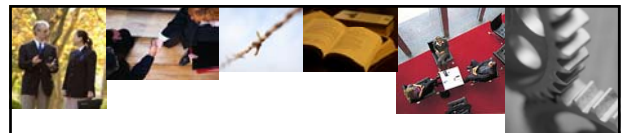




Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

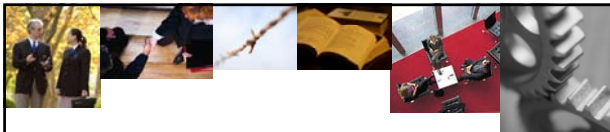
Keith Hamburger AM
24th February 2009

Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons


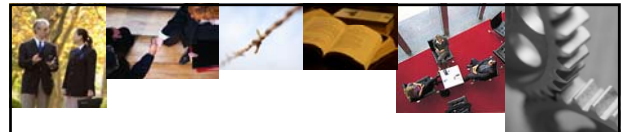
The alternatives involve directing adequate finance to initiatives to:

- support marginalized/ dysfunctional families in developing self esteem, parenting skills, work ethic, work skills, overcoming substance abuse etc;
- Nurture, support and educate children at risk in dysfunctional families;
- Implement community development initiatives in lower socio – economic communities to enhance social and economic infrastructure with priority for remote indigenous communities;


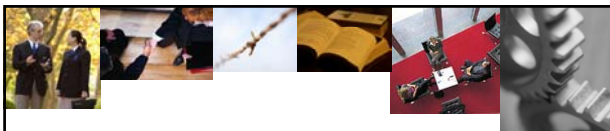
Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

- Implement meaningful, interesting, challenging and enjoyable diversionary/ personal development programs for youth at risk of coming within the Criminal Justice System;
- Reform sentencing practices based on Restorative Justice Principles;
- Restrict the size of all new prisons/ correctional centres to in the order of 100 inmates and over time phasing out all large prison institutions;


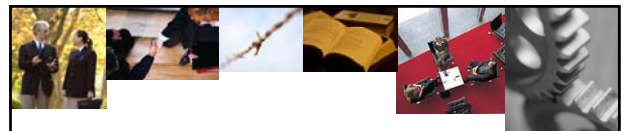
Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

- Focus the role of these small prisons/ correctional centres to deal with specific categories of offenders and offer programs targeted to the underlying causes of the offending behaviour;
- Ensure Restorative Justice Principles underpin correctional centre rehabilitation programs;
- Close consultation with and greater involvement by indigenous leaders in rehabilitative strategies and initiatives for indigenous offenders;


Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

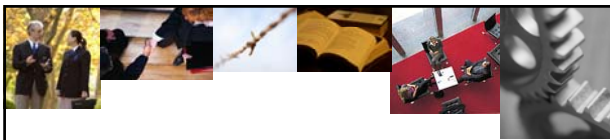
- Apply the concept of phased release for most inmates to facilitate reintegration and rehabilitation through participation in release to work, home detention and parole;
- Strengthen community corrections to provide greater support including increased emphasis upon programs for offenders to achieve cognitive and behaviour change while undergoing community supervision;

Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

- Change the culture of prisons/ correctional centres through strategies such as:
 - ✓ Changed staffing models to reflect a restorative justice/rehabilitative focus;
 - ✓ Enhanced training and development opportunities for people employed in corrections;

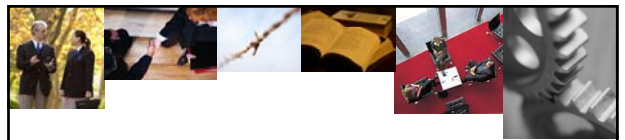




Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

Strategies to change prison culture would include (continued):

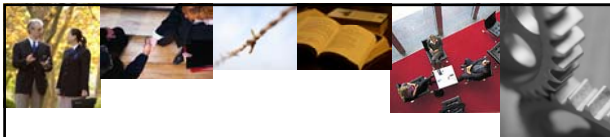
- ✓ High quality programs for inmates based on the individual needs of offenders;
- ✓ Developing a culture of mutual respect between inmates and staff;
- ✓ Involvement by inmates in certain aspects of the functioning of the institution;
- ✓ High involvement by community agencies in program delivery and in interaction with inmates. For some categories of offenders, community agencies, including indigenous organisations, should be contracted to run correctional centres;



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Strategies to change prison culture would include (continued):

- ✓ An institutional culture of openness and accountability;
- ✓ Changes in institutional design to focus on making the environment as "natural" as is possible;

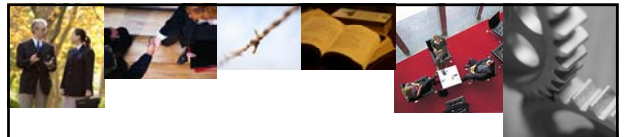


Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

The foregoing recommendations must be viewed from an understanding of what is the root cause of crime

Most criminals come from dysfunctional abusive families characterised by child neglect and abuse.

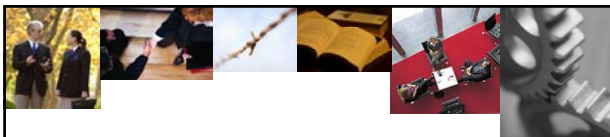
80% of offenders serving sentences of 5 years or more are from such families



Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

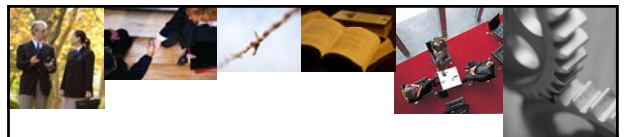
In this context dysfunctional families are characterised by:

- Disagreements are dealt with by screaming and by violence
- Child discipline is grossly inappropriately applied
- Child health and nutrition is neglected
- Substance abuse is a fact of life for family members



Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

- Children are emotionally, physically and sexually abused
- Children are not nurtured and appropriately socialized in their early formative years
- Lack of parental commitment and or finances result in children not getting the resources and activities that more fortunate children take for granted
- Little or no support with the trials and tribulations of school life
- Positive achievements by the child are not encouraged/ supported/ recognized

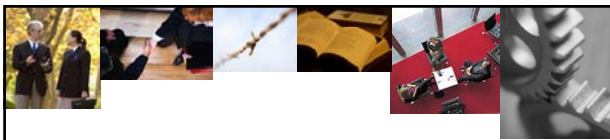


Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

"Child Abuse Files of Shame". The Courier Mail

- 30th June 2006 - 12,000 outstanding investigations and assessments of child abuse reports not finalised in QLD
- 6,352 cases of neglected and abused children living in "out of home care". Many had endured multiple placements.
- Predicted outcome of this is *"reduced health status, lower education levels, a lack of stability in future relationships and a higher incidence of imprisonment, drug abuse and mental health problems"*.





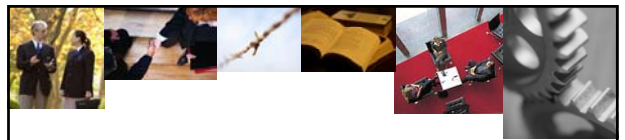
Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

Who is in Prison?

Majority under age 30
11% intellectually impaired
24% indigenous - QLD
40% functionally illiterate
Significant % mentally ill
80% serious offenders from severely dysfunctional family circumstances

70% of women prisoners have suffered sexual abuse, often as children

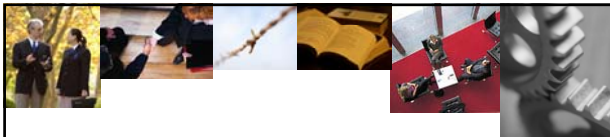
93% of prisoners are male



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People do not decide to become criminals when they turn 18

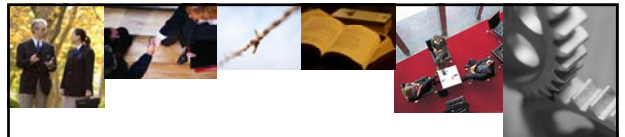
Criminality in Australia is largely the result of childhood circumstances in a range of community settings, increasingly from mental illness and very unfortunately from the social and economic circumstances of Indigenous Australians



Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

Neglected and abused children of today will impact on adult crime and imprisonment rates 11 to 17 years from now

Today's crime & imprisonment rates reflect social policy settings of two decades ago

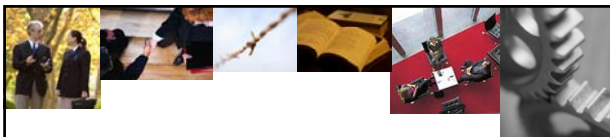


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Extrapolating the QLD *Files of Shame* figures we could have in the order of 100,000 neglected and or abused children Australia wide

If so we have guaranteed increasing crime and imprisonment rates for the next two decades

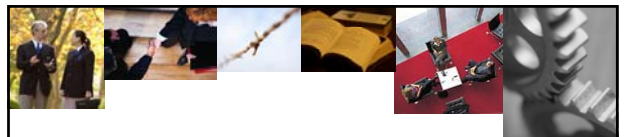
Hence the foregoing recommendations relating to community and family strengthening and support for at risk children and young people, so that we cease turning significant numbers of our young people into criminal justice system cannon fodder



Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

The recommendations relating to reform of sentencing practices based on Restorative Justice Principles, for phased supervised release of inmates and for strengthening of community corrections programs are aimed at ensuring that:

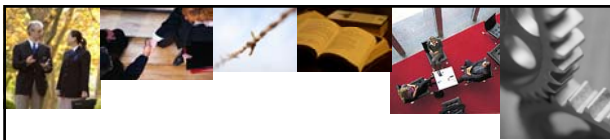
- Prison is an option of last resort; and
- Courts have a greater range of community based sentencing options under a restorative justice model where community expectations for punishment can be met while the offender makes restitution and undertakes programs to restore him or herself to a law abiding lifestyle;



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The recommendations relating to the size and operating culture of prisons and correctional centres relate to the need to ensure that these facilities are truly places of rehabilitation thus reducing crime through reduced recidivism

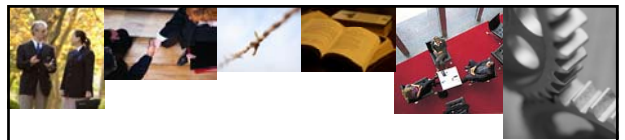




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Queensland is in a dire situation in terms of our flawed approach to dealing with crime and punishment as the following demonstrates:
Queensland - Victoria comparison:

QLD	State Population	4 million
	Prisoners	5,396
VIC	State Population	5 million
	Prisoners	3,558
QLD	25% less population 52% more prisoners	

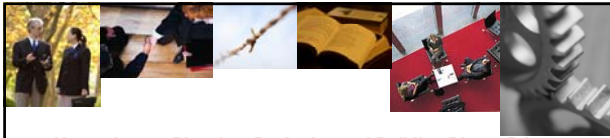


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Queensland's daily prison population has increased by **142%** since 1993.

Over the same period Queensland's State population has grown by **28%**.

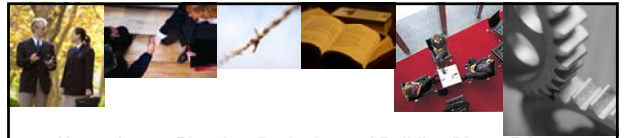
The Queensland Government predicts that the State's prison population will increase by a further **90%** over the next ten years;



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The predicted 90% growth in prison population over the next ten years was used by the Minister to justify the expenditure of mega dollars on a new 4,000 cell prison at Gatton, west of Brisbane.

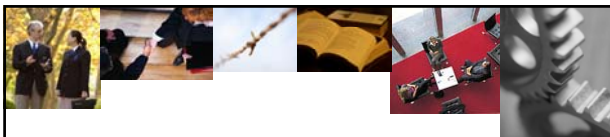
Sisters Inside and Knowledge Consulting advised a Parliamentary Public Works Committee hearing that this was tantamount to the government accepting and planning for social failure.



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If Queensland could reduce its imprisonment rate to that of Victoria it would save **\$120 million per annum** in corrective services costs alone or **\$1.2 billion over the next decade**

Australian Institute of criminology estimates cost of crime to Australia is **\$32 billion per year**



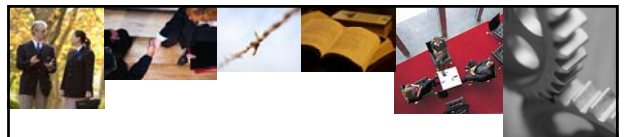
Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

Based on the commonly held view that the role of the Criminal Justice System is *To punish offenders and through punishment deter offending behaviour:*

Politicians who reflect the community view generally react by being *"Tough on Crime"* and fund and legislate for:

More Police – longer sentences – less parole – restrict judges sentencing discretion – more prisons – war on drugs - etc

That is - *they Attempt to Punish Crime Away*



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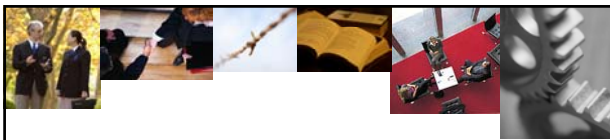
That is:

Considerable resources are applied to back end options after crime has been committed and

Insufficient resources are applied to front end options that could prevent crime occurring in the first place

As a society in dealing with crime our default setting is reactive not proactive

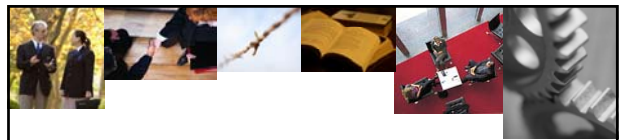




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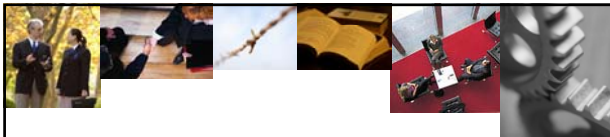
Sadly there is evidence that our criminal justice system is losing and will continue to lose the respect of the community as it fails to meet the expectations raised by our politicians and media for it to curb and reduce crime

The long term consequences of community loss of confidence in the Criminal Justice System is too terrible to contemplate



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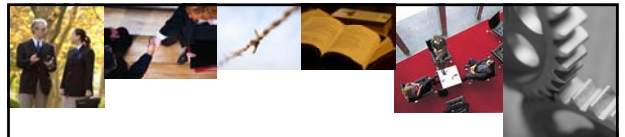
In early 2006 *Sisters Inside* and *Knowledge Consulting* made a presentation to the Queensland Parliamentary Public Works Committee concerning the issues being discussed this evening. We made four recommendations, two of which were:



Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

Recommendation 1 - The Queensland Government commission a Task Force with appropriate public sector and external representation to develop a strategy for an integrated and focused attack on the underlying causes of crime in specific regions and communities.

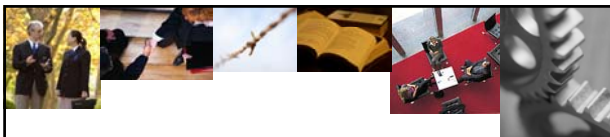
The strategy to be ultimately developed into a business plan that takes account of costs and benefits, sets performance milestones and provides for local leadership and community engagement in best practice initiatives.



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Recommendation 2

The Department of Corrective Services be requested to prepare for consideration by the Cabinet Budget Review Committee, a cost benefit analysis of a proposal for the future corrections building program to rely less on large institutional infrastructure and to move progressively towards a range of purpose built, program orientated small institutions located in regional areas

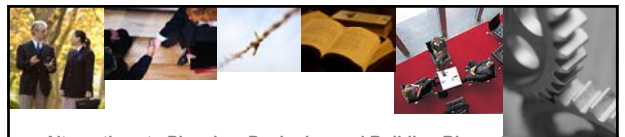


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Recommendation 1 for a Task Force to address the underlying causes of crime was not picked up by the Parliamentary Committee

Recommendation 2 for a cost benefit analysis of moving from large prisons to smaller institutions was adopted by the Parliamentary Public Works Committee in its report to Parliament.

To the best of our knowledge the Department has not implemented this recommendation



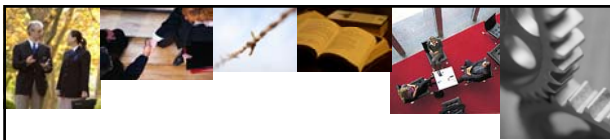
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It is gob smacking and unbelievable that with potentially hundreds of millions of dollars of savings in government expenditure readily available through a logical and simple change in social policy; and

With the massive social and economic benefits that will flow from better families and better communities, including reduced crime; and

Where in Victoria we can point to a working Australian example with other wonderful examples in Northern European countries; and



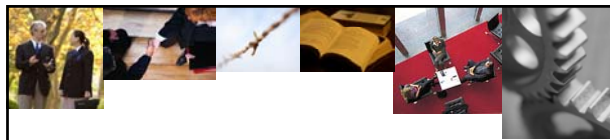


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We in Queensland are not prepared to even investigate the possibility of achieving the social benefits and making the economic savings; and

We continue to plan for further social and economic failure by building a 4,000 cell prison and in announcing the building of the prison brag about it as a job creation initiative; and

We live in - **“The Smart State”**



Alternatives to Planning, Designing and Building Bigger Prisons

Thank you for the opportunity to Speak to you this Evening

