

Submission to Productivity Commission Into Recidivism and Prisons 2019, QCS.

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Submission for Art based therapies and Holistic outreach Chaplaincy.

I write this submission out of personal experience, for the benefit and perspective of this review and Correctional Services.

- In 1996 I was charged with a offence that would forever change my path. Once convicted I found myself in place that I couldn't understand the implications of. I did not have the maturity or parenting to assist my cognitive function to be able to absorb this new environment or the consequences of my actions.
- I have a Bachelor in Visual arts, which Corrections encouraged me to pursue. From that I carved myself a successful career in Art and rehabilitated myself under the pre-existing model of community corrections. I also had a valuable long-term relationship with my Chaplain who I remain in contact with. I then became a First Peoples Chaplain, and also undertook Ministerial studies through Trinity College and am now a commissioned Lay Preacher.
- Recently, before the CCC hearings, I was employed by Corrections as an Art Tutor at Woodford Correctional Centre, until funding cuts saw the cessation of Art programs from most Centres. I then (with the support of Uniting Care) rewrote and facilitate a Art Program which uses cognitive therapy techniques as a model for relapse prevention, accountability and community awareness.
- This pilot program has been greatly received by Brisbane Women's Prison and Borallon Training Centre. While graciously funded by Uniting Care Prison Ministry, it is a voluntary position.
- I am also employed by Re-Start employment services at Borallon as a casual supervisor overseeing the graphics design department.
- I now find myself immersed in a Masters of Social Science and Leadership at Christian Heritage College, collating qualitative research on the social impacts of recidivism and community rehabilitation.
- After 25 years I have found myself speaking out for those in that place that I found myself.

It has been a result of all these intersecting experiences that I submit this to you, with 25 years of Art experience, prison experience, inside and out, social awareness and Theology, I not only believe but know that Corrections must

take a new direction in its approach to rehabilitation, but harness the potential gifts on offer to you within the already sourced volunteers and community that presides within Correctional facilities. As correctional services is imploding with services at its limit, new approaches must be explored, as the previous techniques display limited positive results. This is not explicit of all providers and techniques. There are genuine and structurally sound initiatives taking place which Corrective services have the potential to develop.

A holistic approach must be initiated by Correctional Administration, Church groups, Community, Health providers, and Leaders working communally and in unison for an Altruistic goal. Not only is Art a necessary outlet for humanity in a time of struggle but it is a key to unlocking identity which is essential to navigate through a displaced social order. Some of the most pivotal leaders of ours and their own times, utilized creative tools of writing, art and music to in their struggle to order visions and goals that became reality for nations seeking inspiration, Nelson Mandela, Ghandi and Abraham Lincoln. Correctional centres must reason with the ideology that re-creation of the mind is a prequel to restorative justice.

The mind MUST be released through education (Garner, 2019), from its physical bondage before the physically rehabilitated state can function in completion in cohesion with community. The obligation for Correctional facilities to provide solid Art therapies is not for media hyped recreation. It is for the sole purpose of re-creation. Correctly facilitated art programs by stable life skilled educators has the potential to instil self reflective measures which can therefore lead to recognition of accountability.

Inmates that are bored are not productive (Giles, 2016). Enabling inmates with alternative skills and creativity not only recreates self esteem but identity, which offers alternatives to self employment and therefore results in community engagement outside of pre-structured domains and recidivist cultures. Art within prisons is beneficial to the entire prison population, but teaching life skills and self awareness while using art to communicate has additional life enhancing benefits. In my qualitative experiences within the walls of facilities I have already witnessed transformational awareness forming

with the use of art techniques and a complete understanding of the nature of prison culture.

This theory is also recognised within Indigenous Theologies of dreamtime practices and community sociology, and is embraced within this culture as a holistic approach.

As documented in submissions by Prison Fellowship, programs initiating consequence of actions and self responsibility which remove the victim mentality have empowering motives (PF, 2018). However it is also a reciprocating duty of the governing forces to recognise systematic failures which have left these members of society short of communal and social skills to function within a identity based democracy.

Self magnified concepts of the suffering healer attempting to save the world, need to be adverted and the potential for a communally aware method harnessed. Prison Chaplaincy, after The Rolek Report (1998), has reverted to a somewhat restraining and archaic model. Prison Chaplaincy needs to socially advance its training across all denominations and act holistically, to teach, guide and assist living skills, to assist offenders to exist within a self-supported life (UNODC, 2010) This needs to be supported not only externally by church bodies but government ventures also. Prison Chaplaincy is pivotal in its need socially, yet blurred and undetected in its vision for remorse and recidivism prevention. An entire restructure needs to occur to enable those within trusted positions *i.e. chaplains in correctional centres*, to be able to Minister effectively across a broad range of social hurdles.

Alternate approaches need to be explored and gifts must be used to fruition to assist preventing the economic catastrophe on the horizon. Therefore Chaplains would be advantageous in accepting new alternate training that is appropriate to understanding the perpetual hurdles that newly released inmates endure within a rapidly changing and evolving cultures.

Australia as a adolescent country, that embraces a criminal past and culture (Porter, M. 1990), has many impending issues to focus upon in influencing our youth, this includes many social and global issues that currently affect Australian and neighbouring countries new millennium.

The Theology of the New Testament is not limited to the Biblical teachings of the previous Mosaic law, it encompasses all aspects of life, parenting, community, teaching, education, communication skills and creating a valuable existence that has an ebb and flow that enforces a positive impact. This Testament seen within a contemporary context has the potential to enhance the position of Corrective Services jointly with their duty of rehabilitation for longevity, minimising the excessive cost to taxpayers (Jacobs, Olitsky, 2004), for housing inmates which could be directed back into health care and education within the functioning community.

It is therefore my submission into recidivism prevention that Chaplaincy be explored to its full potential, and the wider community of the church bodies raise awareness for the need to support inmates post release and chaplaincy within Correctional facilities, while Correctional facilities explore and relationally combine holistic efforts and training with chaplains.

References

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