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(ACTCOSS)
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Community Coalition on Corrections

25 May 2009

Mr Jon Stanhope
Chief Minister
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA, ACT 2601

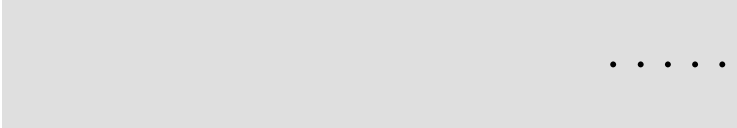
Dear Chief Minister,

The ACT Community Coalition on Corrections (the Coalition) seeks your Government's commitment to a whole of government planning and monitoring process to ensure effective aftercare for prisoners released from the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). The Coalition remains concerned that insufficient attention is being given to coordination and communication about support for prisoners as they leave the AMC and re-enter the general community, putting at risk the human rights and rehabilitation objectives of the AMC.

A forum was held on 14 May 2009, co-hosted by the ACT Community Inclusion Board and ACT Corrective Services, to discuss possible governance arrangements for the coordination of aftercare. An agreed outcome of this session was the establishment of a joint Government and Community Sector body to oversee aftercare coordination.

The Coalition strongly supports the establishment of such a group and urges you to act on this issue. The Coalition proposes that you establish a cross-agency coordination body whose primary role would be to ensure that throughcare and aftercare services are well-planned, effectively and efficiently delivered, and subject to rigorous performance monitoring.

A systematic approach is required, that brings in agencies beyond Corrective Services, who would be integral to the establishment of post release community support networks. Agencies that must be involved include Corrective Services, Housing ACT, ACT Health and Mental Health, key community organisations and other relevant agencies.



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Specific issues such a body could cover include:

- Considering gaps in service provision, with recommendations on priorities;
- Continuing case management as needed, to ensure that aftercare is effectively linked to throughcare;
- Provision of timely, accessible and appropriate mental health and addiction support services;
- Enhancement of the capacity of family support networks of prisoners to provide support;
- Ensuring that specific offender groups, such as female and Indigenous, have their ongoing needs met;
- Determining lead agency responsibilities for key outcomes; and
- Establishing performance information.

Given the size and geographically contained nature of Canberra, we have a unique opportunity to get this right, and become a national and international model of excellent practice. To achieve this, we need not only a model prison, but also a model well-integrated system of throughcare and aftercare, including adequately resourced community services, to ensure that the substantial investment in the prison achieves the desired outcomes.

For your information, we wrote to you about these issues on 30 January this year. Your Chief of Staff referred the matter the Attorney General, and we have not had a reply

We would be happy to discuss these issues at your convenience and look forward to working with you in future.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sutherland
Chair
ACT Community Coalition on Corrections