



Bandyup Action Group

a subcommittee of the Deaths in Custody Watch Committee (WA) Inc.

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SEND UNDERWEAR: BANDYUP ACTION GROUP LAUNCHES ACTION PLAN

Lynn MacLaren MLC and Debbie Kilroy OAM to speak at the launch

BANDYUP ACTION GROUP (BAG) will mark one year since the release of the inspection report into Bandyup Women's Prison with the launch of its Action Plan on Wednesday 23 September.

The Hon. Lynn MacLaren MLC, Member for South Metropolitan Region, will launch the Action Plan at a light breakfast event in Perth city. Also speaking at the launch is Debbie Kilroy OAM, founder of Sisters Inside (Qld) and advocate for women in prison.

The Action Plan identifies easy, everyday things that members of the community can do, at very little cost, to alleviate the conditions for the women inside Bandyup. It calls on members of the public to send toiletries, books, tea towels, mop heads and underwear, among other things, to the women at the prison because the government doesn't provide enough of these essential items due to lack of funding.

BAG is also calling on community organisations to do their part, such as: Breast Cancer WA, to include Bandyup in its mobile services outreach program; Netball WA, to organise sports sessions for the women; and legal associations to send in law texts to update the legal resources at Bandyup.

The Action Plan also calls on Bandyup management to introduce 'section 95' work programs for the women.

'The rules that apply to maximum-security male prisoners should not apply to 90 per cent of the female prison population in Bandyup who are not maximum security,' says Marc Newhouse, chair of the Deaths in Custody Watch Committee.

The launch is an opportunity to take stock of the government's progress against the 40 recommendations from the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), 38 of which it accepted. The OICS report found myriad systemic failures at Bandyup arising from chronic overcrowding and dilapidated infrastructure and resources.

Bandyup Action Group and the Deaths in Custody Watch Committee urge the government to reduce the population of Bandyup immediately to address some of the problems related to overcrowding.

- Release all women in prison for fine default and minor offences.
- Accommodate bail for women on remand and provide legal resources for them.
- Resource community work programs, especially in regional areas, as an alternative to imprisonment.
- Release minimum-security prisoners to home detention, or release on parole where possible.

Earlier this month Lynn MacLaren MLC tabled a petition from Bandyup Action Group calling on the state government to halt the multimillion-dollar conversion of Hakea into a women's remand facility and instead fund a bail hostel and legal resources for women so that women on remand have their legal entitlements met.

Event details

Wednesday 23 September

7.30am light breakfast, launch start at 7.45am to finish at 8.45am

Venue: Uniting Church in the City, 1st Floor, 97 William Street, Perth

Tickets: \$40 waged, \$20 unwaged

Book: <http://www.trybooking.com/IZPZ>

All are welcome to attend. Speaker biographies and further details on following page.



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Speaker biographies

Lynn MacLaren MLC joined the Western Australia Parliament in May 2009. As a Greens WA elected Member of the Legislative Council she represents people in the South Metropolitan Region. On behalf of the Greens in WA Parliament, Lynn's work spans a wide range of portfolios including: planning, housing, community services, social inclusion, heritage, animals, volunteering, seniors, disability issues, food and GMOs, sexuality, tourism, arts and culture, small business, and science and innovation. From 2005 to 2008 Lynn worked as a Senior Policy Officer with the Western Australian Council of Social Service, where she specialised in policy areas of poverty, housing and sector viability. She also worked as a consultant in strategic planning and capacity building for community organisations.

Debbie Kilroy was imprisoned for drug trafficking in 1989 for six years. She was stabbed and witnessed the only murder inside an Australian women's prison, and lost almost everything: her marriage, her home and her children. After her release in 1992, she established Sisters Inside, which advocates for the human rights of women in the criminal injustice system. Sisters Inside has won international acclaim for its work and for a unique structure which ensures it is driven by women inside prison. Debbie was awarded the OAM for services to the community for working with women in prison 2003 and was awarded the National Human Rights Medal in 2004. She has a degree in social work and is a qualified gestalt therapist. Debbie was the first person in Australia who has serious convictions to be admitted by the Supreme Court of Queensland to practise law in 2007.

Statistics on women on remand at Bandyup

In 2014 the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) released a report that described Bandyup as the 'hardest and most neglected prison in the state'.

The prison has a design capacity of 183. In December last year, there were 348 women at Bandyup. At any one time, about one-third of the population at Bandyup is women on remand.

More than half the women released from Bandyup each year are unsentenced.

In 2013, 868 prisoner releases (including women who were released multiple times during the year) occurred at Bandyup Women's Prison. Of these, 459 were unsentenced (53%).

- 328 (71.5%) of the 459 unsentenced releases were women released on bail (including home detention).
- 108 (23.5%) of the 459 unsentenced releases were women who did not receive a custodial sentence.
- 235 (51%) of the 459 unsentenced releases were Aboriginal women.

In 2014, 811 prisoner releases (including women who were released multiple times during the year) occurred at Bandyup. Of these, 514 were unsentenced (63%).

- 369 (71.5%) of the unsentenced releases were women released on bail (including home detention).
- 121 (23.5%) of the unsentenced releases were women who did not receive a custodial sentence.
- 261 (51%) of the unsentenced releases were Aboriginal women.