



**Andrew Wilkie MP**  
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR CLARK

The Secretary  
Legislative Council Government Administration Committee 'B'  
Parliament of Tasmania  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000


Dear Secretary

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Tasmanian Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention Matters.

I enclose a submission which has been provided to me anonymously by a member of the public. The author of this submission did not wish to make a representation themselves, for fear of identification and/or retribution.

I would be grateful if you would consider this account in the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Wilkie MP  
Independent Member for Clark

30 March 2023

But for the grace of God go you or loved ones...

I come with life experience within the justice system of over 12 years in prison and over half that time again under some sort of supervision within the community under Corrective Services.

I didn't do well in prison.

I could not fight and did not like at all the violent, psychologically damaging culture amongst the inmates. I just didn't fit in. I guess you could say i'm lucky that I didn't become an apprentice of crime whilst in that intensive and oppressive environment that is within the walls of a correctional institution.

I was seriously assaulted on a number of occasions during my various terms of imprisonment, including being 'jugged' with superheated hotwater, and I can unerringly say that none of them were for things I did wrong. I just had to learn how to sit on the edge of the culture in order to not only survive but to observe that culture.

I observed a lot of 'not willing' to reform characters and also a number of 'willing' to reform characters during my numerous terms of imprisonment. You know who is going to make the transition from 'crim' to good citizen.

Through discourse, I learned a lot about certain types of crimes and those who commit them. One of the most recalcitrant groups I observed would be those who have a long history of sex crimes against children and only ever pretend to be 'changed' characters.

From almost the beginning of my last sentence, I decided that my jail days were over after and i did what I could to retrain myself with the new behaviours I would need to become a non recidivist.

I harked back to my days in countless rehabs(often for months at a time) and the 'tools' they give you for getting away from your addiction. All the things I remember hearing but decided to let go straight out my other ear came flooding back to me and I found myself by no means short of solutions.

The last prison sentence I served was just short of 4 years and was for crimes I committed when I was 14 through until about 20 years old. Thank God the type of offending did not remain in me after I was found out. I was a victim of sexual abuse; I became a perpetrator of sexual abuse and I became someone who turned their back on such behaviour. I have come full circle with the cycle. It was unfortunate and probably a major factor in that cycle that when discovered, my offending was hushed up by my family.

It should have been dealt with then!

I have done time in 3 states and can still remember my M.I.N.[prisoner id no] from 2 of them(even after all the intervening years). That shows how much of the culture has been left imprinted on me.

Those imprints are of the physical AND mental nature Not forgetting the numerous bashings I received-which were mostly because I wouldn't 'play the game' of us vs them. I am talking about the game that exists between prisoner and officer where each one must aim to be at least 1 step in front of the other.

During all the negative tumultuous times in prison, I have experienced brief windows of very positive steps forward and this has propelled me towards rehabilitation. I am MOSTLY cured of my addictions and know how to live one day at a time.

I had a gambling addiction that lasted well over 30 years. Now, I have not gambled for somewhere around 12 years and I can still feel the exhilaration of having those shackles off. Lucky break, eh?

These paths fuel hope within the individual who wants to self-rehabilitate. They did for me. It makes my heart a bit softer when I see people getting past the shackles of mind as well as body.

If we don't want to see a continual revolving door of recidivists draining the public purse each year, we need to take some responsibility for the 'through care' we provide for the recidivist. The State has a duty to provide programs and facilities that enable the individual to seize their own rehabilitation.

It is 6 years since I left prison for the last time and I have experienced the positives of 'going straight' and also the temptations that have come up during that time. I made up my mind to self rehabilitate but have been open to help along the way.

There were times when I asked for help in certain areas-especially in the area of mental health- and found that the promised help was not there. I was left to flounder and except for my Christian faith, I would have spiralled back into the cycle of recidivism. There were occasions when I was on parole that after asking for the promised help from parole officers, I was told basically that it was up to me to find the particular help needed. After being told that "All you need to do is ask us and we will help you. We don't want to see you breach your parole.", I felt like I was turning circles. The sense of dismay at a system that seems to be all about being seen to help was powerful and at times caused me to not only help myself despite a lack of care from parole officers but left me vehemently against placing any faith in Correctional Services.

It took me over 2 years to get myself a flat after I got out of prison in 2016 and that was only because my Dad helped in obtaining it.

Secure accommodation is probably the most important factor in the movement from recidivist to rehabilitated citizen. I cannot stress highly enough the importance of secure accommodation for one who is looking to break the cycle of crime.

Addiction (this has many forms) is a key aspect that needs to be addressed for one to move from recidivism to 'normality'.

Another key factor in a successful transition from recidivism is keeping busy. This is common to addiction recovery as well. Somehow, someway, the individual needs to participate in social programs ie. community gardens, tafe/university, mentoring programs, employment etc. to feel that they have a needed role to play that doesn't involve crime or addiction. I do personally believe incentivised programs are the way to go with regard to pre-release programs that are fair dinkum.

You really do have to use the carrot rather than the stick. Bottom line. You can't expect much more than a signature on an official paper as a starting point for the inmate to participate freely. The rest is up to the quality of the program offered.

Unpicking the past learned behaviours to start afresh is essentially what I see that needs to happen.

That is what happened with my self-rehabilitation. I was blessed enough to be able to have introspection and realisation and then determination to succeed with getting 'straight'.

Within the corrections and inmate fraternities there is corruption. Corruption that lets mobile phones and drugs into prison. There is a corruption that pervades the units or wings of our prisons that makes a mockery of the criminal code and seeks to serve itself at the expense of the inmate who really does want to have a go.

Privatising Corrections. Stop it now. The State imposes the punishment and therefore are responsible for running the prisons.

One thing that has always occurred to me is that in the whole justice system, it seems that no one ever tells the individual WHY what they did that brought them to prison is wrong. Not just, "it's against the law." Is the first step to rehabilitation the acknowledgement of the wrong doing? If so, then TRUE therapy can bring about the change from crim/recidivist to non crim/recidivist. The walls keep the individual contained but ironically, it is the walls within the mind that need to be torn down. Let's face it, it is within the walls of the mind that the initiation of the crime occurs.

Thank you for letting me open up to you with this information. Please contact me at anytime for any further help needed. Yours Sincerely,

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