the best at nurturing yourself.
Don't be afraid of yourself.
Trust you, be you, become you

Katrina

Where I am housed at the moment there are
2 computer rooms (that are available). These 2
rooms both contain a computer, keyboard and
mouse, and are supposed to be used by "C-
and D-Deck" inmates – which at any time
house 18 to 20 inmates. These rooms have
been unavailable for over several months.

Every morning between the hours of 8 and
9 am – the officers will bring breakfast. At that
time, every thing you wish to do or use has to
be booked. I have enclosed an officers
"Booking Sheet", and have put the letters (N-
U) (Not-Usable) so you know just how much
access we have and have not got!!!

We need the computer rooms and
computers, if not to just write letters, get more
skilled and more educated on them, to gain
more time outta ones cell and be given the
chance to learn (education – computer skills
and to give one the opportunity to get and be
rehabilitated). It's the 21st century – every one
needs computer skills to succeed, most of all

LETTERS cont...

the disadvantaged – and as an inmate of "corrections" and a man with a criminal record, we the inmates of "corrections" need computer skills – cause we are of the most disadvantaged there just about is!!! No inmate has used or been allowed to use the two computers for months upon months. When the officers are questioned and asked why we are not allowed to use the computers, we are told that we're just not allowed to use them, and that's that!!! Us inmates have heard "rumours" that the reason why we ain't allowed to use them is because a "sex offender" somehow got on the computer and got on the internet and activated some thing in the nature of child pornography... But like I said, that's only a rumour, "hear-say" and in this environment, you can't believe pretty much anything that you hear... But I can tell you now that these computers that we've got down here, I don't think would be able to hook up to the internet, they're that bloody old.

C.J. Goulburn

I would like to seek your assistance in the matter of visits to Bathurst Correctional Centre. I would like to strongly criticise the facilities, or lack there of, for visitors to the Centre. Having been a visitor to my son for the 1st time at Bathurst my husband and I (I suffer from rheumatoid arthritis and have had 2 knee replacements) had the pleasure, after a 3 hour drive from Sydney of standing in a line in the sun outside a closed door for an hour waiting to be admitted. While standing there I hear stories from women with babies and toddlers of having to stand there for 3 hours in rain, boiling sun, etc. What is their crime that they should be treated like that?

On being admitted and asking if we could use the restrooms before the visit we were told no, if we did so, our visit would be cancelled. What possible reason could there be for this? I had my handbag searched and my husband had his wallet searched, and we were leaving these in a locker outside the visiting area. What is the reason of that?

The woman officer on duty said that it was a standard procedure in all jails, but it makes our previous visits to Silverwater and Parklea look almost pleasant as we had seats and shelter, toilet access and our bags/wallets were not searched.

While standing in line waiting for admittance, we read a huge sign that said they try to make the visits as pleasant and safe as possible. They should take the sign down because from what I saw it was an absolute disgrace.

I hope you can assist in this matter because this is what you might expect in a third world country, not Australia in 2005.

**Yours Sincerely
Mrs S B
Prison Visitor**

Jail Mail

is for all Australian prisoners, anyone held in detention camps, prisons, mental hospitals and other places of confinement and family & friends wanting to write to them. There are some basic rules: Everyone electing to be in this newsletter must give consent in writing. – Letter-writers to prisoners are requested to respect the confidentiality of prisoners. Photographs are allowed so long as consent is given for publication. Jail Mail is a project of the Western Suburbs Prisoner Mentoring project – WSMP.

To have your advert listed, please write to:

Jail Mail
PO Box 355, Gladesville NSW 1675

LONG TERM AFRICAN DEATH ROW PRISONER REQUESTS LETTERS.

Write To:
Benjamin Tembo
Maximum – S Prison
Death Row Section
Box 80915
Kabwe
Zambia, Central Africa



DEATH ROW ZAMBIA

My family and I write to death row prisoners in Zambia and send them much needed letters and clothing parcels. If you would like to help us please get in touch. Clive Jacobsen (Sydney) ph 0419 769 138

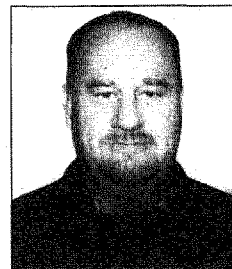


I'm Shaun 24 and I'm serving five years for trafficking amphetamines. I have just started my sentence. I'm a single man and I love doing up motorcycles. I also enjoy fishing, camping, socialising, and occasional night clubbing. I would love to get some mail and I am very keen to meet a lady around my age. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

By the way, my Staffy's names are Clyde and Memphis.
Write to: Shaun Bourke, Private Mail Bag 20, CQ Mail Centre, Rochampton QLD 4702, Australia.

Kenny Lee, (He is a 32-year-old Akha man from Phamee, Chiangrai Province.)
Bangkwang Central Prison, block 4, 117 Nonthaburi Road, Suan Yai, Nonthaburi 11000 THAILAND

Songsak Wangnapalai, (He is a Hmong man from Chiangrai.)
Bangkwang Central Prison, block 2, 117 Nonthaburi Road, Suan Yai, Nonthaburi 11000 THAILAND



Ladies, my name is Peter and I am currently serving a nine year term with one and a half years to go and I have not received any letters for over two years. If you are in the same predicament and you would like to share your thoughts and feelings with a single late thirties male, you can contact me direct any time. Please drop me a line and together we'll help each other make it through to the finish line of our time. Love, Peter.

Write to: Peter Harper Palin Creek CC
Rathdowney QLD 4287, Australia

THAI PRISONER SUPPORT WORKER SENDS THESE CONTACTS:

Chit Win Sein, (He is a 26-year-old Akha man from Burma. His Akha name is Aryoke Chermegu.)
Klong Pal Central Prison, Building 3, 300 Klong Pai, A. Sikiu, Nakhon Ratchasima 30340 THAILAND

Apha Mopogu, (He is a 32-year-old Akha man from China.)
Youth Central Prison, block 1, room 30, 22 / 4 M. 3

T. Klong 6, Klong Luang, Pathumthani 12120 THAILAND

Bue Mue Emily Soe, (She is a 54-year-old Akha woman from Burma.)
Central Women Correctional Institution, build-ing 5, room 3, 33 / 3 Ngam Wong Wan Road, Lard Yao, Chatchuek, Bangkok 10900 THAILAND



Sila no sakut, (She is a 35-year-old Lahu woman from Burma.)
Chiangrai Central Prison, block 4, room 10.

P.O. Box 221, Doi Hang, A. Muang, Chiangrai 57000 THAILAND
Channan Chewchan, (He is a 38-year-old Akha man from Chiangrai Province.)
Chiangrai Central Prison, block 2, room 4/5, Doi Hang, A. Muang, Chiangrai 57000 THAILAND

Prisoner Activist: I am a 25 year old anarchist serving 8½ years for stealing a pair of socks and assaulting a courtroom officer. I am isolated in prison for organising a four day prisoners strike protesting inhuman treatment in an Oregon prison. My ongoing struggle is to educate and inspire my fellow incarcerated freedom fighters by putting together an international penpal program of radical literature, a library and resource guide for radical prisoners to combat racism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of ignorance. I am requesting books, direct from publisher zines, financial donations.


Write to: Cassidy Wheeler C/O Chantel Guldry, C/O LABC POB 1483, Lawrence 66044, Kansas USA.

*Are you in custody, seeking bail or facing criminal charges?
Contact a Criminal Law Accredited Specialist.*

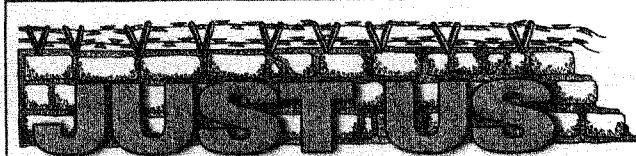
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All letters will be included as space permits. Letters may be edited for space, and content that might get us or you in trouble. Unless otherwise indicated, authors will be identified by first name and prison only.

Just Us needs your support! Help is needed with further projects such as a penpal service, and support campaigns for prisoners and their friends and families. Please contact us if you want to get involved!

Editors: Kat Armstrong, Joshua Coene, Brett Collins, Stacy Scheff, Anthony York, Judi-ann Leggetts, CA and anonymous others.