



Welcome to the second edition of the Inside Out Newsletter!

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this newsletter is being produced and read. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. Sovereignty was never ceded.



Welcome to the second edition of the newsletter. Thank you to everyone who contributed artwork, poetry, letters and ideas! And thank you to so many people for sharing the last edition around their unit and spreading the word about Inside Out. We've had lots of new people signing up to our mailing list, so please keep on sharing and telling others!

For those new to Inside Out, we are an Australia-wide grassroots group, aiming to build a network of sistergirls, brotherboys, LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer), and gender and sexually diverse people inside and outside prisons.

Inside Out aims to create a sense of community across the walls, amplify the voices of prisoners and provide access to information, community news and resources. We produce a new edition of the newsletter every 3 months. It is posted out free to people in prison who go on our mailing list. If you aren't already on it, just send us a letter with your address.

We want Inside Out to be first and foremost lead by people inside or those who have experienced

criminalisation and incarceration. If you have ideas about something you would like to see in the newsletter, or other suggestions for what Inside Out could do, we would also love to hear from you. If you want to contribute artwork, poetry, letters or articles to the next edition, please send them to us.

Thanks to Sam Wallman for the heading design.

Info for people in Queensland prisons

If you're in Queensland and want to contribute to the newsletter, you should speak to your parole officer or Queensland Corrective Services first. This is because the Qld Corrective Services Act makes it unlawful to publish a statement from a QLD prisoner (including someone on parole) without the permission of QCS. However, there are protections in the Australian Constitution about freedom of communication, so QCS will need to have a good reason to stop publication. Please send us your article with any correspondence from QCS permitting publication. You can still write to us without having to get permission, if you are not intending your letter to be published.

If you want free legal advice to get your voice heard, contact Prisoners' Legal Service on the ARUNTA or write to them at PO Box 5162, West End Qld, 4101.



Posting the first newsletters!

Letters and ideas for the newsletter

When you write to us, please indicate if you would be happy for parts of your letter to be published in the newsletter. We will not publish any letter unless you have given us permission to do so, and will treat all correspondence as confidential otherwise.



A letter from Dean

It is so difficult and isolating in gaol however the thing that helps me push through the dark days is that I know I'm not alone with how I feel that there is another gay person out there feeling the same thing.

Would love to be able to post up a flyer in our library and in our sector. It is so good to hear that other states are getting involved.

The only ideas I have in mind is "Lonely Hearts" a penpal system for LGBTIQ inmates and outside of goal. I would also love to see a section for people to share photos.

Anything I choose to share or you would like to use feel free to put my name on it :) I'm so excited about this newsletter and I really wish I could hug you both and be able to sit and have a coffee with you both.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart I'm so happy about your organisation.

With Love,
Dean Bell (NSW)

Ideas from Taryn-Michelle

I absolutely love the newsletter. Some of the stories are heart rending in that the correctional services refuses to recognise simple niceties and basic rights.

You asked if I had any ideas for the newsletter and 2 come to mind that may have already been suggested. The first is a comic strip no less than 3 panels, no more than 6 panels. It would be a graphic representation of

incidences that occur with respect to the LGBTIQ community and a way to bring about awareness. The second is a 'Dear Inside Out' column so that anyone whether LGBTIQ or know someone who is, or just want to learn about the community can write in and do so.

Both ideas can be localised to a person or group to manage, or with regards to the comic strip an invitation can be put out to all to contribute. I'm not sure how the column will go with that concept, however if there are a large number of people writing in then perhaps the letters, questions can be spread out to a number of people with Inside Out oversight.

Letters from Troy

20 - 09 - 16

Dear Inside Out & Co,

Well, the first edition is out! Amazing guys – thank you. My copy looks slightly old already after 6 others reading it – everyone came back to me with such positive comments! Onward and upward we can now go. I have enclosed the feedback sheet with my own comments. Am happy to expand on my comments if required.

Paul West's reflection on page 3 – Paul, thank you, at some stage I will need to complete one of the programs to be eligible for parole. I totally agree with you, those who are part of the LGBTIQ+ family should indeed be proud and tell those in their group, especially the "leaders" the truth of their sexuality so as to, hopefully, be supported, as well as encouraging others to be themselves and seek support!

Rory's Story – you touched my heart and made me cry - *HUGS*, thank you. I came out this year after meeting an amazing guy the day I was sentenced! 8 months later, having been cellies, gone to different centres, back again and now writing to each other almost daily. We are strong for each other and remember "this too shall pass". I trust you and James will remain strong.

Kind Regards,
Troy (NSW)



Dear Inside Out Peoples,

How are we? Greetings from Long Bay Goal (Sydney NSW). Cannot wait for the next edition of "Inside Out"! Any chance of getting another copy of edition 1 cause mine has been passed on to several others :). Can I suggest when articles/letters are printed that after the person's name, in () you might include the state they are from, I suggest this mainly because services in each state corrective services.

With regards to my suggestion for a 'Readership Committee' - you could call for expressions of interest and elect 2 or so from each state (who are active - proactive) who could chase up stories etc from others as well as promote 'Inside Out' through the system. Of course with their permission you could list them on the front page for inmates to contact? Please don't take any of my ideas/comments are criticism, just would like to see 'Inside Out' go places! On the front page for example:

| | | |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| Editor: | TITLE ETC | Year: 2016 |
| | (Address) | No 2. |

Assist Editor:

Typist:

Advisory Cttee:

Readership Cttee:

NSW

QLD

SA

etc

Any clauses and copyright notices

Don't Forget to let us know you've changed your address; simply return your envelope with your new address

Hope this helps and am happy to assist best I can, bearing in mind the restrictions of being incarcerated. Perhaps an advisory committee could be the way to go here?

All the best, Troy (NSW)



Letter from Paul

Hi Inside Out,

Congratulations on getting out the first edition of Inside Out Newsletter. I enjoyed reading the articles very much and could relate to most of it.

My next submission (which I've included) was inspired by the stories and letters within the first newsletter. I found the stories of James and Rory very insightful and believe those boys to be both very talented writers.

Although I found my own thoughts for this new submission to focus around 'A letter from Dean' as his writing did reflect and relate to the many LGBTIQ prisoners, including myself, who come through the system. I believe the last paragraph in his letter to be the most powerful.

I spent some time adjusting my writing to help those new to prison find the assistance they need when feeling isolated and alone. I was very proud of the end result.

I have passed around my copy of the newsletter to interested people here at Hopkins and a couple of us are presenting it to the facilitator of our own 'Open Doors' LGBTIQ support group at the prison to gain her approval to explore the newsletter within the support group itself.

I'd say you will soon have a few more names for your mailing list. I'm please to do my best to promote INSIDE OUT from inside-the-walls!

Anyway, again well done and I look forward to reading the next newsletter.
All the very best,
Paul (VIC)



Writing out Christmas cards!

A letter from Dusty

05/11/2016

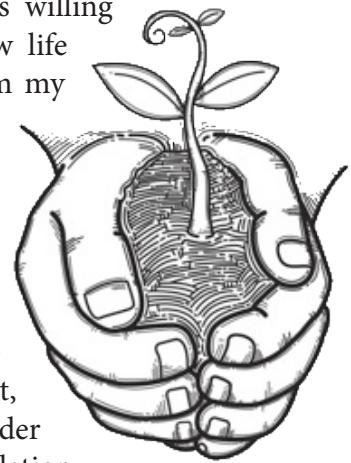
Hi there everyone; Sistergirls and Brotherboys and others!!!

When I do eventually get out, I'd love to help with the magazine where I can. A lot of that will depend on where I can eventually get somewhere to live. At the moment, the most likely place I'll be able to rent is somewhere down in the La Trobe Valley. This is where the most available cheap housing is at the moment. The closing of the power station may be a huge blow to the area for employment, but for those like myself, it could prove to be quite beneficial as it will no doubt decrease the demand on the rental stock in the area, suppressing rental prices and making it more affordable to our communities less well off.



The APB therefore has ruled out every other form of housing other than a detached house, simply by elimination of other options. They will not permit me to move into share accommodation because it is too likely I will be sharing with others with a CRN. They use the term pro-social groups. A major consideration they have with regard to my housing is that I get released to a pro-social environment. They haven't actually defined what this means so I am left to guess its interpretation. The logical deduction from this is they at least mean not living with others who have been or have just got out of prison. Obviously this immediately eliminates the housing options. Given my situation renting a detached house in Melbourne proper, or most other major centres, I am even more limited. Particularly given that I will have to set up a home from scratch. I won't even have a pot or pan with me when I do leave.

The only realistic place I have any chance of affording to rent is around Morwell – Moe district. And that's before I contemplate the massive logistical issues of finding private rental from prison. So if you have anyone on your mailing list down that way who feels they may be able to help, please put them in contact with me. They might have a house they want to rent. Or know someone who is willing to give a girl starting new life a go, feel free to give them my contact details. On the other hand if anyone out there knows of any places anywhere in Victoria that are sitting vacant and needs a responsible very handy tenant who will be on a very limited budget, please by all means consider me. I realise given the circulation of 'Inside Out', this is like relying on winning the lottery, nice to contemplate, but not very likely.



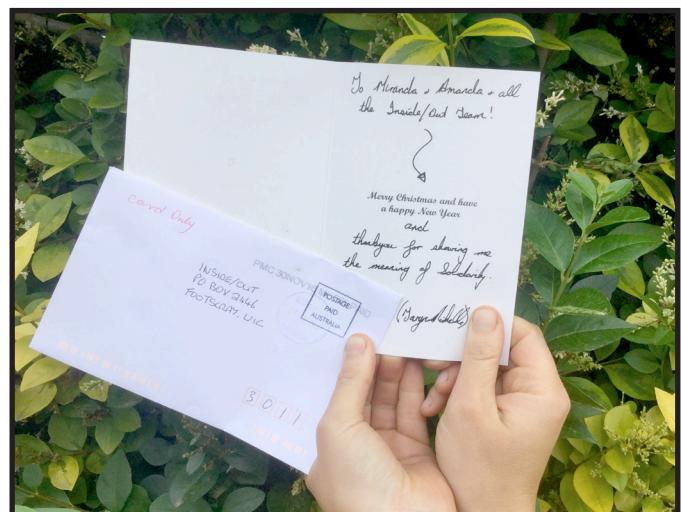
Good luck with your endeavours, and stay in touch.

Dusty

A Christmas card from Tayrn-Michelle



To Miranda & Amanda & all the "Inside Out Team"
Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year, and thank-you for showing me the meaning of solidarity.
Taryn-Michelle



Writing and Artwork from the Inside

My Journey of Discovery

My name is Michael, though I prefer to be known as Taryn-Michelle as I am a non-transitioned transgender woman. I am 43 years old and am a lesbian currently serving an 11 year sentence for sex offenses. Confused yet? I was, for a very long time.

As a child from the age of 4 I knew I was different. I played, dressed and enjoyed life as a girl. I was innocent, I was me. Then I was lost to domestic physical violence and sexual abuse by those who were supposed to protect me. I was a child of the desert in a limbo between two races, two skin colours, two genders, two worlds, two hells. My abusers dragged me kicking and screaming through a childhood of pain and misery until I grew too old to be of interest. I was abandoned, shunned, ignored. Crime, violence, drugs, alcohol, failed relationships and inner turmoil and confusion was the legacy left to me. The worst was the ability to suppress my self pity, hatred and loathing, for it allowed a monster to emerge, unwanted and merciless. I was that monster. I had become what I hated the most! How did this happen? Too late, no return, I'm doomed. Oh no I'm caught. This is the end. Finally. But it wasn't.

I was jailed in 2011 for my crimes and it took 3 years, a couple of suicide attempts, many self harm episodes and the love and patience of strangers for that monster to be driven out. To be forgiven by that 4 year old innocent me for betraying us by committing those evil sins. The first step towards a brighter future. Day by day, month by month, year by year, I gain the strength and courage to speak out to the naysayer's that I should not be defined by my crime, I should be defined by who I am inside and out as a person. A mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend.

During that time I completed my Think First Program aimed at corrective thinking and acceptance of my criminality. As well as other Christian related programs such as Sycamore Tree and Soul Detox. They were the first steps to healing not only a broken mind but a broken soul. By confronting my crimes I was able to stop suppressing what had happened to me as a child and begin processing it, allowing me to heal, to feel again. I never knew or suspected that by doing so would open the way to deal with the much deeper issue that I had been avoiding, and I have a name for

it now where once I did not. I am transgender. I am a woman. I always have been. I always was. I may not look like a woman on the outside but I feel like one on the inside.

I experienced a new grief because of the missed opportunities to transition and because I realized that subconsciously I always knew I was transgender and I recognized the times in the past when I tried to express it or get my attention. I also realised that I am a lesbian for I am and always have been strongly attracted to women. Though there are those who advocated this is because of the 12 years of sexual abuse I suffered as a child my orientation realigned. Meditation and self introspection have helped me to see that I always felt that a relationship with a woman as a woman seemed normal. It would also explain why it was difficult for me to conceive a child as a man with my ex wife and ex girlfriend. My body knew the truth even if my mind refused to see it. I am learning knew things about myself.

In September 2015 I made the choice to come out as transgender. Then out of fear I changed my mind. I was scared of what would happen to me as a transgender in jail. I had already experienced rape, ridicule, bullying and verbal abuse for being a convicted sex offender I was terrified at what would happen to me. So I reverted to acting male, pretending, putting on weight to make myself look big and scary so I would be left alone. I did start paying attention to TV shows, movies and documentaries that focused on the issue of being transgender. It is through the courage of people I saw in SBS documentaries, such as members of our military and Daniel Kertcher who became Savannah, that I learned to stand up for who I am. Their story has given me strength. The work of Louis Theroux on the topic of transgender has helped me realise I am not alone. It is not the end for me, it is the beginning.

In February 2016 I stepped out into the light and told my chaplain what I was thinking and feeling. I told her I am transgender. And it was okay, I wasn't yelled at, spat on or ridiculed. I've since come out to my mum and dad (who already suspected but decided to wait until and if I chose to speak up) and many others. I have lost some friends, a girlfriend and family but I have made new friends and one day may even meet a new girlfriend who will accept me for who I am. Slowly but surely I am building a network of support and people and groups who I am so grateful for.

I thought coming out would solve all my problems about being transgender. Especially with getting access

to hormone therapy medication and counselling, It turns out I was wrong. Having now accepted my true identity I ache to make myself look how I see myself. The real me. It turns out that the prison system is not as liberal as the outside community when it comes to LGBTIQ prisoners in jail. The pain and trauma of not being able to express myself as my gender sometimes seems truly unbearable. I am told I have to suppress the urge to express myself for my own safety. Really? Again? Deja vu anyone?

Don't get me wrong. Some good has come out of the situation. Many custodial accept that I am transgender and are respectful with nouns and pronouns. I met another transgender girl who was in the same prison as me! I would never had known she existed if a prison officer sympathetic to my isolation has not taken it upon herself to help me. I asked the officer if I could visit with the other prisoner and they arranged it. When she and I met it was like having walked the desert for a year and finding another soul in the sea of sand. A twin spirit. We visited every fortnight and talked about many issues surrounding being transgender in jail. Though she has moved on to a different jail now we formed a friendship that will last a lifetime.

With the help of counselling services I have been put in touch with groups such as the Freedom Centre, National LGBTIQ Health Alliance, Living Proud and of course Inside Out. I wrote many letters and received brochures and letters of support in return to which I am eternally grateful for. I started to learn about the wider world, and the more I learn the more I have been able to help others I have met in similar circumstances. I am continuing my journey of discovery. I hope my story gives others the courage to seek out help and support. Always remember you are not alone.

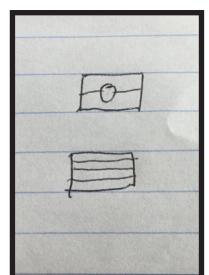
By Taryn- Michelle
(WA)



Then and Now

Through time and space
Not just another disgrace;
Sipping wine with the upper class
Waiting for the disaster to pass;
Run, run, run for your life
Cuts like a razor sharp knife;
Can't stop the hands of time
Just another fucked up crime;
No way an illusion
Not anymore confusion;
Can't end this dispute
You think that you are so cute;
All good things come to an end
Think that I am going around the bend;
One day a brand new start
Starting to open up my heart;
In the heavens above
Angels make love;
One day in time to come
Not just for some;
A very special scene
Whatever has been has been;
Dealt another cruel blow
Nothing to show;
At the speed of light
Won't give up without a fight;
Hard times are here to stay
Which they would go away;
One day at this cruel age
Don't belong in a fucking cage;
Want to be part of the human race
Want to be right off the planet face.

By Geoffrey Sylvester Hay
Langi Kal Kal Prison (VIC)



Time in prison can be a waste, or an opportunity

Many arrive in prison with a lot of anger and resentment toward the system, and those around them. I was no exception when I came in 15 years ago. I felt that any work I was doing in prison was simply an exploitation of me by the system that was no longer interested in my rehabilitation, but rather simply warehousing me until my release, whereupon I become someone else's problem.

After many tough years I eventually worked out that the energy I was investing in this bitterness and anger was merely making my time hard and long, and I got from it that helped me in the future. I was in this place now, and what had happened in the past, no matter how angry it made me, wouldn't change. Considering the way the system abuses its position and uses my skills and labour to its own advantage simply make my time hard, and that's what it wants me to do. By taking responsibility for my own feelings and reactions, I took away their power. My time would be as easy or hard as I decided it was, not what they want it to be. From this point it is a small step to deciding to make the most of my time while I'm here. From then on I have tried to look for opportunities whenever and however they come along, and make the most of them. The abuses of power and position still go on, by both Blue and Green. I simply choose my perspective of them. Everything now has the potential to be both good and bad, an outrage or an opportunity. I can rage against it and get nothing or learn from it and gain whatever is in it to be had.

The most serious corruption and abuse of authority continues to happen even now, but I have become circumspect about what matters really matter, and isn't worth reacting against. I learn an awful lot by just simply being an observer in many cases. Abuse of position power or authority can be perpetrated by anyone, and sooner or later these people do the one thing that will bring them undone. I learnt not to take anyone on face value. Prison is a hothouse environment for the extremes of behaviours, and the colour of their clothes made no difference. I was just as likely to have someone in blue use me to their own advantage as I was from green. But even these people provided opportunities, and the key was simply to be aware of what was really going on, and trying to understand what their perspective is and what motivates them.

Like most people who have never had contact with the prison system before, I was struck almost immediately by the degree of ingenuity even the most supposedly uneducated or intellectually challenged person could demonstrate. They were the master at making something with nothing. My first 42 days in custody were under the Magistrates Court, nicknamed the "Yellow Submarine", partly because of its decor and below the surface, and partly because as the Beatles song suggests. It was pretty trippy down there, and bore little semblance with reality outside. For a start, there is no natural light, so you have no sense of what

time of day it is, other than what was on the TV at the time, and the lighting was turned up and down as our captors chose. It could have been midnight outside, and we could have easily led to believe it was 9am.

But amongst the anger hurt frustration, jostling for a position in the group, or looking for the next victim, I observed people in a place designed for short stays, but stuck there for weeks on end. Re-purposing things in ways I'd never have thought possible to make our lives a little more bearable. Without access to any form of entertainment other than a TV behind plexiglass, we created clothes lines, a washing machine out of a plastic bag, and even played volley ball from a net and ball fashioned from strands of a blanket. I realised that despite my years of education and living, I had been living in a bubble with perceptions of offenders that dramatically undervalues the people in places like this. Crims were suddenly no longer some distorted branch of the human family tree, but every day people like I'd always known, in very different circumstances. If nothing else, everyone on these people had huge potential if they wanted to unlock it. The difference between criminal use and legitimate use was very slim.

At Port Philip Prison, I discovered prison industries can be mundane mind numbing work, a simple matter of passing the time of day and getting us out of the unit for a few hours. It was can also be a great opportunity to learn something new each day. You discover things about yourself and others that many can go through their entire lives and never notice. Opportunities are there but less obvious, and as you are processed through the system, you can take on board these, or ignore them. And along the way, somehow you can grow as a person. Unfortunately I have watched many over the years shrivel into husks of humanity.

I started by enrolling in the available education. I also helped those around me extend their own education. Education could be formal or just as effective informally, I started filling little gaps in my education, stuff that I had perhaps learnt years earlier but forgotten, or simply failed to understand at the time. There was also an amazing array of skills and knowledge residing in the people around me in green. On the outside these people would not have given me the time of day. But here we had the time to teach each other a mesmerising range of diverse things. From accounting, and economics, law and engineering, to electrical, plumbing, and other trades, both legitimate somewhat less legitimate. Even the less legitimate skills people demonstrated had practical application

in the right situation both in and out of prison. Like me, these people had lives on the outside that had no connection in any form of the criminal conduct that got them in here.

From then on, I began to develop a sense of having some control over my life, even though so much had been taken away from me. I took stock of what I had and what I was missing and what I realistically could do after prison and what I could do to make this happen whilst I was in here. Even if you cannot complete a course in prison, you can at least do what you can inside reducing what has to be done when you get out. In many courses I could do 80% of the Certificate or Degree, leaving 20% for the outside. It isn't ideal but it makes good use of our time, turning a 2,3,4,5 year course on the outside into a 1 year or so course after release. And even if it takes 3 times longer to do a course inside, you are still far better off doing it in here than doing nothing with your time.

And remember, education is not just something that happens in a classroom. Life is an education, and informal learning can be as important as in the classroom in the most unexpected ways. I found many people whose only barrier to furthering their own education stemmed from bad experiences with formal education in earlier life. These people with minimal help and encouragement can soon be filling gaps in their formal education by getting other inmates to help them quite quickly. Often people in this situation simply need someone to show them the challenging principals in a different way, and most people who have had the difficulty learning something seem better equipped at helping those like themselves who have had difficulties. The key to reconnecting with education is to be realistic and try something that you can achieve first up and quickly. After that your confidence grows and you take on greater challenges. So, prison can be an opportunity as much as a destructive period in your life. It is up to you. You can take control, even if it doesn't seem to be much.

The system can take everything away from you except your thoughts. As long as you control your thoughts, you control your life. This is true in every situation. If you don't believe me put it to the test. See how others get upset by something, where as you don't. The situation is exactly the same for them as you, the only difference is perspective. Yours is different to theirs, and you reacted differently. Your reactions are your choice. You simply need to be aware of how you are reacting to start to take control. Instead of simply

feeling that experience, ask yourself why you reacted that way, or why this thing made you feel this way. Once you start to consider these simple things, you are becoming more aware of your mind, your thoughts, and your surroundings. Why are you experiencing this one way, and someone else is having a very different experience. How you experience it is what you think of it, and vice versa. Change the way to think of it, and the way you feel changes. Change the way you feel about it, and change the way you experience it.

The only difference is your thoughts, being aware of them, and choosing to control them or not. Prison can be an opportunity. It's just the way you think about it that matters. Make use of your time inside, rather than wasting it. It doesn't stop the bad from happening to you, you just change how those things affect you.

By Dusty Shaw

Dear Future Boyfriend

As I sit in this cell I think about you all the time I wonder if you're even out there. I've been looking for you for 6 years and wonder if you have done the same.

I think about green grass and laying down with my head in your lap while we get lost in each others eyes. I picture us hand in hand walking along the beach watching the sunset.



My only fear is the dark cloud that's rained on me before, I've been heart broken and beat severely with homophobia, I've been abused even bashed, so please don't hurt me.

I wonder if you're even out there if you are say something please Just Say Something! Hmm Silence I guess I must be on dream land.

Lots of Dreamy Love, Dean xxooxx
To all the singles our future partners are out there just give it a good fish you'll be amazed what you find :)

By Dean Bell (NSW)

What Am I?

People say I make their skin crawl,
That I should be stepped on,
People say I am dirty,
That each day I wriggle in filth,
Am I A Worm?

People say I frighten them,
That I belong in the dark,
People say I am scary,
That I do not make sense,
Am I A Monster?

People Say I disgust them,
That I make them sick,
People say I am revolting,
That I am too horrible to look at,
Am I Truly So Ugly?

People say I should have never been born,
That I was a mistake,
People say what a shame,
That I wasn't born dead,
Am I Meant To Be Alive?

People say a lot of things,
That they have no right to say,
People say too many things,
That do not concern them,
Am I Right?

People say I have a voice too,
That I can be heard,
People say it is okay to share,
That I don't need to be scared,
Am I Allowed?

People say that yes I am,
That my voice is important too,
People say to open my heart,
That it really is okay,
Am I Brave Enough?

People please be silent,
That I know who I am,
People please let it be known,
That I know what I am,
I am Transgender, I am Woman.

By Taryn-Michelle (WA)

If you want to have your writing, articles, poetry, letters or artwork featured in the next edition of the newsletter, please send it to us at:

**Inside Out
PO Box 2446
Footscray
Victoria, 3011**



The Prison Mask

With the roll out of the first edition of the Inside Out newsletter I had read stories and articles where LGBTIQ prisoners/ex-prisoners had identified isolation within prison in fear of showing their true selves to others. I noticed a pattern starting to form of similar commonalities in writings.

Many therapy approaches talk about wearing 'masks' to form the acceptable social relationships, such as those of us who are in prison, to hide that part of us we don't want other to see.

But who wears a 'mask'?

Go out into your common area, the exercise yard, or the gym..look around at all the faces before you...there is a good chance that most of these people are wearing a 'mask' to assimilate into the social individual a prisoner must be within a prison community. Most will have similar fears that other prisoners could find out about their own personal struggles and desires, varied as they may be, which would surely cause them to be ridiculed, bullied, or even worse – 'outed' before their ready. As well all know – prisoners aren't exactly well known for their kindness and rumours spread like wildfire. In reality each person will have at least one other who sees the 'mask' come off whether it be friend or therapist, someone to trust and be completely transparent in our selves.

But how do we find this person?

Those new to prison will find it extremely hard to find that once trustworthy person the 'mask' comes off to. Although that doesn't mean to stop looking as isolation and loneliness can make our mental health much, much worse. Prison medical centres can have Psych-nurses who are employed to listen to your troubles and experience of life in prison which can be

an excellent starting point for removing the 'mask', if only a little. But do get to know those around you – in your unit, your neighbourhood and your workplace.

As you talk to others you soon identify common interests and experiences. This may happen with many people although only a handful you will feel you have a strong connection with. It will not happen immediately but it will eventually, as a friendship is formed and trust evolves.

Where else could I find support?

Check to see if your location has a support group for LGBTIQ prisoners. It would be a good way to connect with others to share experiences, to get information and voice your concerns. Feedback by others who have had the same (or similar) experiences can be valuable. Support groups can be run by prisoners, prison officers or therapists.

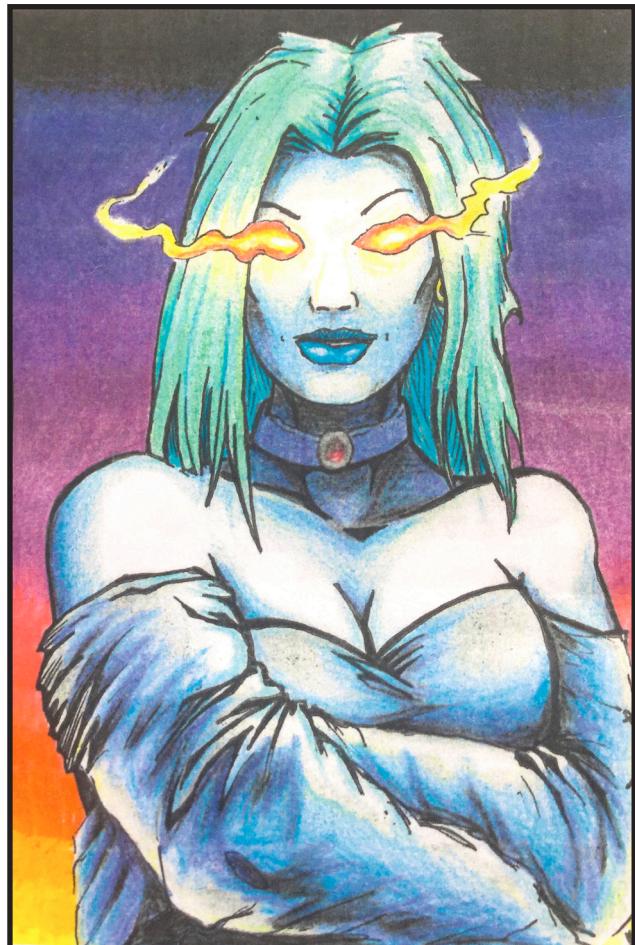
Some locations provide prison officers as 'liaisons' who are able to assist LGBTIQ prisoners and if you are sure it would be of benefit to yourself and others then voice your suggestions through the appropriate channels – ask prison staff on the process required.

The main thing to remember is that every prisoner will go through a period where they feel alone and abandoned, especially when first coming into prison. It can be a frightful places but be assured that though the darkness there is light.

By Paul West (VIC)

*my body is
trapped in here,
but my heart
is with you
still fighting
out there...*

*-Marius
Mason*



Artwork by Ninja

Empowering Women with Criminal History

A vision and possible survival guide - Making a full turn-around and giving back positive energy to our community. Think global act local = 360 degrees.

Let's face it, like it or not women with a criminal record are stained with a permanent scar and often frowned upon in our society upon their release. Often those women who have been incarcerated have become somewhat 'institutionalised' find it nearly impossible to survive in the 'real world' regardless of the preparations they may have gone through during incarceration and somehow they end up right back in jail, the place they know best. Do we dare to care and ask the rhetorical question as to why that the reality is. Perhaps regardless of the negativity associated with the jail system it is always there and offers a familiar community that is a place to get away from troublesome lives. Basically 'what went wrong' ends up going around in circles and gets automatically back into the system and part of a familiar community no matter how bad or rough it gets. Humiliation and disempowerment are familiar concepts to those who

have travelled that road before...nothing to gain and nothing to lose, the feeling is numb, no hope just empty.

360 holds the vision to be another positive solution to a never ending vicious cycle of problems that occur within our society for a variety of reasons. 360 aims to see the female 'villain' come 'full circle' to be the 'heroine' in the eyes of our society by giving back positive energy as an exemplary community. 360 would encourage the full turn around in the lives of women with criminal history and see them share their life experiences to help others avoid suffering a similar fate and offer positive reinforcement including education and employment opportunities. This vision and potential business model can help empower many women to become leaders and mentors to offer their support and advice to others who may be suffering very similar things in their lives such as DV, drug & alcohol addictions and re-offending. There is nothing like this available to women in such situations. 360 aims to provide a safe haven community that offers ongoing support for female ex-prisoners in need of a place in society. It would incorporate such things as;

- Accommodation including food and basic amenities
- Rehabilitation in the form of both standard and alternative therapies
- Potential employment and possible self-employment via a 360 franchise
- Potential to own their own home due to employment
- Access to wide education in a supportive environment

This exemplary community would become a safety net as a preventative from failure to re-join the society we live in via offering gainful employment within the 360 community and would become an integral part of women offenders relapse prevention plans. It could help prevent them from re-offending and heading back in and out of the jail system. This is a vision that can restore hope for many lives and an better our future for ourselves and our future generations. Do you want to be involved?

DREAM BIG! BELIEVE IN YOURSELF! ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE! Even from the inside!

By Esther

Editors note: 360 is not a currently existing organisation, but a possible vision for the future.



Writing from formerly incarcerated folks

As we strive for Equality through Marriage Equality.

It is often hard for me to understand during a time of national debate in regards to any formal acknowledgement around the definition of Equality through Marriage. That any application of Equality must open our own eyes as a community to what Equality actually does mean within the LGBQTi Community?

Some would offer an opinion, that our Community Media shapes the focus of our views as a Community. All platforms of media shape how we view the world, our opinions, what we eat, which coffee we drink and how we dress.

It could be considered though that within Community Media that comes strong social responsibility. Where there is external funding though to Community Media, Could there be any possibility that this could affect content? Within the responsibilities that any community media organisation holds, are we more focused on gossip like "who is gay now?", "who has just come out of the closet?".

I suggest that where our community conversations are surrounded around subjects and items associated with "glitz", "glamour", "what's in", "who's in" & "whats not", that we are sheltered as a community and that we deliberately wrap ourselves up in an identity of glamour and fabulousness, while sweeping any undercurrent of vulnerability or discourse under a cheap and nasty door mat.

While it is important that we hang onto our values and a unique sense of community It is also extremely important, that we understand and own the fact, that we actually have dirt in our own backyards. That paving the backyard with a rainbow emblem won't hide any imperfections that we just don't want to acknowledge.

Often our concerns as a community are to normalise our approach to realistic social concerns. This could be exemplified by some of our views around substance abuse, alcohol and ICE.

While we recognise the significant impact on our community through this scourge, we would often rather justify addiction through normalising a dangerous drug with a pretty name like “Tina”. And further normalising excessive recreational usage with a definition of “manageable” and not with proper referencing like “abuse” or “problematic”.

Other examples of substance abuse statistics reference that Alcohol is a significant factor of concern within the LGBQTi community. This when we know the statistics around depression, anxiety and other mental health diagnosis within the LGBQTi community are higher than within the wider communities.

It is also very easy as a community to point figures at those who might negate our Brand LGBQTi. It is very easy instead to create barriers of isolation against anyone within our community that might be in the news for a disparaging matter; who might be arrested; who might be deported; who might have done something really bad; who might have gone to jail.



It is very often easy for us as a community to label, stigmatise and isolate those that might damage our brand, while we instead shove a needle of “shard” into our veins and party in group scenes, practicing sex in a manner that may be inconsistent with safe practices.

It's easy for us to label, stigmatise and isolate those that might damage our brand; while instead secretly peddling drugs; cheating on our taxes; running a red light or speeding in our car through a school zone. It is always easy for us as a community to demoralise, stigmatise and isolate those that might damage our Brand LGBQTi.

Perhaps our own communities find it hard to accept the significance of negative social influence that impacts our own community. A normalisation of social trends or incidents that may be outside the normative views of our community, may have a prevalence to be ignored or swept under the carpet and out of view.

Instead, an alternative consideration might be to ignite a conversation within our own community, that should be devoid of social sensitivity and that does not offer a discordance with conversations that are more widely accepted within the wider community.

These types of conversations, should be considered as important and within the strategic framework and social responsibility of Community Media or Community Engagement resource's. They should be important for significant stakeholders in our community, such as Ms. Rowena Allen Victorian Commissioner for Gender & Sexuality; and within discussions around the strategic framework of the Victorian PRIDE Centre and within it's design and intended service provisioning structure guidelines.

While there are concerning trends in our own community that could be viewed as troubling. It has been suggestive that further trends in our own community that are sometimes normalised and accepted may at least be breaching Human Rights considerations & could redress any conversation about how we view Equality from within our own community.

Recent presentations of examples by some within our community that people affected or living with HIV/AIDS have been made to feel “diseased”, “dirty”, “feared”, “un-clean”, “shunned”, “unwanted” from others within our own community.

We now see the expression “clean” constantly referred to on our community chat apps and forms. This term is abhorrent and the most disgusting expression in our modern community vernacular. We have regressed as a community to a time and place when fear was prevalent in our own community around HIV/AIDS.

The same fears are still prevalent in the wider community and with imbedded fears current in most state institutions where care is provided by the State.

During a time when the community conversation is directed to our understanding of Equality and

through a debate in regards to marriage. It is somewhat distressing, that examples such as these could point to a disturbing trend that could derail the understanding of Equality as we have grown to understand it from inside our own community. These examples and presentations are also troubling as we view an increase globally in conservative & right wing extremism views.

The recent US jailing of a member of our community with behavioural traits that exist outside any normalised behaviours has shed additional concern on to our community. Where the recent ABC 7.30 report provided us insight in regards to the distressing consequences to members of the Melbourne Chargers that were caught up in this matter and now tainted from a community backlash against their club. When they were in the dark. Where they had no idea. Where they were betrayed. Where they did not understand. Where they felt helpless. It is emerging issues like these from within side our own community, that must open our eyes. That must ignite ownership and a conversation. Not instead to close our eyes.

Often the normalisation of specific social issues, ignites an ignorance of the trends that might impact from inside our own community and where there is a lack of understanding or acceptance of these matters as a community.

There are additional vulnerabilities in the fabric of our normalised community

There are those living on the streets. Living homeless and without any connection to our own community. There are those working the streets. Those committing serious crimes to support substance abuse issues or to maintain the ability to eat, to access health care or to pay for their medications or a roof over there heads. Without a connection to community.

There are those with mental illness. Those with physical disability. Those aged, impaired. Those in rural settings. Those with a multitude or complex disabilities, impairments and vulnerabilities and with no connection to community.

There are those that are "Aged" living in Nursing Homes, with no connection to Community. Surrounded by staff and other residents that don't understand them, that they don't understand. Living in a foreign environment. Disconnected from Community.

There are those from our community living in institutions, incarcerated, in care facilities. With no connection to Community.

There are many individuals living on the outer rim or outside of the bounds of our community. That have been disconnected. That have lost their identity. More connected with an external society that might prey on their vulnerabilities, or with whom they identify more with and because of a disconnection from our own community.

Those who identify as Indigenous Australians, understand the strong importance of connection to land, to family and to community. Is this a strength that we as a community can learn from the traditional owners of our lands?

There are now so many LGBTQI individuals that are so disconnected from our community that have lost there identities, that live in isolation. That live in a broken disconnected isolation due to circumstance or standing.

That have dropped through any safety nets that should be in place. Where our community should be providing support, instead of closing our eyes. Where we should have a strong social consciousness and responsibility of ownership.



We as a community must understand the importance of connection to Community, just as the traditional owners of the land embrace those values and as a significant part of being individuals within a community. With an identity that should connect us to community.

The importance of Equality Recognition is a basic human right.

During this period of national debate in regards to Equality through Marriage. This is also a time when we must open our hearts, our eyes, our ears. A time of compassionate contemplation as a community to understand if we really understand what Equality means to all of us as a community.

By Nick Tuscany (VIC)

Images accompanying this article are by Brody Calypso

International Day of Trans Prisoner Action & Solidarity



Jan 22nd will mark the second International Trans Prisoner Day of Solidarity. First imagined by Marius Mason, an incarcerated trans man in Texas, this project has grown into an annual, global event.

Call for submissions

All sistergirls, brotherboys, trans and gender nonconforming people who are (or have been) incarcerated are invited to contribute to the 2017 Trans Prisoner Zine. This is a small, DIY magazine that will feature stories, artwork, poetry and articles. It will be distributed to people both inside and outside prisons around the world as part of the 2017 Day of Solidarity on Jan 22nd. Send your submission to Inside Out, by January 10th:
PO Box 2446, Footscray, VIC 3011.



Inside Out Newsletter Feedback Form

Name (optional):

What did you like about the newsletter?

.....

Anything you didn't like or think could be different?.....

.....

Feedback

Please write and let us know your opinions on the suggestions made by other Inside Out readers. What do you think about:

- Dean's idea of Lonely Hearts Pen-Pals?
- Taryn-Michelle's idea of having a comic strip? (Would you like to draw a comic for it?)
- Taryn-Michelle's idea for the Dear Inside Out column? We are happy to find people in the community to respond to the questions, such as health professionals, counsellors and possibly lawyers. So send us any questions you have.
- Troy's idea about the Readership Committee? Who would like to be a part of it? Let us know!

Don't forget to tell us if you would like your feedback or letter published.

We also really want to include more art in the newsletter. So please send us your artwork!

Birthday Cards



We would like to invite you to create a birthday card design or artwork. We will then print them onto cards ready to be sent out when someone on our mailing list has a birthday! Send your design or artwork to us by Feb 15th. Don't forget to tell us when your birthday is if you want to receive cards!

Don't Forget to let us know if you've changed your address; simply return your envelope with your new address

More about Inside Out

Who is this newsletter for?



Inside Out is primarily for people who are or have been incarcerated. This includes prison, juvenile detention centres and immigration detention (on-shore and off-shore detention). It is for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, sistergirl, brotherboy, 2spirit, takatapui, fafafine, asexual and many other diverse gender and sexual identities. You don't have to identify as one of these to receive the newsletter. You might be curious or questioning your gender or sexuality. You might just support the LGBTIQ+ community. You might have loved ones who identify as gender or sexually diverse. This is an inclusive newsletter! Going on our mailing list doesn't mean having to identify in any particular way. The newsletter will also be available to those in the community on the outside. However, the focus is in providing a voice for, and giving access to information to people in prison or those who have experienced incarceration.

Email: info@insideoutaustralia.org

Website: www.insideoutaustralia.org



Feedback Form continued

What else would you like to see in the newsletter?

Any other comments/ feedback?

I'd like to receive the newsletter.
My address is
.....

I'm being released on this date:.....and I would like to keep receiving the newsletter after that. Here is my post-release address:

What do you want Inside Out to be?

We want Inside Out to be first and foremost lead by prisoners. If you have ideas about what the newsletter should include or ideas about what the Inside Out network should be, we would love to hear from you. Please let us know if you want us to publish your ideas so that we can create a discussion and build this project together.

Right now the newsletter is the main focus of the group. However, as we build more capacity we might be able to take on other projects. Please be aware that Inside Out does not currently have the capacity to provide support in terms of individual advocacy, legal advice, financial support or counselling. However the newsletter will always include a resource list outlining services in your state that can help with these matters.

Go on the mailing list

Let us know if you are not already on our mailing list and you want to receive this free newsletter. Or if you know anyone else who wants to. We will send you out a new edition every 3 months.

Contribute your artwork or writing

If you want to have your writing, articles, poetry, letters or artwork featured in the next edition of the newsletter, please send it to us at:

Inside Out
Po Box 2446
Footscray
Vic, 3011



Resource List

LGBTIQ+friendly organisations that can provide advocacy, advice and support for people in prison.

Queensland



Advice and assistance for people in prison, independent monitoring of Corrective Services, financial counselling and Safe Way Home Program to assist prisoners to gain access to gradual release. Ring directly via the Arunta system, write to us or ask a correctional officer to arrange a referral or video link up. PO Box 5162 West End 4101



Legal advice and information for those who have legal problems arising from their identification as LGBTI and/or because they feel more comfortable in dealing with a solicitor with specific skills, interest and understanding of LGBTI issues. P: 0401 936 232 30 Helen Street, Teneriffe QLD 4006.

Sisters Inside

We advocate for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system, and to address gaps in the services available to them. We work alongside women in prison in determining the best way to fulfil these roles. P: (07) 3844 5066. PO Box 3407, South Brisbane 4101.



New South Wales



Community Restorative Centre

Support to people upon release from prison and their families. CRC transitional projects address issues such as homelessness, employment, substance use, family, relationships, trauma, finances, education. P: (02) 9288 8700.

LEAP - Legal Education and Advice in Prison for women in NSW

See a free lawyer for: family law, child protection, domestic violence, sexual assault, victims support, discrimination or human rights issues, at Silverwater Women's (Mulawa), Dillwynia or Emu Plains CC. Speak to your SAPO or welfare officer to make an appointment. Or call on CADL #21 or CADL #20. You can ask to speak to an LGBTIQ staff member.

THE ALBION CENTRE

Medical testing and treatment for HIV, hepatitis C and related infections, as well as emotional and social support for people living with HIV.
P: 02 9332 9600 or 150 Albion St Surry Hills, NSW.

Victoria



Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO)

Support for individuals leaving prison, and families and children of offenders. Services include Video Visits program and Supporting Kids and Youth (SKY) program. The VACRO Women's Mentoring Program (VWMP) is a one-to-one program which matches female volunteers with women exiting prison or on community correctional orders. P: (03) 9605 1900.



A state-wide advocacy and support service for women who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria. This could include support around homelessness, drug and alcohol treatment, or any underlying causes of criminalisation. P: (03) 9372 6155.

South Australia



Shine

Got a sexual health question? You can talk confidentially to a nurse for free on the Sexual Healthline. P: 1300 883 793. Country callers: 1800 188 171 (toll-free). Mon – Friday, 9:00am – 12:30pm.

National



Q-Life

A free national LGBTI peer-to-peer phone counselling and referral service. P: 1800 184 527 (Daily: 3pm-midnight).



Radio Shows

Doin' Time (VIC) 3CR 855am. Monday 4-5pm
Locked In (QLD) 4zzz 102.1fm. Monday 6-8pm
JailBreak (NSW) 2SER 107.3fm. Tuesday 5-5:30am