

Suzette's Lesson:

Community control

The aim of this project is to highlight the importance of community controlled prisoner support organisations, while also honouring Suzette Broderick for her contributions as a prisoner representative.



Suzette's Lesson

Community-led initiatives play an essential role in ensuring that the voice, needs, and expertise of people with lived experience remain at the centre of advocacy and

service delivery. Suzette Broderick's leadership, lived experience, and commitment to prisoner rights exemplify the power of community-driven change. Her work stands as a reminder that the active involvement of those most affected by the justice system is important in shaping solutions. By documenting and honouring her contributions, the project aims to improve access to culturally safe support, and promote grass-roots leadership.

Suzette's lived experience and the respect she had earned amongst prisoners put her in a unique position to fiercely advocate to improve the lives and prospects of other prisoners. During her 12 years in prison, she became acknowledged as a respected leader. Upon release, this was particularly seen through her service as President of WJN (WIPAN), which led her to speak at National Conferences as a representative of women prisoners.

However, despite her effort to maintain a stable financial base post-incarceration, she was not given a job or training that would have enabled her to lift into a management role for participating in control of women prison services. She instead got diverted into damaging relationships and drug use, and ultimately dying in tragic circumstances in November 2025.

Suzette's tragic death has left her family, friends and community angry and emphasises the need for community control to be integrated into prisoner services. If her passionate advocacy had been embraced, her post-release story would have been very different. There is now an opportunity for Suzette's legacy to help others by applying the principles of consumer controlled funding for prisoner services.



Former prisoners who did time with Suzette - Lynda Rich, Leanne Carr, Naomi Davis, Deb Yesimite and Kat Armstrong, as well as her daughter Brittany Glasby call for that change.

History

Suzette Louise Broderick (formerly Suzette Louise Glasby) was born on the 29th September 1974. When Suzette was 20, she was arrested for murder. While Suzette did not murder John Thiessl herself, she was found to have colluded with her then husband, Gary Zane Glasby and John's wife, Carmela Thiessl, for the murder. Suzette was subsequently sentenced to a minimum of 9 years in prison with an additional 3 years for refusing to name her husband as a principal offender.

If Suzette had received the support she needed, training and the means to project her voice and experience, she would have become a significant leader for female prisoners in the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, while some funded organisations were pleased to be seen beside her, Suzette did not get the opportunities offered to her to enable her to continue her work and she struggled to be relevant after her release.

Despite Suzette's influential role as a leader of women prisoners, her death in [November 2025](#) was attributed to a relapse in drug usage, a problem which originated from the time prior to her sentencing—denying her the opportunity to continue being a role model and inspiration for women in prison.

Prison Time

During her time in prison, she was revered as both a leader and fighter. She cared for others who weren't so strong and protected them from abuse. She represented them in Prisoner Committees advocating for their rights, whilst also servicing other women with their hair and presentation.

At the time of her [1999 court hearing](#), the judge noted that Suzette had 'completed some drug and alcohol related courses' following two past attempts at suicide.¹ To prepare for release and make her contribution to society, Suzette committed to the prison education programs and completed a Certificate 4 in Business Office Administration among various tertiary qualifications. such as numerous computer courses, a horticulturist statement of attainment and a VET certificate completion as a result of her work and training as the Head of the then Print Shop in Berima Correctional Centre in 2006. Suzette received multiple graphic design certificates in Photoshop, Acrobat Pro and Website Design.

Release

Suzette joined the board of members in the Women in Prison Advocacy Network (WIPAN) along with Kat Armstrong. She later became the Vice-President and President of WIPAN, now known as the [Women's Justice Network](#) (WJN). This community controlled organisation is aimed at offering support for female ex-prisoners in response to a lack of support for women in correctional institutions.

The goal is to advocate for systematic changes in prisons, improve support available to women in prisons, and reduce recidivism. Suzette was integral to the work, as the President of WIPAN, in meeting with Members of Parliament, CEO's from other services and mentored women pre and post release from prison.

¹ *Registrar, Criminal Division, Supreme Court of New South Wales v Glasby* [1999] NSWSC 846 [4].

Consumer Controlled Organisations

Community controlled organisations refer to groups that construct and fund services tailored towards individuals with vulnerabilities, with these services codesigned by individuals with lived experience. Examples of this include [Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations](#), that aim to offer culturally appropriate services developed specifically by Aboriginal people to improve health outcomes for their communities.

Consumer controlled funding supplies service seekers with proper funding, enabling them to control and access services most applicable to their current condition. Currently, this consumer controlled funding principle is present through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for the general public, yet absent for those in correctional centres despite the high prevalence for mental issues.

The Productivity Commissioner in 2011 introduced the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for people with disabilities, providing them the funds to seek and select the services specific to their disabilities. Before consumer based funding was introduced in the NDIS, disabled people had to beg from service providers who were directly funded by the government, leaving the less wealthy or difficult cases little access to the services they needed. The Productivity Commission analysis showed that the NDIS was three times as effective in consumer satisfaction.



However, this scheme is still absent for Australian prisoner services. Currently, taxpayer dollars are still invested into services and not the consumer, creating a barrier that diminishes the quality and access for prisoners to seek the services that they need.

It is time to introduce [consumer controlled funding](#) for prisoner services so prisoners' voices are heard and respected.

Community Controlled Organisations

Evidence of Effectiveness:

- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-020-09943-4>
- [https://www.lowitjajournal.org.au/article/S2949-8406\(25\)00035-X/fulltext](https://www.lowitjajournal.org.au/article/S2949-8406(25)00035-X/fulltext)

Further case information is available on AUSTLII:

- [Regina vs Glasby 2000](#)
- [Garry Zane Glasby pursuant to s 78 of the Crimes](#)
- [Supreme Court of New South Wales v Suzette Louise Glasby](#)