

## **Submission: Tasmanian Legislative Council Inquiry Tasmanian Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention Matters**

### **1. Factors influencing increases in Tasmania's prisoner population and associated costs;**

- a. As an active member of the community and as part of the CALD community in Tasmania, I believe criminalisation of Youth is a very important factor in the increase in prisoner population. Early criminalisation leads to disempowerment and disenfranchising in youth and young adults, leading to a potential lifetime of revolving door in and out of the corrective system. The root of this particular problem is the lack of Public spaces for Youth and young adults to gather, exercise and communicate creatively. This is no new idea of course, it's the oldest and most effective strategy, and the data suggests that implementation at a widespread level is more effective than shattered spaces. In other words, the implementation needs to be done by the State Government in every suburb, not by Councils. The State Government needs to take the lead and mandate this to councils, and of course finance it as well.
- b. The issue of wrongful conviction is one that I have actively been involved in. Wrongful convictions have occurred in Tasmania. I understand that this might not increase population per se, as a rightful conviction would put the same number of people in jail, or more (for example in the case of Sue Neill-Fraser's wrongful conviction, the real perpetrators are known to be two or even three). Nevertheless, for the public to know that the right people are convicted, would be a bonus for peace of mind and knowing that the taxpayer money is well used. As another example, I would have personally loved to see people such as Tim Ellis being incarcerated for running over and killing Natalia Pearn with his car. These are cases in which a suspended sentence is totally inadequate and makes the system look corrupt and certainly not in the interest of the public.

### **2. The use of evidence-based strategies to reduce contact with the justice system and recidivism;**

I will have to come back to the case of Sue Neill-Fraser in this item. The investigation into the disappearance of the alleged victim was not evidence based, but rather circumstantial and, moreover, relied on the active concealing of substantial evidence. This was the result of a combination of both ineptitude and open corruption of the investigative bodies. It is obvious that these investigative bodies are not prepared for serious criminal offence such as this particular case, but they have also shown poor character and inefficiencies in pettier investigations. An increase in funding from taxpayer money should not be a recommendation in this inquiry, as it has already been established openly that there is a systematic problem, Australia wide, with corruption in the Police and Department of Prosecution system, which will not be solved, as Police tend to investigate themselves, exacerbating the problem. An independent review on Police Corruption might be more adequate than an inquiry as to why the high levels of incarceration. This is not to imply Police are all corrupt. There is a high proportion of Police on the ground doing an amazing job. The problem is at a higher level, and hence the reluctance to do anything about it.

### **3. The provision of, and participation in, services for people in prison and leaving prison (health housing and legal services);**

As I understand, Tasmanian prisons run as a corrective organisation, not a rehabilitation or skill gathering institutions, in preparation for integration to society after conviction. This must change, and the argument that there are not enough resources is simply untruth, as there is a waste of recourse in many levels of the Court and correctional system (This should also be the focus of an inquiry). Other countries have championed the correctional system making it effective, lowering prisoner numbers and giving all support necessary for a proper rehabilitation, with a fraction of the money. If the will is there, it's just a matter of looking elsewhere.

### **4. Training and support initiatives for corrective service staff related to increasing individual well-being, professionalism, resilience and reduced absenteeism;**

Here is an item which certainly requires more funding, specially amid the shortage of skilled workers in all these sectors. At the same time, we have skilled migrants who cannot work in these areas due to Visa constraints. These migrants are already in the country and the Government should not spend money and energy in trying to bring new people for these jobs, but giving the opportunity to the people already in the ground trying to find jobs, and trying to acquire the appropriate Visa to be eligible for recruitment. It is really a no brainer.