

# Submission on the ALRC inquiry into the incarceration rate of Indigenous Australians

## Your details

<b>Name/organisation</b> <i>(if you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of a contact person)</i>	Laura Christie
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In meeting the Australian Government's commitment to enhancing the accessibility of published material, the Attorney-General's Department will only publish submissions to this website that have been submitted electronically. The following formats are preferred:

- Microsoft Word
- Rich Text Format (RTF)
- txt format.

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Would you prefer this submission to remain confidential? NO

## Your submission

Insert your text here and submit it as an electronic Word document.

It is requested that submissions are limited to comments about the terms of reference. There will be opportunities to make submissions directly to the ALRC on relevant issues and possible recommendations during the course of the inquiry.

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Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this. My first point is to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and its waterways and pay respect to all elders, past present and emerging. I would also like to pay respect to those who are in Sorry Business.

We are a community that in a lot circumstances and a lot of ways wish to deal with, and have input into incarceration of our people. If the shoe were on the other foot, and we as First Nations decided, without consultation that, from this day forward our law prevailed without any consideration to your customs and legal system, how would that feel? You, as attorney General need to completely understand that consultation, cooperation and consideration are key factors that will reduce incarceration of our First Nations People. For example:

More use of community run programs instead of \$\$ bail – ensuring that this is done in COOPERATION WITH the elders of the community and not dictated by the western law processes.

More use and incorporation of traditional law/lore processes – IN COOPERATION with the elders and community and not dictated by the western law processes.

More consideration of the lateral violence issues that face communities and what is causing it.

More consideration to the generational trauma that these communities have endured and are still enduring (hence the term GENERATIONAL trauma) and the effects of heavy handed and RACIAL treatment this has on the families and offender that feeds this GENERATIONAL trauma.

University degrees for police officers that incorporate social work, social justice, psychology, interpersonal communication, trauma, indigenous/cultural studies and placements to community organisations that interact with these kids/adults on a daily basis. These police officers need to gain a thorough understanding of the issues these kids and adults face and the effects it has on them, the systemic issues within any given community and the organisations available that will support these kids and adults instead of assuming that the racial, heavy handed arm of the law will sweep this issue under the carpet. Reform can start with the police and legal systems.

Roll out to all schools the (Resilient Adolescence Program) RAP and RPP (Resilient Parenting Program). Developed by QUT professor, this has independent research to demonstrate that this program reduces the incidence of mental health in adolescent's right through into adulthood. This is a "fix the cause" approach rather than a "fix the symptom". Worth thinking about considering the prevalence and correlation of mental health issues with incarceration (not to mention the greater prevalence of mental health issues with First Nations Peoples). Think about it – long term solution – won't get immediate results and therefore won't get votes at the next election but will address the problem.

COOPERATION with elders, CONSULTATION with elders & communities. Do not assume that western law will prevail. Assume that there are other laws that need to be followed and utilised IN

CONJUNCTION with western law. Think outside your square and understand that inclusion of cultural law and custom may actually ENHANCE the current ways.

Always ensure that any western processes are not used to override local law and custom, rather, ensure they are used alongside them.

These may seem foreign concepts to a lot of people, but remember we have had eons of law and culture prior to 1788 – and it worked. Please remember that always. Respect needs to occur before reform can happen.

Thank you for considering the above statements.