

# Community Living Association Inc

5 Nundah Street, NUNDAH Q 4012 Tel. (07) 3266 5633 Fax. (07) 3266 5866

Managing: Community Living Program, ARROS & Community Connections.

**Email.** Co-Ordinator: [moconnor@communityliving.org.au](mailto:moconnor@communityliving.org.au)  
General: [info@communityliving.org.au](mailto:info@communityliving.org.au)  
Finance: [finance@communityliving.org.au](mailto:finance@communityliving.org.au)  
Volunteers: [volunteers@communityliving.org.au](mailto:volunteers@communityliving.org.au)

**Web.** [www.communityliving.org.au](http://www.communityliving.org.au)

Crime Inquiry 2014  
Submission 079

4 August 2014

The Chairperson

Inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland

Dear Sir and committee members,

I note that several submissions to the Inquiry (Grazia Catalano and QLD Advocacy Incorporated) have raised the issue of over representation of people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities in the criminal justice system.

The statistics on such over representation are well known and irrefutable therefore this presentation will not focus on those facts but on potential causations and responses.

## Causations

People with intellectual and cognitive disabilities are overrepresented in the criminal justice system as offenders (although also victims) because:

- They are extremely vulnerable to abuse which may in turn lead to them developing offending behaviours which are the result of trauma.
- They are excluded from necessary inclusive social roles such as employment leaving them open to involvement and engagement in criminal activity.
- They are vulnerable to manipulation by others which can include being recruited as drug couriers, offsideers in crime etc.
- They are often people who experience public anxiety and fearfulness which leads them to escalate when they are confronted with situations of rejection or what they perceive as rejection. Community Living Association Inc works with a number of people like this whose behaviour if understood and made allowance for will not escalate but if they are made more anxious, or made to feel stupid by punitive responses will escalate in their behaviour.
- People with intellectual disability and cognitive disability also have poor recidivism rate associated with exclusion from prison rehabilitation systems on account of their abilities and/or release from prison with little support.

## Responses

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme offers an opportunity for people with intellectual disability and cognitive disability who are potential or have been offenders to receive necessary psycho-social supports. However this will require interface between Disability Services QLD and Corrections and a target approach to these people many of whom will not have heard of NDIS and be unlikely to access it without support.

- Current open employment programs funded by Commonwealth have largely failed this group; new options need to be looked at, the present Brisbane City Council offering of social procurements to groups like Nundah Community Enterprises Co-operative who then employ people with intellectual disability and cognitive disability is a promising example.
- Rehab programs in jail specifically targeted for people with intellectual disability/cognitive disability.
- Public education of police and other public interface populations whose lack of perception around people with intellectual disability and cognitive disability (also known as invisible disabilities) can lead them to respond in ways which ease escalation by person with intellectual disability/cognitive disability.
- Focus on known at risk groups. For example young people with intellectual disability, cognitive disability exited from Child Safety face not only the vulnerability conferred by intellectual disability, cognitive disability but also the vulnerabilities conferred by a history of abuse and the early and largely unsupported ejection into community life at 18. The new Child Safety reforms must include specific out of care supports for young people with intellectual disability/cognitive disability exiting Child Safety.

Yours sincerely,



Morrie O'Connor  
On behalf of Community Living Association Inc