

Community Coalition on Corrections

1 August 2007

Mr Simon Corbell
Attorney-General
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Corbell,

The Coalition notes that the Correction Management Act 2007 has now been passed by the Legislative Assembly and welcomes the Government amendment which provided that the doctor to the Alexander Maconochie Centre will be appointed by the Chief Executive of ACT Health. The Coalition is, however, disappointed that other, important amendments to the Bill which it recommended were not adopted in the final form of the Act.

The Coalition, which includes much collective knowledge about corrections matters, is resolved to continue its work now that the Act is in place. The Coalition was informed in March that by then about forty procedures for the prison have been written and that roughly 150 more remain to be completed. There would be much to gain, therefore, if these and other documents provided for by the Corrections Management Act 2007 could be made available to the Coalition before finalisation as part of a practice of public exposure.

Accordingly, we request that the earliest opportunity be provided for public input into the ministerial directions, corrections policies and operating procedures under the Act. The Coalition is pleased to note that the Act provides for these documents to be notifiable instruments.

I therefore request:

- that the ministerial directions, corrections policies and operating procedures under the Act be made available to the Coalition before finalization;
- that these instruments be made available as they are formulated rather than in one impossibly large release on the opening of the prison; and
- that the exception in favour of instruments, the public release of which “may endanger public safety or undermine justice, security or good order at a correctional centre”, should be closely defined in regulations or ministerial directions which are publicly accessible.

Yours sincerely,

(Katherine Purnell)
On behalf of the Community Coalition on Corrections