

QUEENSLAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO IMPRISONMENT AND RECIDIVISM 2018

SUBMISSION

PRISON FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA (QUEENSLAND)

Contents

TERMS OF REFERENCE & ISSUES	1
INTRODUCTION	1
PRISON FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA (QUEENSLAND).....	2
REHABILITATION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	2
REINTEGRATION OF PRISONERS	9
PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION APPROACHES.....	10
CONCLUSION	15

TERMS OF REFERENCE & ISSUES

The stated terms of reference and issues to be addressed are:

1. Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice
2. Reintegration of prisoners
3. Prevention and early intervention approaches

INTRODUCTION

1. To understand Prison Fellowship Australia and the work in Queensland, it is necessary to start at the beginning, and Prison Fellowship International, from whence its genesis is.
2. Prison Fellowship International was born out of the experience of Charles Colson, a former aide to President Nixon. Convicted for a Watergate-related offence, Colson served seven months in prison.
3. During that time, he saw and experienced the difference that authentic Christian community makes to a person's life. Colson was convinced that this had broader implications in how prisoners are viewed and valued.
4. When Colson walked to freedom, he felt a responsibility to support men and women behind bars in their spiritual journeys. As a result, he spent the rest of his life encouraging others to join him in his work. The results of this effort began to transcend traditional religious boundaries, influencing the perceptions and policies of many leaders in the criminal justice field around the world.
5. In 1979, Colson founded Prison Fellowship International, extending the mission and work beyond the United States of America.

aus.office@prisonfellowship.org.au

ABN 85 005 883 161

PRISON FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA (QUEENSLAND)

6. In 1981 Australia became just the third chartered member of Prison Fellowship International, with the work commencing in Queensland. Prison Fellowship Australia is a strong national organisation with a presence in every State and Territory, enjoying productive partnerships with each State-based Correctional Department and running programs both inside and outside correctional centres.
7. Across Australia there are over 1000 volunteer men and women visiting prisoners, running programs in prisons, organising camps and providing Christmas presents for prisoners' children, supporting ex-prisoners when they are released, playing sports, running in-prison worship, Bible and other instructive studies, and providing many other services and programs and support.
8. Prison Fellowship relies on donations from individuals and churches for the majority of its financial needs, and as an organisation are constantly humbled by our partnership with those who support this work. In all Prison Fellowship does, we seek to bring a message of hope and change for prisoners, ex-offenders and their families through the message of Jesus Christ.

REHABILITATION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Chaplaincy

9. Prison Fellowship Australia's Visiting in Prison (VIP) program is provided in the form of Chaplaincy in Queensland under the umbrella of the State Chaplaincy Board, of which Prison Fellowship is a member and the only non-denominational provider. The State Chaplaincy Board has a Service Standard Agreement with the Queensland Corrective Services Commission to provide chaplains to prisons. Prison Fellowship's team of 45 selfless volunteer chaplains dedicate at least one day each week to provide pastoral care to the 9,000+ prisoners housed in 14 Queensland correctional centres. They also perform Sunday Chapel Services, attend team meetings, perform memorials and be available to support prisoners, staff and other workers when there has been a death in custody or deaths of families and relatives. Prison Fellowship Chaplains come from all walks of life, backgrounds and Christian denominations and are expected to demonstrate an ability to care for prisoners both professionally and pastorally through previous ministry experience and ongoing training provided.
10. Pastoral care, or spiritual care, is a ministry of support to any person during their pain, loss and anxiety as well as their triumph, joys and victories. Pastoral care reaches out to people wherever they are, offering consolation and encouragement, in whatever form is appropriate to the person at the time. The type of support needed may vary from day-to-day. The carer must accept them irrespective of their condition, their religious background, their strengths and their crimes. The carer shows no prejudice, judgemental attitude, or superior air toward their social position, their faith belief, use of language or their ethnicity. A pastoral person must respect the theological position or otherwise and not set out with an agenda of proselytisation of the Prisoner. Where faith beliefs differ,

there must be an acceptance of the common elements that exist in all religions and provide reassurance and support through their faith. (*Definition from the SCB Handbook*)

Sycamore Tree Project (STP)

11. In 1995 Prison Fellowship International decided to develop a program that would apply the principles of restorative justice in a prison context. PFI convened an international design team to explore how such a program might be constructed and to oversee development of the curriculum. Since then, the Sycamore Tree Project (STP) has been run in 35 countries, impacting thousands of prisoners and victims of crime.
12. Apart from chaplaincy, Prison Fellowship in Queensland has since 2011 delivered the STP. Initially, it was piloted at Woodford Correctional Centre as part of the approval process. It was approved primarily because of the demonstrated increase in empathy by prisoners for crime survivors as the course progressed.
13. Based on the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus in the Book of Luke, the tax collector who agreed to repay people he had cheated, this project brings victims/crime survivors into prisons to meet with offenders and discuss issues related to crime and its consequences. The program is used in 34 countries with more than 3,500 victims and prisoners participating. Research shows it changes offenders' attitudes, so they no longer view crime as acceptable.
14. STP background, resources and links:
<http://sycamorevoices.org/>
<http://restorativejustice.org>
<http://www.justicereparatrice.org/www.restorativejustice.org/>
<http://restorativejustice.org/we-do/sycamore-tree-project/>
15. Following the pilot program, the STP ran at the former Borallon Correctional Centre before the centre was initially closed and since then at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre (SQCC). Although, with the transfer of Brisbane Women's to SQCC it has been in abeyance. It is anticipated that for the first time it will be undertaken with an entirely female cohort. The STP is being revised generally and more specifically for a female cohort.
16. The STP is unique in Queensland, in that, it is the only means by which unrelated crime survivors and prisoners can meet. To Prison Fellowship's knowledge, there is no other program which enables such a dialogue to take place. It is also unique, in that, to Prison Fellowship's knowledge, there is no other restorative justice program for adult prisoners operating in Queensland prisons.
17. The STP course is made up of 5-8 sessions of two to three hours, each involving structured talking, sharing of experiences and encouragement to reassess the past. A key point in the course is when participants meet face-to-face with a crime survivor and are encouraged to relate the issues raised by crime survivors to their own offending experiences. Prisoners are also asked to complete a workbook throughout the course—

both in and outside session time.

The course draws on restorative justice theory, inviting prisoners to consider the impact of crime and to meet with crime survivor —enabling them to take responsibility for their actions and develop a greater capacity for empathy. The course culminates in a voluntary act of restitution in front of members of the community, crime survivor, prison staff and fellow prisoners.

The course is voluntary so potential participants will have an existing desire to change, however nascent. They are assessed for suitability at the outset and given clear information about the course and what will happen. The programme is suitable for prisoners from a range of backgrounds and needs, including those with learning disabilities. Increasingly the requirement to complete a crime survivor awareness programme has led to the course being signposted in sentence plans.

As well as the content of the course, a large part of the STP benefit comes from the environment in which it is run. The programme creates a space in which participants are exposed to a way of interacting that is outside of the prison routine and where they can benefit from interaction with volunteers and members of the community. Working in this environment, participants are able to find space to reflect and have a sense of value conferred onto them.

The STP gives participants the opportunity to stop and think about their lives, using knowledge and experiences to inform their attitudes and underpin a change in behaviour. It is intended to be a turning point that encourages a change of direction — a key part of the journey to reducing reoffending. The emotional and personal process is at the heart of the theory of change.

18. The impact and success of STP is supported by a number of studies. In Australia, the initial study was undertaken by Jean Mackenzie of the Notre Dame University, Fremantle in 2009 who considered the ***Facilitators / Facilitator Assistants' experience of a Restorative Justice Program***.
19. The paper reviewed the STP conducted in Western Australia by Prison Fellowship and concluded:

The findings in this study suggested that the model under review appeared to have a number of benefits for victims and offenders when compared to RJ programs which brought victims into direct contact with their offender. These included such elements as increased safety, protection from re-victimisation, and the opportunity for some level of healing in situations when the actual victim or the offender was not available. There was no evidence that re-victimisation was an issue but rather that the model provided a positive benefit by offering a less threatening alternative to direct contact between actual victims and offenders. Victims could access some closure and healing by telling their stories to a 'one step removed' offender. Offenders too received some benefits. They had the opportunity to be heard, to achieve some understanding of the impact of their behaviour, and some insight into how their victims might have felt. They were then able, working from within a community of acceptance to make some plans

for reparation and for moving on.

There was strong evidence of positive changes in both victims and offenders.

20. The findings in Western Australia were later corroborated in 2015 when a study was undertaken through independent consultants Shawn Boyle and Associates to the review the STP for Prison Fellowship. The outcome of the report was:

Prisoners overwhelmingly realise the impact of their crime on victims, often for the first time in their lives. Victim empathy, which reflects the offender's acceptance that his/her crime had adverse effects on some victim/victims, is a known factor essential to reduction of recidivism.

Prisoners described how the STP course has helped them better understand their thoughts and emotions that led them to commit the crime, and to have better self-control. Evidence from published research show that such self-realization is a critical factor related to successful reintegration and desistance from crime.

The program and its themes of remorse, forgiveness, responsibility and restitution helps prisoners make a meaningful internal commitment to get off the cycle of offending. Prison officials spoke about prisoners gaining understanding of forgiveness and taking responsibility for their actions.

Supported by other programs, counselling services and chaplains, this internal commitment can be harnessed to break the cycle of offending.

Rehabilitation of prisoners was a huge benefit expressed by all stakeholder groups, and most strongly reflected in the interviews with prison officials. Prison officials described a true differential impact observed in prisoners and their behaviour, with many noting a lessening of anger and more signs of positive behaviour among prisoners after attending the STP course.

Prison officials spoke about STP as making a difference in the lives of prisoners when they leave prison. Stakeholders described prisoners seeing a different and alternative way in life after prison that has given them hope for the future.

Victims often feel stronger and aided in their healing from their participation in STP. For many, it has helped them work through their fears and anxieties. Healing has helped victims to become survivors.

Many stakeholders (prisoners, victims and facilitators) described their participation in STP as life changing. While their physical environment has not changed, prisoners view STP as a turning around and the start of a journey to change.

STP benefits families and the wider community. Prisoners talked about how the STP helped them reconnect with their families, the resolve to not reoffend, and realising the need and their chance to give back to the community and society.

Some prisoners interviewed expressed their plan to use their experience to work with youth and apply what they have learned and experienced through STP.

21. Casting the net wider, but still 'locally', the restorative application of the STP has been extensively trialled in New Zealand where restorative justice is inbuilt into many aspects of their justice and penal systems. Indeed, the model applied in Australia, and the training of facilitators for the STP was initially undertaken in New Zealand.
22. The STP in New Zealand was reviewed by Margaret Marshall, a lawyer who worked as a Disputes Tribunal Referee and member of the Legal Aid Review Panel. In 1992 Margaret trained as a facilitator in the Victim Offender Reconciliation Programme (VORP) offered by the Centre for Community Justice in Elkhart, Indiana. Margaret is an accredited restorative justice facilitator in the Court – referred Restorative Justice Pilot and has worked as a facilitator with the Waitakere Restorative Justice Community Group for several years. Margaret has also been involved at a regional level in clarifying and developing restorative justice practices for provider groups and facilitators.
23. Margaret's paper - "*A Consideration of the Sycamore Tree Programme and Survey Results from the Perspective of a Restorative Justice Practitioner*" 2005 concluded:

The STP includes most of the core elements of a fully restorative justice process. Victims are provided with a safe and respectful place in which to tell offenders their stories. They also hear inmates accept the wrongness of their actions. Victims have a significant experience of vindication, while inmates are given a realistic context in which to consider their own offending. Elements of restitution are considered and given some symbolic form. The interests of the wider community in the process are recognised in the form of a celebratory meal. Some victims will find that the STP process is sufficient to meet their emotional needs arising from the harm suffered. For others it will be a further step in the healing process. For both victims and inmates, involvement in the STP is excellent preparation for having a restorative justice conference with their own specific victims/offenders.

24. The Australian experience is further corroborated by Prison Fellowship International, where the STP was developed and is in use in 34 countries, including the United Kingdom (UK). A useful example is from the UK where it operates in 34 prisons in England and Wales: <http://sycamorevoices.org/responding-to-the-harm-of-crime-in-the-uk/>
25. The application and evaluation of the STP in the UK was undertaken by Simon Feasey and Patrick Williams - "*An evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme: Based on an analysis of Crime Pics II Data*" 2009 - Sheffield Hallam University for the Hallam Centre for Community Justice, Sheffield, UK:

Across the whole sample of prisoners there were significant positive attitudinal changes with regard to the five psychometric features of Crime Pics II. Statistical analysis indicates that these positive changes are associated with completion of the programme.

The positive attitudinal changes are associated with all groups of prisoners including male, female, adult and young prisoners.

The positive attitudinal changes are also evidenced across all institutional categories

With regard to the scale, of both male and female prisoners demonstrated an increased awareness of the impact of their actions on victims, directly or indirectly, i.e. higher victim empathy. This positive shift was marginally higher for female prisoners.

With regard to the scale, both male and female prisoners demonstrated a reduced anticipation of future offending. This positive shift was marginally higher for male prisoners.

With regard to the scale, both adult and young prisoners (under 21) demonstrated an increased awareness of the impact of their actions on victims, directly or indirectly i.e. higher victim empathy. This positive shift was marginally higher for young prisoners.

With regard to the scale, both adult and young prisoners demonstrated a reduced anticipation of future offending. This positive shift was marginally higher for young prisoners.

26. The impact of the programme varies across the institutions that are involved in delivery. Prison Fellowship's experience is that the STP is unique on its impact on prisoners and the correlating reduction in recidivism because prisoners engage with crime survivors:

<http://sycamorevoices.org/my-gratitude-is-to-never-offend-again/>

<http://sycamorevoices.org/today-i-look-in-the-mirror-and-i-see-an-offender-that-wants-to-change/>

<http://sycamorevoices.org/listening-to-these-people-has-made-me-stop-and-think/>

27. Apart from the effect on the prisoners a hallmark of the STP is allowing and facilitating crime survivors to have a 'true voice' to unpack the 'ripple effect' of the crime on their lives, which is not adequately dealt with by the current judicial process:

<http://sycamorevoices.org/how-far-would-you-go-to-stop-another-crime/>

<http://sycamorevoices.org/inside-sycamore-video/>

<http://sycamorevoices.org/learning-respect-for-a-victims-pain-a-mother-explains/>

<http://sycamorevoices.org/276/>

<http://sycamorevoices.org/crime-victim-finds-voice/>

28. A common misconception is that restorative justice is 'soft on crime'. Prison Fellowship's experience is that the most confronting and challenging aspect for prisoners is to have to face crime survivors, albeit not the actual person, but someone who has experienced a similar crime. Prisoners often confide that such a meeting to them is more frightening and harder to deal with than anything else they have had to experience. Apart from the prisoners, crime survivors who participate in the STP corroborate that it is not 'soft on crime': <http://sycamorevoices.org/sycamore-tree-project-is-tougher-on-crime/>

29. At each graduation of the STP, members of the government, departmental officials, corrective services officials, members of the community, parliamentarians and the judiciary are invited to witness firsthand the transformation in the lives of the prisoners and speak to the crime survivors who have participated in the courses.
30. Members of the judiciary who have attended such graduations include:
- The Honourable Margaret McMurdo;
 - President Kingham;
 - Justice Mullins;
 - Judge Horneman-Wren SC;
 - Judge Richards;
 - The Honourable David Searle.
31. An example of the impact of the STP on the judiciary is the recorded interview by the ABC:
- <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2013/04/26/3746150.htm?site=brisbane>
32. Graduation ceremonies not only give a real and tangible insight into the effectiveness of the course, but it also reinforces to the prisoners that it is a serious commitment. Prisoners for the first time are engaging with members of the judiciary and community in a different light and with the hope of real change.
33. Due to resource constraints and lack of funding, Prison Fellowship has only been able to conduct the course after the initial phase at SQCC. The course is intensive and to work best requires the assistance of crime survivors. Prison Fellowship is endeavouring to fund an expansion of the course by funding administration and facilitator costs, together with recording the crime survivors stories in a format which can be incorporated into a DVD for use in other the prisons, and especially in regional areas. It is, however, like most matters associated with prisoners, very difficult to fund and find donations.
34. Ultimately, the vision is to expand and collaborate with elders and indigenous groups to similarly provide the STP course sensitively and appropriately to their cultural identity.
35. Restorative justice is not unique to Prison Fellowship, and examples of its practice include Norway. When criminals in Norway leave prison, they stay out. It has one of the lowest recidivism rates in the world at 20%. Based on that information, it's safe to assume Norway's criminal justice system is doing something right. Few citizens there go to prison and those who do usually go only once. So how does Norway accomplish this feat? The country relies on restorative justice, which aims to repair the harm caused by crime rather than punish people. This system focuses on rehabilitating prisoners.
- <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/why-norways-prison-system-is-so-successful-2014-12>
36. Similarly, Germany and the Netherlands have significantly lower incarceration rates compared to Australia and the United States of America (U.S). Their systems are philosophically and practically different in their approaches that could have implications for reform in Australia.

37. German and Dutch prison systems are organized around central tenets of resocialization and rehabilitation. The U.S. system is organized around the central tenets of incapacitation and retribution. Incarceration is used less frequently and for shorter periods of time in Germany and the Netherlands.

<https://www.vera.org/publications/sentencing-and-prison-practices-in-germany-and-the-netherlands-implications-for-the-united-states>

38. Finally, if there was any doubt that restorative justice ought to be seriously considered, reference is made to the United Nations ECOSOC Resolution 2002/12 - Basic principles on the use of restorative justice programmes in criminal matters.

Change on the Inside (COTI)

39. Change on the Inside provides participants with practical knowledge and skills to be able to form positive attitudes about themselves and others, to communicate effectively, to work cooperatively and to develop and maintain positive relationships. It also addresses self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others which are often overlooked and misunderstood concepts that are essential for cultivating empathy, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.
40. COTI often follows on from Prison Fellowship's Sycamore Tree Project (STP) which breaks down the negative character of a participant, while COTI sets about building a positive character in participants. COTI is a six-session program that can be run over six weeks or three days, inside of a correctional centre or in a probation & parole or community setting.

The Prisoners Journey (TPJ)

41. The Prisoner's Journey is an eight-week, in-depth course, which explores the life of Jesus through the Gospel of Mark. The course is designed to simply let the Gospel reveal the truth and power of Jesus' life and words. Video series guide, and fellow inmate, Tuho Isaac shares real stories of real prisoners who were transformed by their encounters with Jesus and invites participants to embark on their spiritual journeys of hope and transformation.
42. The Prisoner's Journey in-prison program takes a radically different approach to Bible study for prisoners. Unlike other study programs, it is a comprehensive, end-to-end endeavour designed to appeal to prisoners by addressing their psychosocial and spiritual needs. Prisoners discover Jesus was also a prisoner, and He understands what they feel: anger, fear, isolation, and abandonment.

REINTEGRATION OF PRISONERS

T24

43. Prison Fellowship Australia in Queensland will be piloting a new comprehensive post-release transition program called T24 in two locations in South East Queensland. T24 is a comprehensive transitional program that recognises that prisoners experience significant challenges upon their release from prison. T24 identifies prisoners who have completed Prison Fellowship programs such as STP, COTI, and TPJ, or have been meeting with one of

our Chaplains over time and connects them with appropriate service providers based upon their needs and a supportive church and/or organisation. The prisoner is also provided with a mentor who will visit them for 12 months leading up to their release date, and a further 12 months upon their release and provide ongoing support post-release through their church/organisations.

44. T24 is a 24-month mentor based transition program that identifies prisoners who have shown that they are ready and willing to break the cycle of crime by completing Restorative Justice based programs (Sycamore Tree Project and Change on the Inside) and have been engaging with prison chaplains over time.
45. Prisoners with 12 months left on their sentence are invited to complete a written application to qualify for the T24 program, their suitability is assessed, and if successful they are provided with a mentor who will visit them for up to 12 months pre-release and prepare them to transition into the community at the end of their sentence. The Mentor will meet the prisoner at the gate and continue the mentor role for up to 12-month post-release supported by other T24 volunteers and partnering service providers. Upon release, the prisoner will be introduced to a supportive community such as a church or other such organisation who will provide social inclusiveness and support.
46. Prison Fellowship's experience is that part of the key to reducing recidivism is to build relationships and community. If the prisoner does not have an alternative community and role models, it is likely in combination with structural issues such as lack employment, accommodation and attraction to substances, that offending will become a risk.

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION APPROACHES

47. Prison Fellowship's collective experience is that children of prisoners are at a significant risk of being incarcerated, especially if they are indigenous or from other vulnerable backgrounds. There are well-documented reasons for this, and the purpose of the submission is not to extrapolate why, but to include in the discussion about preventative measures, which measures specifically address children of prisoners.
48. Prison Fellowship note SBS *Insight* will be showing a program titled *Children of Prisoners* next Tuesday, 30 October at 8:30 pm on SBS ONE and online on [SBS On Demand](#). Prison Fellowship knows from hands-on experience and interaction with children of prisoners that they are isolated socially and within the education system. The stigma associated with having a parent or other significant adult in prison flows through school and other community organisations that children are involved with. Prisoners children are often excluded socially by other families within the community and tend to be on the shortlist to be accused if there is trouble or allegations of wrongdoing.
49. Children of prisoners have often also been the subject of abuse within their own families and because of a parent or other significant adult in prison, suffer financial and emotional hardship.
50. Prison Fellowship has found that the following programs assist in breaking the cycle of recidivism and providing alternative pathways and hope for children of prisoners.

51. The programs that work are:

- Camp for Camps
- Angel Tree
- Art from the Inside.

Camp for Kids (C4K)

52. Prison Fellowship understands that children of prisoners are six times more likely to go to prison, and suffer higher rates of dysfunction, disadvantage, and discrimination than their peers.
53. Camp for Kids compliments Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program by taking children, who have a parent in prison, on a free annual camp led by trained volunteer leaders and mentors. Children often feel the stigma and shame of having mum or dad (or both) in prison and do not share what is going on for them with their school friends. The camp provides an opportunity for kids to have a break from their normal situation and to meet other children struggling with the effects of crime.
54. Each September school holidays a dedicated gender specific camp is held for a cohort of prisoners' children. The cost of the camp is sourced from donors, and no fee is charged to children or their guardians. The camps have a specific theme each year with dedicated camp leaders. Because the children on the camp share a common bond and have experienced collective prejudice, they find a sense of belonging and acceptance. One of the many aims of the camps is to develop self-worth and an alternative pathway, which includes access to mentors.
55. It is not uncommon for the same children to come year after year and to develop broader friendships within their group and with the leaders and mentors.
56. Prison Fellowship's Camp for Kid's program provides the opportunity for children, who miss out on having a parent at home, to be with their peers, who also have a parent in prison. There, they can openly share with others who are going through similar issues, which provides a chance for emotional growth and maturity. Parental imprisonment is a risk factor for child anti-social behaviour, offending, mental health problems, drug abuse, school failure and unemployment (Murray & Farrington, 2008). "Failure to recognise and address the needs of these children and their carers can be very costly...and is likely to incur increased social welfare...". (Woodward, 2003)
57. However, the ability to fund and supply such camps is by necessity limited to donations received and limits on resources, including training camp leaders and volunteers. Prison Fellowship's experience is that if these sorts of interventions took place with children of prisoners, it would mitigate and reduce the risk of such children taking pathways that lead to crime and prison.

Angel Tree

58. The breakdown of familial relationships when a significant adult or parent is in prison is well known. As a means of maintaining ties to the relationship, the program of Angel Tree was initiated. It is run every Christmas as a means of an incarcerated parent gifting a

Christmas gift to their child(ren). The mechanics of the program utilise chaplains to coordinate the names of the children from the prisoners, which are then provided to the Centre's Manager of Offender Development for security and other clearances. Once the names have been cleared, they are provided to trained volunteers to source gifts through the community and churches for the children. Through trained volunteers, the gifts are delivered to the guardians of the children on behalf of the person in prison. The ability to maintain contact with children and for children to know that their parent or significant adult is caring about them, together with the knowledge that someone in the community has cared about them, assists in providing hope and maintaining the relationship. Prison Fellowship's experience is that if relationships break down and hope is diminished the inevitable outcome is offending and likely imprisonment.

59. Each Christmas, thousands of children in Australia open a present from their father or mother or grandparent who is not there, they are in prison. If it weren't for Angel Tree, these children would miss out on a gift from their missing relative. This is an international program of Prison Fellowship through which incarcerated relatives can nominate their children by supplying name, age, gender, carer's contact details and, if possible, the interests of the children. The prisoners have confidence that every effort will be made for a gift to be delivered on their behalf to their child, including overseas in a 134 countries around the world in which Prison Fellowship has a ministry.
60. Our volunteers and churches partner to purchase, wrap and deliver gifts to children of prisoners leading up to Christmas. These gifts are given on behalf of the incarcerated parent, to help maintain family relationships in spite of difficult times.
61. By way example, last year in Queensland 2,000 gifts were delivered for Angel Tree and nationally 6,959. These gifts were at no cost to the prisoner, child or their family. Donations were raised, and volunteers trained to make it happen. Resources limit the ability to do more, the cooperation of the various centres and the access chaplains have to promote the program within the centres.

Art from Inside

62. Each year an exhibition of art is held for the art from prisoners, as well as chaplains, correctional officers and for the first time, children of prisoners. The exhibition in Queensland has for several years been hosted by the Australian Catholic University at their Banyo campus. A theme is conveyed each year, and the categories include all forms of art, including applied art. This year's theme is Forgiveness and the children who recently participated in the Camp for Kids have joined in and their art which will be included in next year's exhibition.
63. Prison Fellowship has found that art provides a medium to engage with the prisoners and a mechanism by which they can communicate and express themselves, especially indigenous artists. We have found that it has been an excellent vehicle to promote relationships and to foster well-being and self-worth. Apart from the opportunity to display the art, the prisoner also has the opportunity for their family and friends to attend the exhibition.

64. The Helena Jones Centre provides a significant contribution to the exhibition and the hosting of it. For many years now, the prisoners at the centre have provided applied art and catering for the exhibition. Further programs, including Angel Tree, foster the relationship built with such centres. By way example, last year, Prison Fellowship delivered approximately 25 Angel Tree gifts for the women at the Helena Jones Centre.
65. However, with the ever-increasing overcrowding, it has been Prison Fellowship's experience that several centres do not provide art and will not participate in their inmates being given access to display at the exhibition. When this has been queried over the years, the reply has simply been about prisoners needing to be in lockdown and security concerns. Prison Fellowship has noticed a significant reduction in the number of artworks being allowed to be undertaken, and especially indigenous art, which historically has been a significant contribution to our exhibition.
66. Prison Fellowship's experience is that by using art in conjunction with other programs, prisoners and their families develop self-worth and a means of communicating with the broader community. These foundations build upon each other as a means of providing an alternative pathway and hope.
67. Prison Fellowship encourages all centres to provide access to their inmates to participate in the exhibition.
68. Great benefits are to be had by providing prisoners the opportunity to engage with Prison Fellowship as a community organisation, to explore talents that they may not otherwise be aware of, and to benefit from the remarkable sense of achievement by having their art displayed in a beautiful gallery for members of the public to view and appreciate.

The life-transforming effect on prisoners, former prisoners (who are also eligible to participate), on family and friends of artists who have participated in the art competition and exhibition since it started in Australia in 2003 are many and varied.

69. Art from Inside also includes combined artworks submitted from our Camp from Kid's participants as part of a therapeutic approach to allow children with a parent in prison to express themselves in mediums other than verbal discussion, which has proven to be not only therapeutic but one of the highlights of the camps.

70. A sample of the art from the September 2018 girls Camps for Kids -



CONCLUSION

71. Based on Prison Fellowship's work internationally from 1979 and in Australia since 1981, across all jurisdictions in Australia, our observations about reducing recidivism are as follows:
- a) The majority of prisoners are motivated and not violent, and it is mischievous and politically expedient to portray the entire cohort by notable violent and dangerous sexual offenders.
 - b) Prisoners are largely unaware of the personal impact of their crimes - an important component of the rehabilitation process, and restorative justice is the best means of delivering this insight.
 - c) Prisoners have been keen to undertake challenging restorative justice encounters in our experience, and have become more empathetic and aware of the effects of crime and experience reduced recidivism.
 - d) The current approach does not facilitate crime victims/survivors with opportunities to meet their offender or as in Queensland a 'surrogate offender', and this is a barrier to the healing process for them.
 - e) The STP is regarded by those prisons in Australia who manage it and overseas as highly effective. While currently, it is difficult to quantify and assess because of resources, Prison Fellowship is confident that a longitudinal study of participants, including victims/crime survivors, will corroborate the Queensland experience since 2011.
 - f) Regional prisons lack access to restorative justice programmes, and this is a significant issue for indigenous prisoners and their victims/crime survivors.
 - g) Prison Fellowship chaplains are aware of widespread childhood trauma amongst inmates, often stemming from a significant adult or guardian being in prison when they were children. Chaplains are ideally placed to provide pastoral care and in conjunction with other volunteers delivering a suite of programmes such as the STP, TPJ, COTI, Art from the Inside and T24 and thereby reduce recidivism and provide rehabilitation and reintegration for prisoners. It is an important work which is in need of more resourcing and funding.
 - h) The work with prisoners children with Camp for Kids and Angel Tree helps to maintain relationships, works on providing a better sense of community, with leaders and mentors to reduce the strong relationship to children becoming offenders. Likewise, resourcing and funding limit the children and camps.
72. Prison Fellowship is acutely aware of the costs associated with building prisons (\$1 m est per bed) and with associated costs of housing prisoners (\$111,000 plus per annum). We are also cognizant of the broader cost of children placed into foster and other care arrangements, let alone the broader cost on the community and individuals impacted by crime, not being able to work or requiring medical and other assistance.
73. In the scheme of these costs, Prison Fellowship invites consideration of funding for restorative justice programmes, especially in regional areas and children of prisoners, especially camps and follow up mentoring. Prison Fellowship has unique access to

children of prisoners by providing gifts in Queensland to over 2000 children each year. However, our resources are very limited, but the need is obvious and clearly defined and achievable.

74. Prison Fellowship in Queensland is confident that a significant impact can be made in reducing recidivism if areas like restorative justice and prisoners children are targetted. However, for this to be effective a long-term resourcing and funding approach is required, which Prison Fellowship adopts, and is not subject to the media and whims of the usual mantra of it being 'soft on crime'.

26 October 2018

Prison Fellowship Australia (Queensland)

David Cormack – State Council Chair and Board Director of Prison Fellowship Australia
Martin Howard – State Council Member and Director of the Sycamore Tree Project
Glen Fairweather – General Manager of Prison Fellowship Australia

Contact:

Graham Hembrow
Prison Fellowship Australia
Queensland State Manager
0422 015 173
graham.hembrow@prisonfellowship.org.au

Mail:

PO Box 97, Underwood Q 4119
Suite 11, 2902 Logan Rd, Underwood Q 4119