

SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

This submission addresses only two of the Committee's Terms of Reference:

- Strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activities in Queensland
- Measures toreduce the rate of recidivism.

The submission focuses on the good [and bad] work that prisons can do in these areas.

It is a joint submission from the following:

Kenneth Park. Coordinator of submission and frequent visitor of Stephen W Carter.

Stephen Carter. A prisoner serving a life sentence. Since his original crime while a drug addict, Carter has become an active and devout Christian and has improved his education to Advanced Diploma level. It had been intended to integrate the three individual submissions into a coherent whole; however, Stephen's own experience is so compelling and personal that we have decided that it should stand alone. He has addressed only the recidivism Term of reference; and his contribution is at the end of the submission.

Janet Wilkinson. Janet has visited a number of prisoners in many Corrective Services establishments over many years. During those visits she has formed a personal relationship with Stephen Carter. We do not apply to make a personal appearance before the Committee; unless of course some clarification or elaboration is required.

THE CAUSES OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

"In 1942, on the day that I started school, Mr Borne gave me the cane. Mr Borne was in charge of the one teacher country school at Majors Creek. At lunch time that day he caught one of the sixth class boys [the older Cawthorne boy I think] swearing in the playground. He got six of the best on each hand." Neither Cawthorne nor I have ever faced court.

"When I was around 12, our gang got into a lot of mischief. Petty crime really. One day Constable X caught me and a mate in a back alley up to no good. He gave us both a good kick up the bum, threw us into the paddy wagon and delivered us both to our Dads. We both then got another thrashing from the old man." Neither of the two fathers nor the constable were charged with assault or lost their jobs; indeed all three were regarded as doing their jobs well. How times have changed. Neither my mate nor I have ever faced a magistrate.

"When I was a Shire Engineer, Col, my head gardener came to tell me that old Mrs Y had reported to him that young Z had been doing "burn outs" on the lovely lawn in the main town park. We went to see the Sergeant who had words with Z. The next morning Z presented himself to Col ready to repair the damage that he had caused, and he also "volunteered" to do a couple of extra days work in the gardens as an apology to Col." I can't remember that Z ever stepped out of line again, he got a job, married a local girl and is now a respected member of the town.

The dispensing of justice has changed a lot over the past 70 years, not always for the better. Those of us who have lived through this period have no doubt whatsoever as to why the level of criminal activity has increased so much. In a word, the value of families and schools has been almost destroyed, discipline and respect have been lost and a moral sense has been removed. Power and authority have been centralised and swamped with rules so numerous that nobody could ever read them. I would like to address a few of these symptoms:

MOTHERS NOT IN THE HOME. A couple of generations ago, the profession of Wife and Mother was highly respected. When Johnny came home from school there was supervision, nurture, love and discipline; definitely no bad conduct, no hours on computers or face book addling young brains with rubbish. Today's children are put into child care even before they are weaned or toilet trained. Is this the society we need? If Mothers were again to be full-time carers, youth unemployment [a major contributor to crime] would disappear instantly. Johnny leaves school and can't get a job because his Mum has already taken his job. How did this come about? WW2, a reduced birth rate, the advent of labour-saving devices, and the pill all helped to make the career of Wife and Mother become a much smaller job than it had been. Then came "economic necessity"...whereas once a family could survive with a reasonable standard of living on the husband's wage, it now requires two incomes to support the mortgage. The next anti-Wife and Mother influence was Women's' Liberation. A woman in the perceived role of "slave" to their husband and children was no longer acceptable; women had to prove that they are every bit as good as men in every job. Indeed they had to strive to be better, to rise to the top in a man's world. The women's liberationists were aided and abetted by certain political parties and by the media, so it became definitely unacceptable to be a stay-at-home mum. The vacuum caused by increasing lack of supervision and care of the children was soon filled. That vacuum has been filled with violent computer games, lack of physical exercise, anti social behaviour and all manner of experimentation. Kids no

longer split the firewood, mowed the lawn or did any family chores. All these are precursors to criminal behaviour, all attributable to some degree to the changed role of wife and mother.

How can this trend be reversed? Mothers must nurture their babies until school age. Because jobs are esteemed only by the salaries that they earn, the profession of Wife and Mother must somehow be rewarded for the work that they do. Structural changes to employment conditions and taxation structures are desirable so that a mother can enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding career working in employment but almost entirely from home. These will have to be part-time jobs so that the woman completes her paid work before the children come home from school. Many are already doing this so it is possible to build upon it. Motherly love and supervision are the antidotes to delinquency and juvenile crime. Regrettably, most of the remedies are outside the jurisdiction of state governments.

LACK OF HONOURABLE BEHAVIOUR, GOOD ROLE MODELS, INTEGRITY. Once upon a time lawyers could be trusted, politicians were honest and put the interests of their constituents first, sports stars never took drugs or got drunk in public or misbehaved with girls. The police had respect and priests were beyond reproach. Our heroes and role models today have feet of clay. It goes without saying today that all politicians can be bought. People in high office no longer fall on their swords when their infamy is detected. They brazenly proclaim their innocence at enquiry after enquiry until all avenues of appeal are exhausted. Never any remorse.

Senior public servants tell the minister what he wants to hear rather than what he needs to hear. There are no standards, only expediency. There is no truth today, only spin.

What effect does all this have on young people at their most vulnerable age? Doing the wrong thing, the self-centred thing has become the norm. We adore Ned Kelly, the crooks, the “colourful” personalities. The media ensures that these modern heroes are rewarded every day with public adulation and financial gain. Rock stars, despite their abominable behaviour are constantly promoted by the media as desirable examples. Young people are impressionable and look for role models. They imitate behaviour that the media tells us again and again is acceptable, desirable, sexy and profitable. If people accept high office, if they take positions of trust or they permit themselves to become role models, if they seek and obtain constant media exposure then a higher standard of behaviour must be demanded of them than is expected from us mere mortals. When a priest abuses children in his care, when a politician embezzles public money in his custody, when a football star practises thuggery and violence on and off the field then punishments should be commensurate with the status of the offender. That is a concept that is difficult to incorporate into the law, but is a concept that judges and juries understand and can enforce if they have adequate discretion. Mandatory sentencing is within state jurisdiction and should be reconsidered. The selection of our role models and heroes is almost entirely in the hands of the media, and that selection is usually based on all the wrong criteria. If people of such eminence behave as hooligans or are corrupt then it is OK for us, their worshippers, to behave likewise.

Fallen role models are a significant, if indirect, contributor to an ambience of poor behaviour, leading to crime.

LOSS OF BELIEF. Although there are notable exceptions, people who actively profess a religion tend to do the right thing, to care for others and to keep out of court. Convicted criminals who later find some value system, a belief, or some power greater than themselves are more likely to show remorse, to respond to prison programmes and to emerge as reformed and worthwhile citizens. Their understanding of the difference between right and wrong is much more focussed. There are two conclusions about the value of “religion” in its broader sense. Firstly, at a government level it should be encouraged. School Chaplains, [though strictly speaking they do not teach religion] and Religious Education should be encouraged; deviant priests should be harshly punished. Secondly, the prison system should nurture the prison chaplain service. The quality of chaplains, the access and facilities afforded them and the financial support they are given should be examined. The role of universities and “political correctness” in undermining religion in our society will be discussed separately.

LACK OF NATIONAL PURPOSE AND PRIDE. I believe that the young men who served in World War 1 or in World War 2 had a lower crime rate than their contemporaries of today. The discipline, respect for authority and pride of serving your country, of wearing the nation’s uniform make the difference. Even those who did not serve in combat achieved those benefits. The three month National Service scheme that operated in the 1950s [not the one during Vietnam days] is interesting. None of those trainees served on operations, but they experienced character building and camaraderie that still stays with them today. Fifty years later those men and the ex-nashos from the Vietnam era have bonded together in an organisation that is more stridently nationalistic than the RSL, and these men are the custodians of the values of discipline and respect. The experience of wearing a uniform, of being fit, of being a team, of harsh conditions and harsh discipline, of experiencing danger, of doing a real man’s job....these are experiences that will keep young men out of trouble and out of gaol.

Many people would restore National Service, and indeed that would effectively remove crime from our streets. Some say that all should do time in the army and serve in whatever combat is current. The Israelis do that, and their army is very successful. I understand that their crime rate is low also. Other people advocate a civilian form of National Service where the trainees are subjected to a military style of discipline while working on remote infrastructure projects of national development, but without

training to kill. Such advocates also usually want the girls to have a similar scheme. All I will suggest is that something needs to happen. "Work for the Dole" and "Community Service" [as a court awarded punishment] are the only examples that I know of the civilian National Service model, and neither has been a great success. Regrettably again, little can be done at a state level.

The advantages of national pride in crime prevention are obvious. If you have pride in yourself and in your country/state/town then you are unlikely to vandalise it or decorate it with graffiti. How to obtain national pride is a question for our leaders and our media. There is an interesting interplay between national pride and multi-culturalism. In pre and post WW2 days immigrants were encouraged to learn English and to adopt Australian ways. Today, dual citizenship is encouraged, old national customs and dress are encouraged, English is not compulsory and we are many nations within one country. National allegiances are questionable and so ghettos and culture-based criminal gangs have developed. The attitude of young Muslim men towards Australian women is well known. It is difficult to see how multi-culturalism has contributed to a lower crime rate.

MOULDING OUR YOUTH. As mothers are mostly at work or exhausted when they are at home [after cooking and doing house work, driving Fiona to ballet and Claude to soccer], churches have lost their impact; so the education of our youth and children in good citizenship falls now upon the media [especially social media] school teachers and questionable older mates. Journalists, radio and now TV reporters have a unique ability to influence the young with the bias they put on their reports and by what events they choose to cover. These moulders of public opinion and standards were in earlier days trained as cub reporters in a type of apprenticeship scheme. In those days reporters reported news- they did not have an ego-filled belief that they were the news. Editorials were restricted to the Editorial section, but today every journalist has to give his or her opinion; usually with a political or social bias. The police officers who gave chase are the villains, not the speeding car thieves. The big change came when journalists began to receive their training at university. Fortunately most of us have outgrown the simplistic, left wing Marxist theories; but not so in certain faculties of our universities, especially those that teach our budding media performers. Fortunately also most of us outgrew the worst excesses of "political correctness" and retained only the good, sensible bits. Not so in those same hallowed grounds of brainwashing. Has anybody ever heard an ABC interviewer take a "politically incorrect" line of questioning? The problem is that the products of these institutions have such an influence on our youth. Consequently sexual promiscuity is portrayed as normal, embarrassing language in performing arts is artistic license, etc. Imagine if the media took up an anti-homosexual campaign with the same vigour that it embraced the anti-smoking campaign. Taken individually, the white-anteing of morals and standards by the media are small steps on the downward spiral. However they are cumulative and they are irreversible. Progressively the respect for traditions, standards, and morals is eroded. The ambience of disrespect for the establishment, for law and for law enforcers is one step away from small crimes.

Like journalists, teachers were once trained "in-house" in teachers' colleges. Now they too are university trained. Teachers today are highly unionised and highly political. Having questioned my children and now my grandchildren, it seems to me that only one side of the debate is ever promoted by the teachers in political and social issues. Children are amazed to hear that there is another side to every debate. I am however sympathetic towards teachers. Once a highly respected profession, they are now abused by parents and assaulted by students. Corporal punishment is out, other discipline is too complex to administer. A son-in-law of mine, frequently an acting deputy principal, spends most of his day at the police station! What has happened to education? In these circumstances what hope is there that teachers will fill the gap in moral instruction, citizenship and discipline. Bad attitudes and bad behaviour, if not already criminal, are well established before children leave school. State governments can act on all aspects of school education.

THE RISK OF APREHENSION. Whenever we drive in NSW my wife and I are amazed at the behaviour of the local drivers. They are absolutely cowed. The reason is obvious: there is a highly visible presence of traffic police. That presence is reinforced by the law and by the magistrates, with double demerits on accident prone holidays. The risk of apprehension and punishment is high. Here in Queensland the likelihood of being caught taking drugs into a prison is high, the deterrence is very visible and active. Most visitors therefore do not attempt to take drugs into prisons. Regrettably the incidence of alcohol-fuelled violence, of underage alcohol abuse, of party gate crashing, of traffic offences, of official corruption is unacceptably high here in Queensland because the risk of being detected and the risk of punishment are thought to be low.

The visibility of police, the CMC, the customs officers, the council building inspectors, parking inspectors and every agency that enforces or administers a law has a marked effect on the number of offences against that law. How can the presence of the law enforcers be increased without turning Queensland into a police state and without making the cost of enforcement outweigh the benefits? Increase the enforcement strength? Reduce the number of petty regulations? Get the enforcers out of the office by reducing the paperwork? Employ non-uniformed staff to do much of the office work? Based on the Corrective Services budget allocation, it costs around \$70,000 per year to keep a prisoner in gaol. At that rate it would be cost effective to employ a few extra police officers. Each additional police officer would deter, say, two or three potential offenders from ending up in jail, so it would more than pay for their wages. It would also add to Community Safety. The visibility of the enforcers is a very significant factor.

The punishment of juvenile offenders needs consideration. The stories of juvenile hooligans caught shoplifting are folk lore. "Don't bother calling the police Mr Shopkeeper, I'm underage and they can't do anything to me." That is the start of another life of crime. It is also legend that the offender who uses the duty solicitor or the legal aid solicitor will fare far worse than the same offender who employs his own solicitor. Prison population is more a measure of the availability of good lawyers within the legal aid system rather than a measure of the level of criminal activity.

The publicity given to apprehension and punishment is in itself a significant deterrent. Who would now be a drug mule taking drugs into Bali? As usual however, the media focuses on all the occasional incidents of police bungling and apparently inadequate sentences by judges, rather than on the many successes in crime fighting. The short answer is that the enforcement agencies have to be more visible and need more high media impact prosecutions. Also the media should portray the truth about what incarceration is like and not sensationalise and stir up the public outcry about prisoners eating ice cream or watching TV. The truth is incarceration is a life-changing and terrible experience yet the public don't see this. This means that it loses its deterrent value to a large extent. The government employs an army of "spin doctors", so it is within its power to publicise successful apprehensions and prosecutions and to de-glamorise the life of imprisonment.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. When I was a student in Melbourne in the 1950s many Chinese restaurants had an opium den out the back, occasionally raided by the police. The general Australian population however had no interest in drugs. We loved our beer and occasionally drank too much and got into fights; but 6 o'clock closing kept the problem more or less under control. Wine was not drunk here and few used hard spirits. I believe that drugs became part of the Australian scene around 1970. In Vietnam, American soldiers were using marijuana almost constantly, even on combat operations. In my own unit of over 350 men, not one incident of use was detected by my own officers of NCOs or by the Provost. After that time things went downhill rapidly. Today drugs reap such profits that syndicates and gangs can command more resources than the police, there is ample money to kill or to bribe anybody who gets in the way. Overseas, drug cartels are more powerful than the legitimate governments. The addiction is so powerful that they are the direct or indirect cause of most crime. Most worrying are home invasions when drug-crazed kids injure or kill the elderly in pursuit of a few dollars. It would be the joke of the century to suggest that the state government is doing nearly enough to eradicate drugs in Queensland. The bkie crackdown has scratched the surface and the momentum must not be lost. Drugs have to be legalised or there has to be zero tolerance. No half measures.

How can today's school children afford to buy drugs or to engage in binge drinking? Sixpence to go to the pictures on Saturday arvo was the limit of money available to children of my day. Are parents, teachers, truant officers, welfare officers, police and the courts doing enough? The weekly stories of hundreds of teenagers gatecrashing a party and assaulting the parents and the police who are attempting to restore order are a real concern. Restoration of parental responsibility and liability would be a good start. The constant excessive drinking and violence seen on TV at certain night club areas is disgusting; particularly when the remedies are so obvious and within the exclusive authority of the state government. Surely these night clubs are not paying such big political donations that justifies the death and injury of so many of our young people.

RECIDIVISM

A person's experiences within the prison system will probably be the most significant factor in determining whether or not he re-offends after release. Consider two very different scenarios describing the outcomes for two imprisoned offenders:

Scenario 1.

- His violent and vicious behaviour has worsened.
- He has become drug dependent while in prison.
- He has no supportive friends, relatives or support organisations on the outside.
- Through other prisoners he has developed a criminal network inside and outside of prison.
- His social skills are so bad that he can not form relationships; his ability to relate to women is poor.
- He has no respect for authority, cannot accept discipline.
- His job-seeking skills are poor.
- He has never had a job and has no skills of use to an employer.
- His basic education does not permit him to communicate his thoughts and emotions or to carry out normal work and societal functions.
- His personal attributes [punctuality, reliability, team work, responsibility, manners, personal hygiene etc] are poor.
- He has not developed acceptable moral standards or a purpose for his life.

Scenario 2

- He can resolve issues and disputes by compromise and negotiation. All violent tendencies have been removed.
- He has been drug free for a period and has resisted temptation when offered.

- He has a small but reliable circle of friends, relatives and organisations that will assist him in the transition back to a normal, productive life.
- He has no relationships with criminals.
- He has become articulate, personable and friendly and now has a good attitude towards women.
- He respects authority and accepts that rules, discipline and punishment are essential elements of a civilised society.
- He has learnt how to apply for a job, how to behave during an interview. He understands the discrimination aspects against ex-convicts.
- He has learnt a number of work skills, eg furniture manufacture, farm work, kitchen duties etc.
- His basic education has been improved; those with basic education have taken the opportunity of prison to advance.
- He has developed many personal skills and work-related qualities.
- He now sees a goal in his life, has values and standards, sees a spiritual dimension to life.

The person described in scenario 1 is very likely to re-offend [regardless of the “harshness” of his sentence and probably enhanced by the length of time he is kept in jail]; whereas the scenario 2 person is not likely to re-offend. The influence of the prison system in helping the inmate move from one scenario to the other is paramount:

- Violence. People speak with their fists or with weapons because they are not articulate and have too little vocabulary and education to express their emotions or to resolve difference of opinion by negotiation and compromise. Prisons could do much more in developing these skills.
- Drugs. The authorities are very effective in preventing visitors bringing drugs into prisons. The anecdotal evidence however seems to indicate that it is not the visitors that bring drugs into the prisons. Prisoners who don't get visitors can still get access to drugs. For several weeks in 2012, during severe flooding, no visits were allowed but drugs still were allegedly available in certain prisons. Prisoners who have associated with drugs are required to complete a thorough programme to free them from addiction. The desirable result is not merely a freedom from the addiction but a long term abhorrence of drug taking. Reformed cigarette smokers often develop this level of antagonism against their former addiction, so it must be feasible. On the wider front, there is still a large scope to develop zero tolerance towards drugs, such as we see in Malaysia. This needs a combined operational approach by law makers, judges, police, customs and immigration and border security agencies. The huge drug busts that are frequently reported on TV clearly indicate that many syndicates see the rewards as outweighing the risk of detection and the penalties.
- Support Network. In my many prison visits for over ten years I am always uplifted to see the how well some prisoners are supported by their families, friends and churches. Those visitors need to be welcomed, as they are in some establishments; not deterred, as they are in others. Unfortunately, there are some prisoners who have no visitors and who have no support outside the prisons. This is not too serious for short term prisoners; but is detrimental for the rehabilitation of long-termers. Support while in prison often equates to support on release; which is terribly important to re-integrate offenders back into society and to minimise recidivism. Prison chaplains and prisoner aid organisations can play a big part in helping to develop support networks and it seems appropriate that the authorities should support their efforts in every way, including financially. I do have to mention a particular complaint. That matter has been dealt with and need not be raised again except to ensure that the lessons have been learnt. In one particular corrective establishment over some years visitors were made very unwelcome. This was due to a poor attitude among the staff at that place and due to a malfunctioning itemiser [the instrument which is used to determine if visitors are drug-free]. The ridiculous results that this instrument was producing were brought to the attention of the Commissioner again and again before it was properly calibrated. The main complain was however the devastating effect that this had on the prisoners and on their visitors. When only one visit per week is allowed and then to have that visit cancelled at the very last moment is completely demoralising for both parties and quite a strain on the sometimes delicate support network relationships. In fact more should be done to encourage visitors to our correctional centres. This includes quicker processing of police clearances to allow contact visits, the standard provision of tea and coffee facilities and more comfortable seating. The current standard steel seats set 3 metres apart are particularly uncomfortable and unsociable, causing back strain and pain particularly to older visitors and pregnant women. Most prisoners worry that they will lose their partners due to their incarceration and the breakdown of family relationships. This is a serious added cost of crime to the community so anything that Qld Corrections can do to encourage visitors would be to the State's advantage.
- Criminal Networks. Many youths make a couple of silly and immature judgments get sent to prison; and come out of prison hardened criminals. Of course, that is folk lore, but has an element of truth in some cases. There needs to be constant streaming of offenders to separate the bad influences from those who may be influenced. Under no circumstances must streaming be based upon the time to serve remaining or upon the nature of the crime. For example, the offender that I visit is serving life for murder plus man-slaughter. In reality he is a gentle soul, a model prisoner and a great influence for good with other prisoners. On the other hand others are convicted of violent rape, abduction and murder; and show no remorse. There has been a tendency over the past two years to treat both these convicts the same way, based only on the crime and the time still to serve. The streaming which isolates the hardened criminals and the violent types from those who are progressing towards a better life needs to be encouraged. The main streaming events are the transition from high security to a low security establishment, and from there to work camps and finally to parole.

Again, these transitions must never be based on arbitrary factors but rather upon the rewards and punishments of a “carrot and stick” approach. At all costs, bad influences within the prisons must not be enabled to spread their poison to those others who are capable of rehabilitation.

- **Social Skills.** It is beyond my expertise to advise how to develop these skills in people whose lack of social skills is the probable cause of their imprisonment. How to teach rapists how to relate to women is something that challenges the imagination. But it must be done if these prisoners are ever to become useful members of society again.
- **Respecting Authority.** I had the privilege of commanding four units in the Australian Army, two in peace, and two in war. Fifty years later my old soldiers seek me out and show me friendly respect, usually saying: “You were a tough bastard but always fair”. I mentioning that only to point out that no soldier who served under my command ever lacked respect for authority then, or even now. That is an observation about a system, not about me. The warders and the senior staff in each prison are the only “authority” that the prisoners know while they are in prison. If they do a good job then a respect for authority is established. The opposite is also true. People, including prison staff, do a good job, not because of the pay, but because they understand their work and can relate the importance of that work in a wider context, they believe that the work they are doing is worthwhile and because they receive real leadership and are not stuffed around by the hierarchy. It took some years of military training, tertiary education and experience before I was entrusted with an independent remote operational command. I do not believe that the prison staff has training of equivalent level. There is another feature of military training that is relevant. As a person progresses up through the ranks, different skills are needed. Some are picked up on the job, others need additional training. The corporal leading his section into battle needs quite different skills to the general dealing with politicians and senior public servants. I am therefore suggesting that Corrective Services needs to re-examine their training, qualification and promotion criteria. If prisoners are to learn to respect authority then the prison staff that they contact daily need to be motivated, fully trained and of the best quality. Recidivism will be reduced if prisoners are taught respect for authority. It will increase if there is engendered as hatred of authority.
- **Job Skills.** The likelihood of reoffending is greatly reduced if a released prisoner can get a job. This requires the ability to track down vacancies, to make an application, to present well at interview, to have some work experience and to have the personal qualities that employers are seeking. I am not aware that the service makes any serious attempt to provide these skills. In today’s situation it is assumed that any job applicant has some computer skills and has a driving licence. My prisoner friend is studying for an advanced diploma and has no access to a computer; indeed he has not been able to undertake any computer course. His driving licence has expired, so he will be disadvantaged in attending interviews. At one time inmates could find employment in prison on pine furniture making. Its unique brand was good quality and sold well, generating income for the prison service and valuable work experience for prisoners. The work ethic is foreign to many prisoners, so closely supervised productive work is very valuable. The furniture operation was closed down in favour of making plastic water tanks. That venture soon failed [at great cost] and, as far as I know the work opportunities are now much less than before. As their final transition back to normal life, the work camps are ideal. Many long term inmates have lost all touch with the real world and this relatively unsupervised productive work with low key security is excellent for their rehabilitation. Progressive transition towards more self discipline and trust while doing some productive work does develop a work ethic and good attitudes; enhances the likelihood of the person becoming a valuable member of society. I am very disappointed at the political over-reaction when two prisoners absconded from a work camp recently. The blanket punishment of the innocent was as counter-productive as is possible to conceive.
- **Education.** Education is the key to a better life. It is essential that all prisoners return to society with basic 3R abilities. It was a lack of education that was the probable root cause of most offenders finding themselves in prison. I have not become aware that the prison service is making a serious and coordinated effort in this area. The effort required to get text books and educational material into a high security prison would deter all but those with high perseverance. For those that do already possess a basic education, every opportunity should be made to encourage inmates to progress their education to higher levels. This will require educational counselling to choose the appropriate path and access to funding. Improved education means improved access to jobs and improved social skills; and therefore less recidivism.
- **Personal Qualities.** The attributes needed to hold down a job and to make and retain friends cannot be easily taught. Basically they are learnt from others who are in authority or are regarded as role models. Once again, the warders have a major responsibility. They can, by their own example and by their supervisory practises, develop in the prisoners an improved civility, reduced swearing, cheerful attitudes, proper grooming etc. All of these have a snowball effect if that is the ambience of the whole establishment. Even as a visitor one is treated with helpful friendliness by the staff at some establishments; while at that other one is made to feel that we the visitors are also convicted criminals. Once again, the selection, training and supervision of the warders need constant improvement if prisoners are to develop suitable personal qualities which will mitigate against re-offending.
- **Morals.** Somewhere in his life the offender blurred the line between good and evil; between doing what is right and what is wrong. This holds with white collar crime as much as with crimes of violence. This is essentially a moral issue. People who have been taught from childhood to respect the elderly, to respect other’s property, to tell the truth, to obey the rules have little problem here. It is not the fear of punishment that keeps the majority on the straight and narrow, it is a belief that intrinsically doing what is right is the correct thing to do and society will break down if we don’t strive to do what is right. A belief in anything helps. Belief in God or some external supreme power is beneficial. A belief in democracy

helps do what is in the common good. The Prison Chaplains are probably the best equipped to re-establish in the minds of offenders the difference between right and wrong, and every assistance should be given to assist them in this work. For prisoners who have no desire to be exposed to religious beliefs then moral instruction becomes the work of councillors and social workers; and they too need to be encouraged. Understanding the difference between right and wrong is the first step in reducing recidivism.

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION BY PRISONER STEPHEN WAYNE CARTER

Stephen Carter



25.6.2014

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RE: PRISONS ENQUIRY

I am writing in reference to the inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland. In particular I would like to address measures to curb criminal activity by reducing the rates of recidivism.

My views are that of someone who has spent over 12 years in Queensland goals, of which more than 10 years has been spent in High Security and just over two years in Low Security. From my first day I have been absolutely determined that once I am released I will never return. Following are some of the views I have formed over the years concerning causes of recidivism and what could be done to address these causes.

It has been my long term observation that there are basically three groups of inmates;

1. Those with a strong and determined mindset to succeed and never come back to goal, and these men do very well for themselves.
2. And there are those with a mindset to reoffend, and reoffend they do, usually quite quickly and return to goal.
3. However, the majority of inmates are those who are "on the cusp". That is to say, they don't want to reoffend, or use drugs or come back to goal, but many don't have the skills or confidence yet to succeed in living a normal life in the community.

Therefore all effort must be taken to sway those on the cusp to make a determined commitment to re-enter the community according to the community's expectations.

Therefore I would like to put forward the following points;

- a) "The Withheld Program", where 20% of an inmate's income is held for them in a separate account that they cannot touch, except in extreme circumstances, and is exempt from SPER, Victims of Crime, ATO, etc. In this way an inmate will, with the right intent, at least have an opportunity of quickly entering the job market upon release. As it stands now, an inmate leaves goal and receives one week's unemployment benefit and if he obtains a crisis payment this will be taken out of his next unemployment

payment, making it very difficult to go job hunting, let alone survive in the community. Of course some will just waste their savings, but many will use these funds appropriately, and this could be the difference for many who have no support networks, for whatever reason, yet do have the right intentions.

- b) Education – This must be focused on those most at need, and in areas that will affect their reintegration into the community. Eg, teaching men how to write a resume, fill out a job application, and the do's and don'ts of participating in job interviews, etc. I realize that this type of training is already conducted by job agencies, but for those on the cusp this type of training needs to be done prior to release, to give the well intentioned inmate the best chance of success in the community.
- c) Reintegration for long term inmates – at the moment the few low security facilities are being used to house short term inmates, who would be better served by doing their time in a secure facility, as a real deterrent to re-offending, especially for the younger offenders. This would allow long term inmates the necessary environment to lose the secure mentality that comes with years spent in a tense and over structured setting. As years are spent adjusting and adapting to the secure environment, it cannot be expected to undo this damage in a few months or even a couple of years for those who have spent a decade or more in high security facilities.

Therefore there needs to be a series of forward progressive environmental steps to correctly reintegrate long term inmates successfully back into the community. Again this cannot be rushed through in the last couple of years, if an inmate has spent a decade or more in a high security facility.

The effort and time taken to reintegrate an inmate needs to be proportionate to the time taken to institutionalize him.

I am unaware if the Department understands the constant stress, anxiety and depression that many long term inmates experience due to many years in a high security environment, or even if the Department gives any gravity to these maladies when viewing a strategy for a long term inmate's successful reintegration. I have personally found this to be a very real factor and know that many other long term inmates have also. Therefore incremental reintegration is vital to the successful reintegration of long term inmates back into the community.

The prison farms are a good start to this end. W.O.R.C. is an excellent extension of the farms. Both allowing the inmate to exercise and develop personal discipline and responsibility in a progressively less structured environment. This is absolutely vital. However, there still needs to be more forward progressive steps, such as Release to Work, such as the Northern Territory Government has introduced very successfully. I realize that there will be both public and media nay-sayers who will condemn and deride such a move but if the community is to be upheld as the priority in this, then this type of avenue must be explored and implemented. Also the re-introduction of Home Detention for the final period of a long term inmate's sentence should be looked at. The reintroduction of both of these progressive measures will not only aid greatly the opportunity for long term inmates to successfully reintegrate into the community, but will also highlight any gaps in the individual offender's reintegration program, allowing any offending behavior to be promptly and appropriately addressed before a parole based order is given.

There will no doubt be a limited number of long term inmates who qualify for this form of reintegration, as I do not believe that those who have had numerous serious breaches and dirty urine tests should be given further rope to hang themselves and discredit those who are honestly endeavoring to both pay their debt to society and become a useful member of the community.

However it has been my experienced that the vast majority of inmates will eventually start to behave the way that they are treated. Many inmates have grown up in horrendously dysfunctional childhoods and this was the foundation of their original problems. Therefore more abuse and punishment will only compound the issue, not remedy it. Be clear that I am not recommending a lack of discipline. There must

be a carrot and stick approach to rehabilitation, not just the stick, if the government wishes to prevent and reduce criminal activity and the rate of recidivism.

The common media view of “lock up the scum and throw away the key” will never work. On the contrary, as hurt people hurt people, so healed people help people. If the powers that be truly wish to build a safer community, then it must address the criminogenic needs of the offender and not just run down the “knee-jerk”, momentarily popular “treat all crims like animals and give them what they deserve” attitude espoused by the media, commercial TV and newsprint.

Inmates need to be housed according to their behavior, as soon as practically possible, to separate those who wish to succeed from those who wish to continue to use drugs and reoffend, if the government is to take rehabilitation seriously and put the long term needs of the community as the highest priority. There is no positive whatsoever in housing low risk inmates, particularly young ones, with negatively focused offenders who continue to display an unrepentant attitude to their offence and crime in general.

To judge who is sincere, or fair-dinkum, in their remorse and striving for genuine rehabilitation, the Corrective Service Officers at the coal face need to be the ones who make the decisions on who progresses and who does not, as these officers are the ones who deal with the inmates on a day in day out basis, and it is obvious that there is no pulling the wool over the eyes of an experienced CSO. They have seen it all before. So please trust their judgment and listen to their input and advice.

I sincerely hope that you will thoroughly read and weigh up what I have written. I have been as open and as genuine as is possible and I believe my years of imprisonment have given me a unique insight into how the system might be utilized to best benefit both the offender and the community.

If there is anything further the Committee would like to discuss with me or question me about I would be more than pleased to comply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. W. Carter', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Stephen W Carter (A30579)