



JUSTICE ACTION REPORT - Mon 28/11/11–Fri 09/12/11

This is our regular report to update you with our latest news and projects. Please let us know if you can provide any assistance or advice, as that would be greatly appreciated.

JUST US - VOLUME V, 2012

Justice Action announced its new edition of the newspaper JUST US has begun! This publication enables Justice Action to reach out to prisoners and mental health consumers all over Australia and New Zealand, encouraging expression and participation. It is also distributed to all the judiciary and politicians, by name, in both countries.

Following our Supreme Court win, for the first time JUST US will go to mental health consumers in the institutions. For those who don't know, not only did we force them to change their policy on newspaper access, we also took \$5000 from the Attorney General as legal costs. Now we will use this access to break the secrecy and bring about changes.

* Sophie, Nicola, Charles, Jasminne, Cynthia, Kritika and Geoff wrote letters directed to various stakeholders to create awareness of the newspaper and to encourage participation in it. Sponsorships and advertising similar to the UK Inside Time <http://tinyurl.com/7fsxc55> is being prepared <http://tiny.cc/yas7r>

* Manasi compiled prisoners' and mental health consumers names and addresses from the databases and case files.

* The team arranged letters which were sent off to prisoners and mental health consumers and still rolling out.

CLEAN NEEDLES AND SYRINGES PROGRAM IN PRISONS

Justice Action got in behind the Moore Report in a campaign <http://tinyurl.com/6de4tef> to support the distribution of needles and syringes into prisons around Australia, beginning with the ACT. The appalling rate of infection and cross infection of prisoners sharing needles has finally spurred government into action as it can't be ignored any more <http://tiny.cc/h53iu>.

Following our prisoners Consultation <http://tinyurl.com/7r9nhve> we have followed through with personal contacts and research <http://tiny.cc/yqi67>

* Sam, Geoff and Andrea have developed a risk analysis called the "Pricking the Bubble Around Prison NSPs" Report, which will soon be published. It contradicts arguments of increased risk to prison officers.

SAEED DEZFOULI

Costs of Appeal

* The Attorney General is still pursuing Saeed and his Primary Carer for the government's legal costs of around \$36,000 because Saeed used his right of appeal to the Supreme Court against the Mental Health Review Tribunal. That is precisely the bullying and abuse of authority Justice Action stands against. Bring it on!

Review Hearing

* The President of the Tribunal, Greg James - who wrote the new Mental Health law - in the March Review hearing supported and advised for a review of Saeed's fitness to plead, so that his ten years served would allow his release. Then a few weeks ago he questioned whether it was within the Tribunal's power to find a person fit to plead after he has been found not guilty due to mental illness. Unfortunately Saeed's side-door to release has been closed due to Greg James' poor legal drafting of the new Mental Act. If Saeed had intended to hurt anyone he would be going home! Crazy stuff...

* The hearing for his future release will instead be a full review to be conducted with new psychiatric reports and with legal aid support. One of our psychiatrists has been blocked access to his file despite numerous requests. The saga continues! No wonder they charge the taxpayer \$205,000 a patient a year. And yet they still attack this non-violent man with a syringe every two weeks. What an amazing abuse of power and they don't even see it.

Anti-discrimination Education Case

* Saeed lodged a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Board because, as a patient, he was denied access to undertake courses of education, access to legal materials, to work and earn money at the Long Bay Prison Hospital. The rights of prisoners in these regards are clearly stated, but not for mental health patients.

* The Anti-Discrimination Board referred the issue to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal for a three-day hearing. This was adjourned to February for an audio visual link to be available.

* Justice Action is negotiating support amongst consumer organisations and teachers.

Right to a Name Issue

* The team is still awaiting Justice Michael Adams' judgment on the appeal heard on 4th August 2011 against the Tribunal's rejection of Saeed's right to use his name.

For a summary of Saeed's case, visit <http://tiny.cc/tjuo7>

REMISSION

At the recent consultation by Justice Action with prisoners of the ACT prison, the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), prisoners said they felt "helpless and hopeless" as they awaited the expiration of their gaol terms. As a result, Justice Action is promoting Remission <http://tinyurl.com/7za4qlz>. This is a system by which reductions in prison sentences are used as an incentive for good behaviour and personal development within prisons. It is win for everyone, most importantly the general community. It is cheaper and safer when positive people are released instead of drugged ex-prisoners staggering in the sunlight. In the penal colony days, 2% recidivism was achieved by Alexander Maconochie himself using his "Marks" remission system.

- * Sophie and Francis have been writing a research paper.

- * Bilal and Cynthia have been conducting research on a range of systems in other countries, mainly the UK, Ireland, and the US.

For more information about the Remissions program, visit <http://tiny.cc/gvf51>

HALL OF SHAME

The team has developed a structure and a website to expose people or organisations for unethical or abhorrent behaviour. It focuses on disgraceful behaviour concealed behind lies, hidden often by an abuse of power.

The inaugural four inductees will be Thomas Ley, Milton Orkopoulos, Keith Wright and Rex Jackson.

- * Rod, Sophie, Andrea, and Sam have developed the concept and the domain name.

- * Adrian, Cameron, Rod and Sam researched candidates for the list and have been looking into visual representations of the concept.

- * Craig, Rafaela and others have been working on the design of the website.

COMPUTERS IN CELLS PROGRAMS PROPOSAL

For the good of our community, we need a computer in every prison cell. Computers are a tool to target recidivism through education and self-improvement. With the majority of prisoners spending up to 18 hours in their cells, Justice Action believes that the only way to make prisoners productive members of society when they return outside is to give them the tools to do this on the inside.

- * The NSW Teachers Federation sent a letter of support for our campaign

- * Charles and Cameron are further developing the implementation strategy

For more information about the Proposal, visit <http://tinyurl.com/brbombu>

BREAKOUT

For decades, the social enterprise Breakout has been working in the printing, design and website industries. From its profits it funds Justice Action in its work for social inclusion and against abuse of authority.

Justice Action has been negotiating to establish its office in Trades Hall Sydney as a permanent cultural base. Significant support has come from Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and NSW Teachers Federation Union. Here's some of what they had to say:

* **"The AMWU Print Division** is proud to give its support to Breakout and to acknowledge the work that it has done over many decades working for the community through the organisation Justice Action...from the profits of its design, printing and website work for unions and others. It links its history back to Australia's convict past as a representative of the first workers who built the farms, roads and ports."

* **CFMEU Mining and Energy.** "Our union has had a long association with Breakout stretching out back almost 20 years now. We are proud to support a business in which all of its modest income goes not to enhanced personal wealth but is rather used for the greater community good."

* **NSW Teachers Federation.** "The Federation's connection dates back more than 25 years to 1984 when Breakout was created. It is proud to support Justice Action as an organisation which seeks to ensure social inclusion and a service for the safety of the community."

WEBSITE

* Geoff and Cynthia updated the JA Homepage, touched up the website - ordered front page item listings, the 4 main links, the JA report links, added remissions on the four main links.

* Cynthia updated the Remissions page on website

VICTORIA PRISONER COURT CHALLENGE

* Victorian prisoner Julian Knight has won court approval to launch a legal challenge against an unlawful prison tobacco levy in the Victorian Supreme Court

<http://tinyurl.com/7cxdfcl>

* In 1993 an unknown officer of the Department of Corrections made a decision to add a 10 per cent levy to the wholesale cost of cigarettes and tobacco

<http://tinyurl.com/6nyebru>

* Justice Action gave support to Today Tonight Melbourne.

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