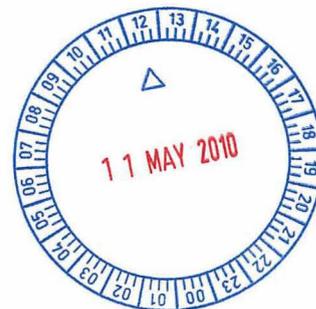


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Linda Omar
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament house
PERTH WA 6000

INQUIRY into TRANSPORTATION of DETAINED PERSONS

Women in Black Perth WA will address the terms of reference 3 & 5.

Women in Black Perth wish to suggest that the present so-called justice system is totally dysfunctional, based as it is on the false premise that locking offenders up in prisons is a solution to crime.

We do not question the obvious necessity for society to be protected from the worst offenders, and that such criminals must be detained in a secure environment where they are unable to inflict harm on members of the community.

However, we submit that such incarceration should be in a humane and civilised institution, where the emphasis is on rehabilitation rather than on punishment. The loss of freedom to live in society, as a consequence of committing a violent crime, is fair and just, and punishment enough.

The prisons of today are little more than breeding places of crime and social maladjustment from where inmates emerge more damaged than when they went in, and therefore more likely to engage in more criminal behaviour upon their release.

Women in Black Perth would like to see the justice system seek to prevent crime by improving the conditions that lead to criminal behaviour. In other words - to look more to addressing the causes of crime than to punishment after the event.

With this in mind, Women in Black wish to refer the Committee members to the Australian Human Rights Commission Social Justice Report 2009, chapter 2, which presents a realistic and practical solution to the current problems facing the justice system of WA, in the form of the Justice Reinvestment scheme. While this scheme may not be the solution to all the problems with our prison system, it is the most positive initiative we have seen to date, and the results where the scheme has been trialed in the UK and the USA speak for themselves. The introduction of the Justice Reinvestment in WA could well be a catalyst for further improvements in the justice system.

Women in Black Perth urge the Committee to include the reading of the AHRC report in your considerations, and to strongly recommend in your report that the government immediately introduce Justice Reinvestment to those areas of the state that have the highest crime rate.

The AHRC report can be found at:

http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport09/chap2.html

Women in Black Perth thank you for the opportunity to present this submission.

Pamella Morris
(for Women in Black Perth)

11th May 2010