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C/- ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)  
PO Box 849  
MAWSON ACT 2607

# Community Coalition on Corrections

26 December 2008

Ms Katy Gallagher  
Minister for Health  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA, ACT 2601

Dear Ms Gallagher,

The Corrections Coalition has written the attached letter to the Chief Minister seeking the Government's response to the 7 key recommendations contained in the Coalition's study launched in April earlier this year *Healthy or harmful? Mental health and the operational regime of the new act prison* ([correctionscoalitionact.org.au/Forums/Recent/PrisonEnvironment\\_MentalHealth.pdf](http://correctionscoalitionact.org.au/Forums/Recent/PrisonEnvironment_MentalHealth.pdf)). We addressed the letter to the Chief Minister because it raised issues wider than your health portfolio or Mr Hargreave's corrections one.

All the advice available to the Coalition is that the Government's commendable objectives of rehabilitation and reduction of recidivism for the new prison will be unachievable unless it is run so as to promote the mental well-being of those detained. How the prison is operated is of far greater relevance to a prison environment than its building and design. The Coalition commends the Government for the attention it is paying to the provision of health services but this would be a waste of resources if these services merely serve to patch up mental health problems aggravated or created by the prison environment.

Yours sincerely,

(John Ley)  
Chair  
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[www.correctionscoalitionact.org.au](http://www.correctionscoalitionact.org.au)