



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

'It was almost normal'

**The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining
Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents.**

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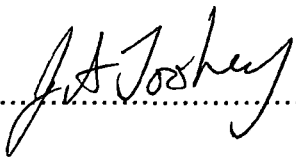
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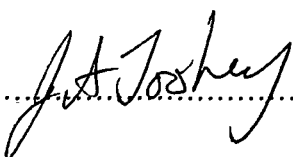
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Julie-Anne Toohey 

Abstract

It is unfortunate that in an era when progressive thinking is celebrated, human rights are on many people's agenda, and both government and non-government organisations are supposedly working to create a more sustainable life for those considered to be marginalised, the difficulties that families of prisoners face rarely take centre stage in political forums or policy debates. Imprisonment, essentially based on a model of retribution, is immune to the plight of families, caught up in the 'ripple effect' that extends well beyond the incarcerated family member.

The following research examines the challenges encountered by the children of prisoners and considers the emotional, social and financial toll that arises as a result of parental incarceration as well as the potential risks of intergenerational criminality. Despite calls from lobby groups, no-one regularly monitors the parental status of prisoners – the collection of statistics is generally dependent upon researchers and non-government organisations.

This study investigates Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison. These special days are designed to improve contact and interaction between children and their imprisoned parents. Kids' Days recognise the rights of children to know and interact with their parents, and for parents, regardless of their status as prisoners, to know and interact with their children.

Acknowledgements

I extend my sincere thanks to the inmates at Tasmania's Risdon Prison for their willingness to participate in this study. To view Kids' Days through their eyes opened my own to the fact that regardless of circumstances, the parent-child connection is a bond to be treasured above all else.

To the Tasmanian Prison Service staff who gave me their time and perspectives, I say thank you. Without the prodigious support and assistance of Julie Bunyard, this thesis simply would not be.

To Dr. Max Travers, I offer my appreciation for the constant guidance along an occasionally challenging path, and for judicious insights into the research process.

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To Liz Moore, a true friend, advisor and motivator – thank you.

And finally to Kevin, Daniel and Laura, my patient family, who have weathered the storms of research and writing with a stoicism that can only be viewed as heroic, I proffer both love and gratitude. You may rest now.

These children have committed no crime, but the penalty they are forced to pay is steep. They forfeit, too often, much of what matters to them: their homes, their safety, their public status and private self-image, their primary source of comfort and affection. Their lives and prospects are profoundly affected by the numerous institutions that lay claim to their parents – police, courts, jails and prisons, probation and parole – but they have no rights, explicit or implicit, within any of these jurisdictions. Conversely, there is no requirement that systems serving children – schools, child welfare departments, juvenile justice agencies – so much as take note of parental incarceration.

All Alone in the World. Children of the Incarcerated (Bernstein, 2005: 4)

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Author's Note

The author wishes to acknowledge Australia's Indigenous people. The disturbing rates of Indigenous incarceration in this country leave little to be proud of, and have served to undermine thousands of Aboriginal families as well as whole communities. Significantly, Indigenous children have been, and continue to be, profoundly affected as their parents are imprisoned at disproportionate rates to non-Indigenous people. The level of disadvantage experienced by many of these children can only be viewed as shameful, as is the degree of intergenerational offending – both strongly attested to in the 1991 Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, but with little progress made in either area despite the promises of successive governments.

This thesis presents a generalised study of parental incarceration and its effects on both children and their imprisoned parents, with a particular focus on Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison. It makes no specific reference to Indigenous incarceration – to do so would require far more than the scope of this project permits. It is a subject that warrants not only dedicated research but dedicated action, underpinned by policies that evolve from a respectful consultation process with Indigenous communities. Such action should ideally be based on a deep desire to turn the tide of a criminal justice system that continues to operate to the detriment of Indigenous people. Such action should seek to create a world that fully acknowledges, embraces and honours the original owners of Australia.

List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
BJS	Bureau of Justice
Eurochips	European Network for Children of Imprisoned Parents
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
MHWP	Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison
Newpin	New Parent and Infant Network
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NZ	New Zealand
OARS	Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services of South Australia
PFA	Prison Fellowship Australia
RBMSPP	Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison
RPC	Risdon Prison Complex
TPS	Tasmanian Prison Service
UK	United Kingdom
UNROC	United Nations Rights of the Child
UNSW	University of New South Wales
USA	United States of America
UTAS	University of Tasmania
VACRO	Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
VRC	Visitors Reception Centre

Introduction

To many in our society, the impact of imprisonment on inmates and their families is a matter of little or no consequence. In the face of everyday concerns such as meeting financial demands, finding a balance between work and family commitments, attempting to access services in a less than satisfactory healthcare scheme and worrying about the state of the education system for our children, the needs of the families of prisoners is generally not a consideration for most members of the public. Furthermore, in a political climate where to be perceived as being ‘soft on crime’ can cause the loss of crucial votes, advocating on behalf of inmates’ families is an unwise platform for any politician seeking office. Prisoners are often assumed to have ‘got what they deserved’ – such a notion is at the heart of the overly simplistic yet frequently used adage ‘If you do the crime, you do the time.’ This one-dimensional retributive attitude towards punishment neither critically questions why we punish as we do, nor takes into account the wider, ‘ripple effect’ of imprisonment.

The Honourable Justice David Harper said:

If truth is the first victim of war, one of the first victims of crime is objectivity in the debate about punishment. No topic of general interest is tackled with less reason or reasonableness. No subject is more vulnerable to rank political opportunism, media irresponsibility or meanness of spirit. And it is the latter which particularly affects the families, including innocent children, of prisoners. They, too, are the victims of crime (cited Tudball 2000: Forward)

Parental incarceration affects a large and increasing number of children, many of whom face significant uncertainty in nearly every aspect of their lives. The Honourable Alastair Nicholson, in his endorsement of the Action Paper (Hannon, 2007) produced by the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) expressed the opinion that Australia, as one of the principal protagonists of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNROC, 1989) has little cause to congratulate itself in upholding the tenets of that charter. It is his view that the cause of human rights in general, and children’s rights in particular, have suffered considerably over the last decade, particularly at Federal level, but also at State and Territory level. While attention is most often focused on the victims of crime (as ideals of a humanitarian approach would warrant), it is often forgotten that children of prisoners are also victims of crime and this too, should be acknowledged. Resources devoted to their needs and welfare will benefit not only the children themselves, but also the communities in which they live.

Chapter 1. About the Study

1.1 Background to the Study

The origin of this research project can be attributed to a situation that arose in a school in which the researcher was teaching a number of years ago. The father of a nine year old boy was imprisoned – knowledge of this situation arose via ‘the grapevine’ and general gossip within the school community. The mother of the young boy felt unable to communicate with the school regarding the family’s changed circumstances, and so speculation and conjecture arose, the young boy withdrew into himself, stigmatisation and teasing reared their ugly heads – and very little was done to either acknowledge or address the needs of this vulnerable and confused child. As staff members, we were requested by those in charge at the school to ‘protect’ the boy by avoiding any reference to his situation, to ignore it, and to not speak to him about it.

At around the same time, the father of four of the school’s children, a man of just 35 years of age and an active contributor to the school community, died in rather sudden and unforeseen circumstances. The outpouring of grief within the school and beyond was significant, and much was done to help and support the children and their bereaved mother. Most of the school community attended the funeral service, and the public acknowledgement of the loss to the family of their precious father was considerable. The children, upon returning to school after spending time in the care of extended family, were embraced and nurtured, and knew that at all times there were support mechanisms in place to comfort and guide them when their upsetting state of affairs threatened to overwhelm them.

It became apparent to the researcher that the loss of a father to incarceration evoked a totally different public reaction to that of the loss of a father to death. The school community did not consist of uncaring people – quite the reverse in fact. However, the young boy with the imprisoned father was attempting to deal with a loss that in many ways resembled that of a loved father to death, but he did not have the advantage of public validation of this loss, nor the support of those upon whom he could reasonably be expected to depend, the researcher included.

While the children of the father who died were able to remain in the family home, with the constant attendance and attention of family and friends, the young lad with the imprisoned father was forced to move from his home as his mother’s financial circumstances deteriorated, his peer group distanced themselves, and he became increasingly isolated. I am

ashamed to say that the school breathed an almost audible sigh of relief as the change in housing necessitated a change of school, and the young boy moved away to become 'somebody else's problem'.

As I re-entered the field of academia and developed an interest in Criminology, thoughts of that young boy returned frequently, and I heartily wished that I could have my time over again to address the mistakes of the past. I often wonder what became of him, and whether he was able to move beyond the stigma and sense of shame that having a parent in prison evoked. I also wondered about the child's connection with his father, and whether imprisonment had strained, or worse, destroyed, the parent-child relationship. It prompted me to view the situation of imprisoned parents through a wide-angled lens, and to investigate not only the extent of parental incarceration, but the broader effects of this situation on families and children of prisoners, and also upon the incarcerated parent.

1.2 Responding to the Children of Prisoners: A Human Rights Approach

During criminal justice processes (arrest, sentencing, imprisonment and release) there is very little recognition given to the fact that prisoners may be parents (Burns *et al.*, 2007). Prisoners are viewed as individuals, their children as 'someone else's' responsibility; they are not seen as indirect recipients of the adult justice system.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNROC, 1989) emphasises the need to protect children from any discrimination or punishment based on their parents' status or activities, and that the child's best interests should be a primary consideration (Articles 2 and 3). Article 9 highlights a child's right to maintain contact with a separated parent, except where it is deemed to be not in the child's best interests. This is challenged by the incarceration of parents in prisons located considerable distances from their homes.

In situations where a child is removed from their home as a result of parental incarceration (typically when a mother who is a sole parent is imprisoned), the child should be protected by Article 20 of the Convention, that is, where a child is deprived of their home environment, the State provides special protection and assistance. In the case of children of incarcerated parents, this is very rarely the case. While there is general consensus that children are not responsible for the actions of their parents, it is also clear that children continue to suffer as a result of a parent's incarceration. Upholding UNROC's tenets is generally left to overworked, under-funded, non-government and community organisations.

1.3 The Research Questions

With the vulnerability of prisoners' children and the limitations of incarcerated parenthood in mind, various organisations both nationally and internationally have sought to instigate programs aimed at developing and maintaining relationships between prisoners and their children. One such initiative is that of Kids' Days, a program operating in Tasmania's Risdon Prison, designed to improve contact and quality interaction between children and their imprisoned parents.

Research that focuses on children whose parents are incarcerated has been quite limited, despite the growing numbers of children who are affected by the imprisonment of their mother or father (and in some cases, both). This thesis addresses two questions that I hope will contribute to thinking in this area. First, it seeks to examine how programs such as Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison help children connect with their incarcerated parent. Secondly, it asks how such programs help incarcerated inmates parent from behind bars.

1.4 Significance and Utility of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the experiences of incarcerated parents at Tasmania's Risdon Prison who have attended Kids' Days, and to gain an appreciation of whether this type of event contributes to the child-parent connection. The purpose of this study is to build knowledge about the factors that help or hinder the maintenance of the bonds between incarcerated parents and their children, and the perspectives of inmates and parolees are central to this.

The study, by drawing attention to the 'pains of separation' as experienced by both prisoners and their children, highlights the need for prisons to acknowledge inmates' parenting role and concerns, and to uphold and support initiatives that enhance parent-child relationships. The literature review and research project presented in this thesis may provide ideas that are potentially useful for criminal justice systems, prison services, government, non-government and community agencies, both in Tasmania and beyond.

1.5 The Thesis Structure

Chapter One sets out the context of the study: its background, a human rights perspective, the research questions and the significance and utility of the study. The study's aims are also outlined: to explore the issues of parenting from behind bars and initiatives that serve to connect prisoners and their children.

Chapter Two presents examples of Australian and international literature that considers the effects of parental imprisonment upon children, the impact of incarceration upon prisoners as parents, and the benefits of maintaining child-prisoner relationships.

Chapter Three explains the study's methodology and research process. It also provides a description of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison.

Chapter Four portrays 'voices' from inside Risdon Prison –inmates, Correctional Officers, Integrated Offender Management practitioners and the prison's Director.

Chapter Five offers insights from beyond the prison walls, presenting perspectives from the Tasmanian Government, Prisoners' Rights Advocacy, a Justice Medal recipient, as well as parolees, Prison Fellowship and Kids' Days volunteers.

Chapter Six discusses the positive and negative aspects of Kids' Days. These findings are compared with the literature. Recommendations pertaining to Kids' Days, pre-incarceration procedures, future research, and concluding comments complete the thesis.

1.6 Key Terms

It is important to clarify the terms that will be used throughout the thesis. The term 'children' will refer to children aged from 18 months – 16 years. The term 'prisoner' or 'inmate' refers to any man or woman who is incarcerated in a formal prison (as distinct to a reception prison or remand centre). 'Parent' indicates the biological or adoptive parent of the child. 'Parolee' denotes a person given provisional release from prison after the expiration of the minimum term of the sentence (non-parole period) who agrees to certain conditions. 'Carer' signifies the person who has assumed primary responsibility for the prisoner's child(ren). This includes state authorised foster carers. Tasmania Prison Service's (TPS) prison officers will be referred to as 'Correctional Officers'.

Risdon Prison Complex (RPC) is a Maximum and Medium Security Prison for men; Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison (RBMSP) is Minimum Security Prison for men; Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison (MHWP) is a Maximum and Minimum Security Prison for women. These prisons (along with the Wilfred Lopes Mental Health Unit) constitute Risdon Prison, located on the outskirts of Hobart, the capital city of the island state of Tasmania, Australia.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the background, impetus and context for the study. It also highlights the fact that despite Australia's commitment to UNROC, children of incarcerated parents are largely overlooked by the State systems with which they interact, including the adult courts and prison institutions. The study is of significance for incarcerated parents and their children and can potentially be utilised by prisons, criminal justice agencies, government, non-government and community organisations. A description of the thesis structure and key terms used in the study are provided.

Chapter 2. Setting the Scene

2.1 Statistics

Unlike prisoners, families and children of prisoners rarely appear in official reports or national statistics.

Australia

As the numbers of adults entering the criminal justice system grows, so do the numbers of children affected. It is thought that around one in twenty Australian children may be affected by having a parent in prison (Quilty *et al.*, 2004; Woodward, 2003).

- Australia's prison population totalled 29,106 - 167 per 100,000 adults (ABS, 2011).
- 60% of all prisoners are 20-39 years of age (ABS, 2011). While it is presumed that a significant number of prisoners who are parents are contained within this bracket, there are no official statistics available from the ABS to confirm numbers. Under the heading 'Prisoner Characteristics', no recognition is given to a prisoner's status as a parent. Significantly, no ABS data is available to indicate the number of children in Australia affected by parental imprisonment.
- An Australian survey (Quilty, 2005) estimated that on any given day, 38,000 children have a parent in prison.
- From 2001 – 2011, there was a 35% increase in female incarceration (ABS, 2011).
- The 2009 New South Wales Inmate Health Survey revealed that 49% of all female prisoners had one or more children under the age of 16 prior to incarceration, and that many of these women were the sole care-givers.
- In Victoria, an estimated 67,500 children had a parent appearing as a defendant at the Magistrate's Court in only one year (Ward, 2009).

United States of America

The USA has the dubious distinction of having the highest incarceration rate in the world (Arditti *et al.*, 2003).

- As of 31 December 2010, state and federal correctional authorities had jurisdiction over 1,612,395 prisoners (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 2011)
- An estimated 809,800 prisoners held in the nation's prisons at mid-year 2007 were parents of children under the age of 18. Of these, 52% of state and 63% of federal

inmates reported having approximately 1,706,600 minor children (Glaze and Maruschak, 2008).

Bearse (2008: 4) provides some notable statistics pertaining to this trend.

Due to changes in drug and sentencing laws and the resulting growth in the rate of incarceration over the last twenty years, currently nationally 1 in 32 adults in the United States are under correctional supervision. It is estimated that half of those incarcerated are parents. Based solely on the number of parents incarcerated it is estimated that 1.5 million children in this country have an incarcerated parent.

United Kingdom

Despite calls from lobby groups, no-one regularly monitors the parental status of prisoners in the UK, and so there may be many unidentified children experiencing parental incarceration.

- The prison population in England and Wales, including those held in Immigration Removal Centres, was at a record high of 88,179 prisoners on 2 December 2011. The Scottish prison population reached a record high of 8,420 on 8 March 2012 (Berman, 2012).
- Approximately 4,200 females were in prison at the end of March 2012, slightly lower than the number in prison a year earlier, accounting for 4.8% of the prison population (Berman, 2012).
- One-quarter of young male offenders in UK prisons are fathers (Berman, 2012).
- Approximately 127,000 children in England and Wales are affected by parental incarceration (Murray, 2007)

European Union

- In the European Union, an estimated 700,000 children are separated from an incarcerated parent. The European Network for Children of Imprisoned Parents (Eurochips) developed the following chart of estimated figures.

Table 1: Extrapolation of the Number of Children Separated from a Parent

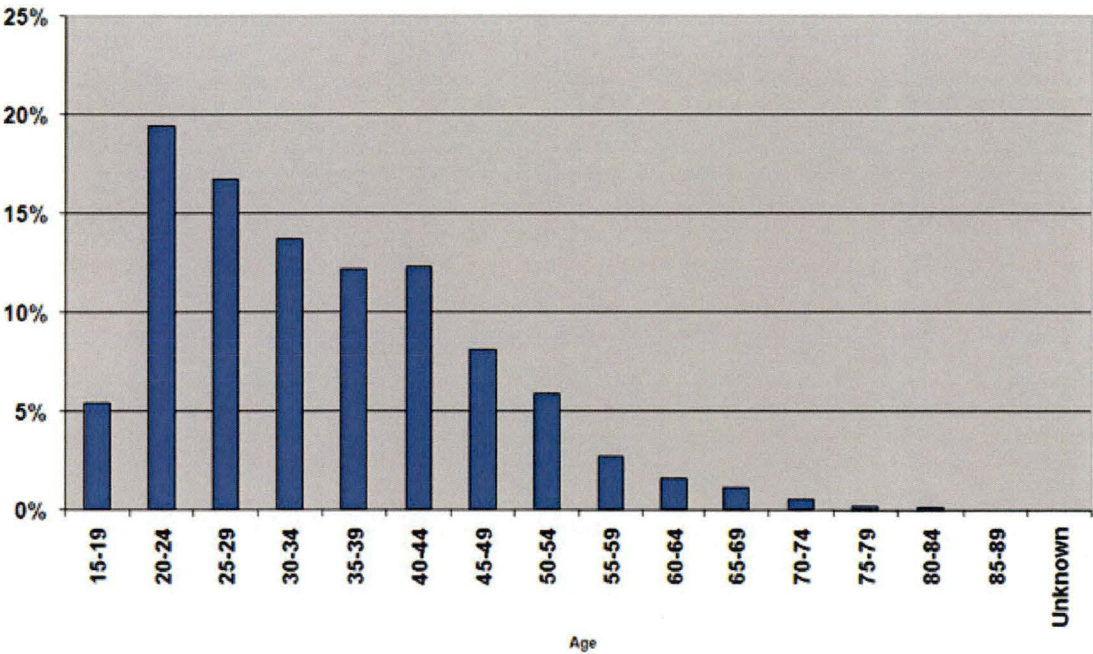
Country	Number of children separated from an imprisoned father (extrapolation)	Number of children separated from an imprisoned mother (extrapolation)
Ireland	4,300	142
France	66,235	2,545
Italy	70,035	3,454
England & Wales	94,449	6,029
Sweden	8,902	692
Portugal	15,895	1,196
Spain	73,389	6,123
Netherlands	23,800	2,297

Source: Eurochips (based on International Centre for Prison Studies data 2005, cited Rosenberg 2009: 1.4).

New Zealand

As of March 2012, the total prison population of New Zealand was 8,698. Chart 1 provides the age breakdown, with the greatest number of prisoners between the ages of 20 and 34.

Chart 1: Percentage of Prisoners in Different Age Groups



Source: New Zealand Department of Corrections 'Prison Facts and Statistics' March 2012

New Zealand, like Australia, does not collect or maintain any official statistics pertaining to the parental status of prisoners or the number of children affected by the imprisonment of a

parent. Gordon (2011), in a report commissioned by Pillars Inc. (a charity for children of prisoners) estimated that in 2009 there were approximately 18,000 children affected by parental incarceration – a comparable figure to New Zealand’s National Health Committee’s 2008 assessment of 20,000.

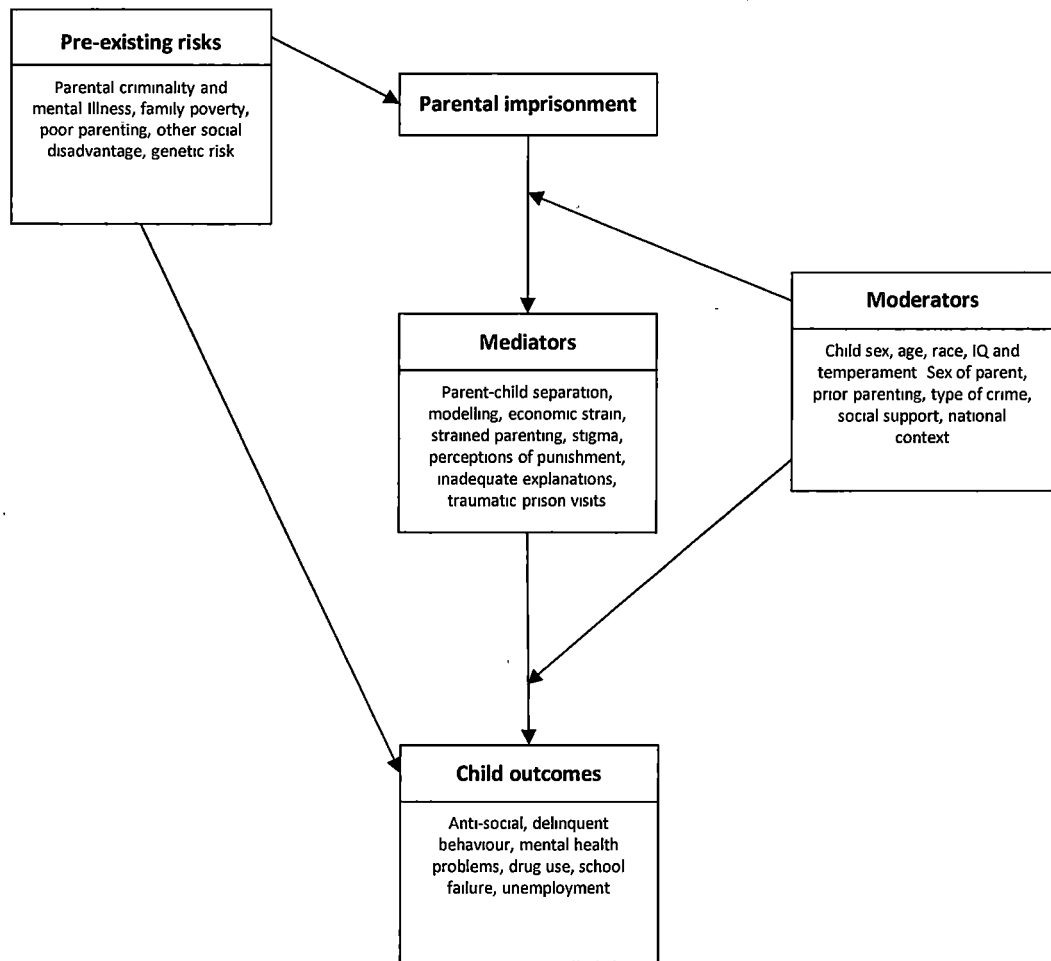
2.2 Children of Incarcerated Parents

What is it like to grow up with a parent in prison? What are the immediate and long term effects of parental incarceration on children? What it means to a child to lose a parent to prison depends on individual circumstance: whether that parent is a mother or a father; whether the child lived with that parent before arrest, and what the family’s circumstances were; why and for how long the parent will be incarcerated; who cares for the child in the parent’s absence, and what supports that child obtains (Bernstein, 2005).

There are an increasing number of studies nationally and internationally that examine the effects of imprisonment on children. In general, published research confirms that incarceration of a parent is a challenging and a potentially distressing event for children. The arrest and removal of a mother or father from a child’s life forces that child to confront emotional, social and economic consequences that may act as a catalyst for behavioural problems, poor educational outcomes, and a disruption or even severance of the relationship with the incarcerated parent that may persist even after the parent is released from prison.

Researchers acknowledge the challenge associated with disentangling the effects of parental incarceration on children from the effects of risk factors that may have preceded a parent’s imprisonment (Christian, 2009; Murray and Farrington, 2006). While incarceration is unlikely to mark the beginning of difficulties for children (see Diagram 1 next page), it is often a continuation or exacerbation of an already challenging situation in lives marked by multiple disadvantage (Johnston, 1995; Dallaire, 2007; Goodwin, 2008; Kjellstrand and Eddy, 2011).

Diagram 1:



Source: Social Care Institute for Excellence (2008) *Children of Prisoners – maintaining family ties*. London: SCIE, p.20.

Current literature identifies problems associated with the nature of children’s living arrangements which may be profoundly altered with temporary, informal situations that potentially separate children from their imprisoned parent, their family and friends (King, 2000; Loucks, 2004; Robinson, 2008). The expense and discomfort of prison visits that undoubtedly limit the contact between parent and child, restricting the maintenance of a relationship during incarceration, may also affect both children and their imprisoned parent (Brooks-Gordon and Bainham, 2001; Arditti, 2003; Christian, 2005; Codd, 2007; OARS, 2008; Robinson *et al.*, 2011). Parents who repeatedly cycle in and out of prison further contribute to the uncertainty and instability that children of incarcerated parents experience (Bales and Mears, 2008; Baldry, 2008).

Nationally and internationally, the families of prisoners tend to be among the poorest in society (Hownslow *et al.*, 1982; Naser and LaVigne, 2006; Baldry, 2008; 2003). In addition to the day-to-day burden of low incomes, many families experience dramatic reductions in parental revenue (Murray, 2007; Malone and Peacock, 2008). Resource-strained caregivers may experience significant financial hardship, impacting upon the children for whom they are caring (LaVigne *et al.*, 2008). Lost wages, prior debt, the cost (for some) of having to move house, and the additional outlay associated with maintaining and visiting the prisoner are issues consistently identified in the literature (Phillips *et al.*, 2006; Rosenberg, 2009; Light and Campbell, 2010). Furthermore, the expense for prisoners of making phone calls from the prison compounds the difficulty for inmates who do not receive regular visits to maintain contact with their children (Cunningham, 2001; Phillips *et al.*, 2006; Christian, 2009).

Children typically exhibit short-term coping responses to deal with their loss, which can develop into long-term emotional and behavioural challenges, such as depression, problems at school, delinquency and drug-use (Johnston, 1995; Arditti *et al.*, 2003; Murray and Farrington, 2005; Kjellstrand and Eddy, 2011). The literature generally identifies three main health effects of parental incarceration upon children: physical health, emotional health and mental health/conduct disorders (Murray *et al.*, 2009; Murray and Farrington, 2008; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). These health problems may change over time, with emotional upset, attachment and physical problems when the child is young; anger, violence and bed-wetting during middle childhood; and a range of at-risk behaviours involving drugs, sexualised behaviour and acting out once the child reaches adolescence (Johnston, 1995; Parke and Clarke-Stewart, 2001; Woodward, 2003; Trice and Brewster, 2004; Light and Campbell, 2010; Murray *et al.*, 2009).

Children of incarcerated parents are potentially exposed to considerable stigmatisation (Goffman, 1963; Cohen, 1995; Major and O'Brien, 2005; Brown and Bigler, 2005; NZ National Health Committee, 2009). While children who lose a parent for reasons other than incarceration will likely receive sympathy and care from others, children who lose a parent to incarceration risk being denied many of the necessary supports and normal social outlets for grieving a parent who has gone (LaVigne *et al.*, 2008; Condry, 2007; Murray and Farrington, 2006; Comfort, 2003; Cunningham, 2001).

Children may experience problems at school; various studies have documented low levels of numeracy and literacy, poor attendance and compromised peer and teacher interactions, often

due to frequent changes of school (Murray and Farrington, 2008; Dallaire, 2007; Sheehan and Levine, 2004; Tudball, 2000). The international literature considers the link between educational success and staying out of prison to be a strong one, if not well-understood. There are a variety of elements to this which include raised self-esteem, increased likelihood of obtaining well-paid employment, and improved life-chances (Murray *et al.*, 2009; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

Additionally, the risk of intergenerational crime is increased, as children with parents in prison may be socialized to follow in their paths (Hagan and Dinivitzer, 1999; Dallaire, 2007; Glaze and Maruschak, 2008; Goodwin and Davis, 2011). With repeated separations from parents because of incarceration, and being witness to criminal behaviour, children may develop a cognitive model that illegal activities are somewhat normative (Reed and Reed, 1997; Arditti *et al.* 2003; Pettit and Weston, 2004).

Table 2: Intergenerational Behaviours, Crime and Incarceration

Childhood Trauma	Emotional Response	Reactive Behaviour	Coping Pattern	Criminal Activity
Physical abuse	Anger	Physical aggression	Fighting with peers	Assault
Parent-child separation	Sadness, grief	Withdrawal	Substance abuse	Drug possession
Witness to violence	Anxiety	Hypervigilance	Gang activity	Accessory to homicide
Parental substance abuse	Anger	Verbal aggression	Asocial behaviour (lying, stealing)	Fraud
Sexual molestation	Fear, anxiety	Sexualized behaviour	Promiscuity	Prostitution

Source: D. Johnston (1995), 'Effects of Parental Incarceration', in K. Gabel and D. Johnston (eds) *Children of Incarcerated Parents*, New York: Lexington, p.81.

2.3 Imprisoned Parents

Prisons deny inmates many aspects of their 'outside' identities, seeking to substitute the identity of 'prisoner'. Applying Burke's (1996) strand of identity theory to incarcerated parents posits that imprisoned parents are often unable to enact pre-incarceration parental behaviours (also see Stryker and Burke, 2000; Arditti *et al.*, 2005; Dyer *et al.*, 2006). 'Prisonisation' refers to identity transformation resulting from the acculturation into the prison environment (Arditti *et al.*, 2005) whereby individuals come to mirror the norms and values of the prison setting, which is highly regulated and seeks to keep prisoners both

controlled and contained. It is therefore reasonable to expect that the nature of incarcerated parenthood can only be understood in relation to the limits placed upon it by the prison environment.

Research indicates that female and male offenders feel the experience of imprisonment very differently. However, there are issues that have been pinpointed by both incarcerated mothers and fathers that share a common thread. Tudball's 2000 study, commissioned by VACRO, identifies the following as being of particular concern to imprisoned parents:

- The prisoner's loss of parental authority over their children concerns
- The prisoner's inability to protect their children
- The physical separation of parent and child that contributes to emotional distancing in parent-child relationships
- Severe constraints within the prison system that impact on a prisoner's capacity to participate in decision-making regarding their children
- Losing day-to-day contact with their children, resulting in prisoner being out of touch with the details of their children's lives (pleasures, sport, difficulties, accomplishments and even developmental stages).

2.4 Mothers in Prison

Continuity of care for children is generally more disrupted by maternal rather than paternal incarceration, as female offenders are often sole parents (Kingi, 2000 Woodward, 2003; Gilham, 2012). Women prisoners have reported that their children are unprotected and vulnerable while the women are in prison (Healy *et al.*, 2001). For example, in Guransky *et al.*'s 1998 South Australian study, two of the 24 women participants reported their daughters being sexually assaulted since they [the women] had been in prison, and another believed that her children were being neglected and physically and emotionally abused but felt unable to protect them because they were in the custody of their father.

While empirical research on the effects of maternal incarceration is limited, it is generally agreed that mothers in prison lose efficacy as active participants in their children's lives on two levels. First, because they must wait for others to facilitate their children's contact with them, or wait for the children themselves to initiate contact, if they are old enough. Secondly, depending on who is caring for the children, mothers are no longer consulted in decisions affecting their child's health, welfare, placement or schooling (Woodward, 2003; Kingi,

2000; Halperin and Harris, 2004; Hanlon *et al.*, 2006). This is often aggravated by lack of information about the child's circumstances, school life and safety (Flynn, 2008).

Furthermore, prisoners have limited access to Family Court to attend hearings. When visitation orders requiring the interim carers to take children to prison for visits are breached, there is little that imprisoned mothers can do to rectify the situation (VACRO2006).

Incarcerated mothers differ from incarcerated fathers in that prior to imprisonment, they are more likely to have faced multiple threats from substance abuse, trauma due to sexual abuse, violence, and mental health disorders (Celinska and Seigel, 2010; Sharp and Marcus-Mendoza, 2001). Glaze and Maruschak's study (2008) found that between 60% and 73% of incarcerated mothers reported prior physical and sexual abuse. The fact that two-thirds of incarcerated mothers lived with their children prior to imprisonment means that many of the children may have been victim or witness to these same acts of abuse. 90% of female inmates interviewed by DeHart and Altshler (2009) had children of their own or cared for a partner's children. Over three quarters of these women mentioned the impact of abuse on their children prior to their incarceration.

Kauffman (2001) maintains that women suffer more than men from the stigma of incarceration with a societal tendency to view imprisoned women as unfit and indifferent mothers.

2.5 Fathers in Prison

Fathers who live apart from their children have been investigated mainly through the lens of separation, divorce, and re-partnering. With the growing prison population in many Western countries, fathering from prison is emerging as a further significant context in which to understand the contemporary experience of fathers in families (Clarke *et al.*, 2005; Dyer *et al.*, 2012). Children face a high risk of disengagement from fathers who have been involved in crime and the criminal justice system (Rosenberg, 2009). Parent-child relationships during imprisonment are precarious at best, and fathers often report having fewer opportunities to provide emotional or social support to their children than do imprisoned mothers (Arditti *et al.*, 2005).

A UK study examining HM Prison Service policy and the impact of case law on the rights of prisoners and family contact concluded that whilst a father's rights for indirect contact are

upheld, their rights are not respected as much as those of mothers in cases of direct contact (Brooks-Gordon, 2004).

Research identifies men's descriptions of incarcerated fatherhood centre around feelings of helplessness and difficulties in being a 'good father' (Arditti *et al.*, 2005). Clarke *et al.*'s 2005 UK study discovered uneasy and disjointed identities in respondent's evaluations of their role as fathers. Many of the men involved with the study viewed fathering as something that took place 'out there' and 'not inside' prison.

For men who have been the family's financial provider, it may be hard to relate to their children because their role has been altered (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Hairston, 2001). Studies have indicated that men equate being a good father not only with providing financially for their children, but also being physically in attendance to protect them. Being unable to govern their own day-to-day routines, to make commonplace decisions about their own lives or carry out traditional roles, can encourage imprisoned men to perceive themselves as ineffective, and can de-value their role as parents (Hairston, 1995; 2001). A prisoner's life involves child-like dependency, and their main responsibility is following rules (Arditti *et al.*, 2005). For many men, this discourages the behaviours required to be a responsible parent, or even a caring and compassionate adult (Hairston, 1995; 2001; Dyer *et al.*, 2004).

Characteristics of prison life and the wider criminal justice system are clearly factors that shape the experience of fatherhood behind bars (Clarke *et al.*, 2005). Prison culture has distinct norms of how the 'ideal man' should act, and ideas on masculinity which, if adopted, would most likely lead the incarcerated father away from an identity that supports his children's positive development (Dyer, 2005; Dyer *et al.*, 2004). For example, it may be less acceptable in a men's prison to admit to missing one's children and wanting to see them than it is in a women's prison. This can result in imprisoned fathers being more reluctant to make public demands for contact rights with their children, meaning that the necessity of child-father contact is more likely to be ignored (Arditti *et al.*, 2005).

These ideas, whilst useful, cannot be generalised to all imprisoned fathers, as every situation and establishment is distinct, and every inmate will react differently to imprisonment, as will their children. In some cases, a father's pre-prison lifestyle may have involved little contact with his children, in which case imprisonment may not impact upon contact levels. Conversely, in cases where fathers were very much involved with their children pre-prison,

pride, hurt and grief may cause these fathers to disengage from their families (Hairston, 2001; Bedford Family Row Project, 2007).

2.6 Maintaining Child-Prisoner Contact

It is evident from the literature that children's coping and general adjustment is enhanced by promoting parent-child contact during imprisonment, to allow a child to see and communicate with his/her parent and to have their fears about prison allayed (Johnston, 1995; Block and Potthast, 1998; Trice and Brewster, 2004; Hairston and Addams, 2001). Indeed, maintaining contact with one's incarcerated parent appears to be one of the most effective ways to improve a child's emotional response to the incarceration, and reduce the incidence of problematic behaviour. Better outcomes with decreased disruptive and anxious behaviours have been identified for children who maintain contact with their parent during incarceration (LaVigne *et al.*, 2005; NZ National Health Committee, 2009).

In addition to these direct benefits to the child's emotional health and behaviour, maintaining contact helps the incarcerated parent. Direct correlations between child visitation and coping mechanisms of imprisoned parents have been reported (Tuerk and Loper, 2006; Sheehan and Levine, 2006; NZ National Health Committee, 2009). Frequent visiting has also been seen as lending support to family reunification (Martin, 1997; Bruns, 2006; LaVigne *et al.*, 2008). Studies suggest that child visitation contributes to lowered recidivism rates (Harrison, 1997; Klein *et al.*, 2002; Hairston, 2004; Codd, 2007; Bales and Mears, 2008). These improvements for the parent will indirectly benefit the child by adding a greater degree of stability to their life once the parent has left prison (Murray *et. al.*, 2007).

Conclusion

In the simplest human terms, prison places an overwhelming burden on the relationships between imprisoned parents and their children. Children must come to terms with the reality of an absent parent, the stigma of parental imprisonment, and an altered support system that may include grandparents, non-familial arrangements or foster care. The potential for changed living conditions, as well as the possibility of being separated from siblings, may also threaten to further de-stabilise children's existence. While there is evidence to suggest that risk factors for children associated with the imprisonment of a parent may be pre-existent, it is clear that parental incarceration exacerbates these stressors, and changes, sometimes irrevocably, the life of that child.

Incarcerated parents are generally concerned about a lack of agency in their children's lives. While there are points of commonality between incarcerated mothers and fathers, there are also issues unique to each group. Fathers often experience feelings of helplessness in the face of being unable to contribute to their child's financial and material welfare, while mothers, some of whom have suffered abusive backgrounds, are concerned about their children's happiness and safety.

The benefit of maintaining strong ties between imprisoned parents and their children has been well-documented. For children, there are clear indications of improved social, emotional and physical well-being, and for prisoners, the evidence points to consistent contact with their children as being a major contributor to both family re-unification, reduced re-offending and improved parenting skills.

Chapter 3. Researching a Tasmanian Initiative

3.1 The Research Process

- Foundations for the Research: Underpinning Assumptions

A social constructionist framework has a direct impact on the research process of the current study in several ways:

1. Knowledge, including that of the researcher is subjective. Chapter One discussed how the researcher's personal and professional experiences intersect with the study aims, and explained the interest in pursuing this research. The resultant study allows the reader to make their own evaluation of any impact of such subjectivities on the research process.
2. Knowledge is not a fixed entity: the knowledge that participants present will be constructed, in part, through their interaction with the researcher. Goulding (2004) argues that because the researcher becomes part of the participant's world, the researcher-researched interaction will not only alter the research setting, but will also change the social world participants are asked to comment on. The implication for this study is an acknowledgement that the data gathered will only ever be an approximation of the truth about the value of Kids' Days to participants.

- Methodology and the Research Process

This study develops a methodology that is responsive to the research questions. The need to incorporate qualitative methods, and therefore data into the study is imperative to answer the research questions, specifically:

1. How do Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison help children connect with their incarcerated parents?
2. How do programs such as Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison help incarcerated inmates parent from behind bars?

The research is organised into two distinct areas: 'Voices' from within Risdon Prison, and 'voices' from outside its walls, including political commentary.

- Establishing the Study: Feasibility and Ethical Concerns

In establishing the study, the researcher had to assess the feasibility of its implementation. Conceptual and practical issues requiring attention included: the difficult to access nature of the research population (prison inmates and parolees), the potential vulnerability of inmates and parolees, and their experiences of being ‘over-researched’.

Goulding (2004) considered the possible scope for exploitation of prisoners/parolees, and with this in mind, the researcher sought to ensure that inmates and parolees were choosing to participate of their own volition. Risdon Prison’s Child and Family Support Officer approached potential interviewees on behalf of the researcher, explaining the nature of the study and ascertaining their willingness to participate. Parolees’ Parole Officers also followed this procedure. As such, the researcher is satisfied that recruitment was not coercive and was sensitive to participants.

In June 2012, research approval was obtained from both Tasmania Community Corrections and the Tasmanian Prison Service. The University of Tasmania’s Human Research Ethics Committee granted ethics approval in August 2012.

- Data Collection Strategy

The data collection instrument for the current study is most appropriately described as semi-structured interviews, informed by the studies of Liebling and Arnold (2004) in the UK, which generally employ an ‘appreciative inquiry’ method of interviewing. Appreciative inquiry is an approach to social research that is encouraging and positive, focusing on asking interviewees to consider what is best about the subject area. The researcher felt that this method would give interviewees confidence and a desire to engage with the researcher.

Given the educational attainment of some of the participants (low literacy and articulation skills), the researcher approached the interview by asking clear and simple questions, which enabled interviewees to respond competently. Interviews with inmates, parolees and Correctional Officers lasted between 20-30 minutes. All other interviews lasted 45-60 minutes.

Interviews with Correctional Officers were organisationally problematic, and with the exception of one scheduled interview, were conducted while officers were on duty in the vicinity of Kids’ Days.

- Implications of Methodological Choices

Study Strengths

While the researcher concedes that this is a comparatively small sample of prisoners/parolees who are parents, the participants involved in this study show a correspondence to the broader group of ‘incarcerated parents’ identified in the literature review in terms of their perceptions of parenting from prison. This general similarity supports cautious extrapolation of findings to the broader population of incarcerated parents in other Australian prisons.

Study Limitations

It is possible that the data provided by both inmates and parolees is shaped by a range of exogenous factors: a view of parenthood that could be distorted by the fact of their incarceration, as well as a desire to create for the researcher the image of a devoted parent.

A decision was made not to seek data from either children or their primary carers. This was done for practical reasons. Gaining access to these individuals for interview seemed unlikely in terms of ethics approval, as well as being extremely time-consuming. The researcher acknowledges however, that this is a significant gap in the data, and is an area that could be considered for future research.

3.2 Kids’ Days at Tasmania’s Risdon Prison

The following perceptions have arisen as a result of the researcher’s role as a volunteer at ten Kids’ Days:

April 2012 – RPC Medium and Maximum

June 2012 – RPC Medium and Maximum, RBMSP, MHWP

September 2012 – RPC Medium and Maximum, RBMSP, MHWP.

Kids’ Days at Risdon Prison are organised by the prison’s Child and Family Support Officer in conjunction with Prison Fellowship Australia (PFA). Volunteers from the Christian Family Centre located next door to the prison, along with UTAS students contribute significantly.

Kids’ Days are based on the following principles:

- Children have a right to maintain contact with their imprisoned parent.

- Incarcerated parents have a right to interact with their children (except where it is deemed not in the child's best interests).
- Children affected by their parent's imprisonment are often socially excluded and vulnerable.
- Children have a right to be treated with understanding, compassion and respect.
- Good quality, child-friendly visits help support and nurture the child-parent relationship.

Prison Management recognises the contribution strong family ties make to reduced re-offending and improved reintegration, as well as an incentive to partake in courses offered by the prison, such as the parenting program (Newpin). SHINE For Kids (NSW) has provided ideas for the formatting and running of Kids' Days at Risdon Prison, as well as concepts adopted/adapted from Britain's Kids VIP Family Day Toolkit.

Kids' Days provide children with the time to relax with their parent, get to know them again, enjoy 'normal' activities, feel reassured and have some positive memories of shared experiences with their parent. Kids' Days are held in each prison four times a year, to coincide with school holidays (April, June, September and January).

Contract level is another form of prisoner classification, behaviourally-based and assessed by management (in addition to their status as maximum, medium or minimum). While the classification of inmates who are eligible to participate in Kids' Days differs from prison to prison, and may vary for some units at the discretion of the Correctional Manager, typically it is Contract Level 3 or 4 inmates (Contract Level 1 being inmates who have substantially transgressed) housed in RPC Medium and Maximum, and Contract Level 4 inmates in the remaining prisons.

The prison's Child and Family Support Officer is responsible for contacting inmates and children's primary care-givers in advance of the projected Kids' Day. 60% of prisoners housed at Risdon Prison live outside the metropolitan area (Breaking the Cycle, 2010). As such, offender's children residing in other areas of the state who have long distances to travel need time for carers to organise transportation to the prison, and possibly accommodation.

Working with PFA and the Christian Family Centre, suitable and enjoyable activities are planned, usually thematically-based. April 2012 focused on Easter. June 2012 revolved around a 'princesses and pirates' theme, with inmates and children applying face-paint to

each other reflective of the theme, painting ‘Jolly Roger’ flags, playing ‘Pin the Patch on the Pirate’, decorating biscuits using a variety of toppings, making pirate hats and princess tiaras, and additional activities such as play-dough, drawing, skittles and quoits.



“Jolly Roger” flags.



Pastor Norm Reed (PFA) & Camille (IOM Case Manager) as pirates.



Camille (IOM Case Manager) with “Pirates and Princesses” RPC.



Pastor Norm Reed as pirate. Pirate board cut out constructed and painted by RBMSP inmate.

The September 2012 Kids’ Days saw a ‘round-the-world’ theme enacted; a highlight was cooking pizzas. The children were issued with a passport containing their photo, height and weight (measured on the day). They ‘visited’ Italy (pizza); Japan (face-painting with a Japanese theme) and a game where they picked jelly-beans out of a bowl with chop-sticks;

Switzerland and Germany (soccer); Canada (memory game with photo cards of Canadian animals, blindfold 'feed the chipmunk' and a jigsaw puzzle map of Canada; Australia (biscuit decorating); as well as several craft tables where flags could be made, a globe of the world constructed, play-dough, finger painting and bubble blowing. Outdoor sports were played in RBMSP and MHWP.



Pizza ovens and Italian flag MHWP.

Children are brought to the Visitors' Reception Centre (VRC) by their carer and given into the supervision of volunteers assisting with Kids' Day. When all children have arrived, they are escorted to see their parents. Perhaps one of the most poignant moments to observe is the instant the children clear security and enter the room where their parent awaits them. The coldest heart could not fail to be warmed by faces that light up with unabridged joy as parents and children greet each other.



Waiting for children, MHWP.

There is no doubt that these men and women love their children deeply, and Kids' Days are an opportunity for them to be 'just a mum' or 'just a dad' for two hours, rather than a prison

number in a highly-regulated environment. For that comparatively short time, inmates are able to be responsible parents, to exercise agency over what activities will be done when, to make sure their children have food and something to drink, and to talk to them about what has been happening in their lives.

Food is prepared (usually something simple such as hotdogs or a barbeque), and children can share a meal with their mother or father. For some, this is the first meal they have had with their parent for many years.

It is indeed special to see children painting the faces of their fathers during Kids' Day. On the opposite side of the wall many of the inmates, particularly those housed in RPC, are often cold and hostile – this is their 'survival mechanism' and reflective of their environment. Once in the visiting area and in the company of their children, a very different persona emerges, and these men are transformed into compassionate, caring, loving individuals who want nothing but the best for their children – no different to many other parents.

Photos are taken and printed out immediately. Children can take one or two photos home with them. Inmates are able to select and purchase photos later in the week. Without exception, these images reflect immense happiness and are treasured by inmates and children alike. The number of photos ordered by participating inmates after the June 2012 Kids' Days exceeded 1300 while September 2012 saw a mammoth 1900 photos ordered.

Towards the end of the two hours allocated to Kids' Day in each prison, the IOM Case Manager, dressed in costume to match the day's theme (e.g. in April, she was an Easter Bunny, in June, dressed as a pirate and in September, in a traditional Japanese kimono) enters the room and circulates amongst children and parents. She gives small gifts

reflective of the day's theme to each child. Once children have their gifts, they farewell their mother or father, and are escorted back to the VRC to be collected by their carer. This can be



an emotional time for some, and the tact and compassion of volunteers has been particularly noteworthy.

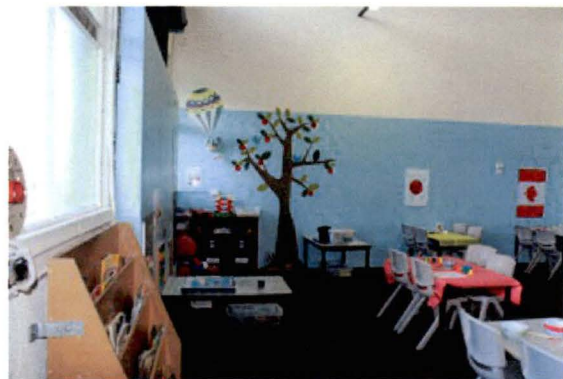
The dynamics of Kids' Days in each section of the prison varies. Days held in RPC are conducted in a large, well-lit room that has a concrete floor, with chairs and tables bolted to it. There is a fully-enclosed outdoor area under a pergola with some seating, but with concrete underfoot – there is no lawn. A small play corner is available for young children inside the main room. Activities for Kids' Days are laid out on the tables, and parents and children move at will from one activity to another.

While the most is made of the available space, and the area brightened up with the colour of the activities on offer, there is no opportunity for fathers and children to partake in any outdoor pursuits, such as kicking a football or soccer ball, or playing basketball. However, it is apparent that for most of these children, they have not known anything different in terms of prison facilities, and seem not to care about the austere surroundings.

Conditions are rather different in the RBMSP and the MHWP. A well-maintained lawn area is available in both, and children and parents are able to play outside in addition to the indoor activities provided.



RBMSP room set up in preparation for June 2012 Kids' Day.



RBMSP room set up in preparation for September 2012 Kids' Day.

While the two photos above display the same corner of the RBMSP Visitors Room, a noticeable difference is the painting of the wall (blue) and the impressive mural created by RBMSP inmates.



Set-up for September 2012 Kids' Day, Recreation Room MHWP.

The age range of the children is also more diverse –children visiting RPC tend to be younger than twelve, with some as young as two or less. Those visiting parents in MHWP and RBMSP are from a wider age range, with young teenagers (some of whom have been visiting their imprisoned parent since they were very young) a representative group.

Table 3: Kids' Days, April to September 2012

	MHWP			RPC Maximum			RPC Medium			RBMSP		
	Apr	Jun	Sep	Apr	Jun	Sep	Apr	Jun	Sep	Apr	Jun	Sep
Inmates		7	14	1	3	8	4	7	7	10	6	13
Children		9	24	1	3	10	7	10	9	18	10	25
Age Range	n/a	4-13 yrs	1-15 yrs	n/a	20 mths - 6 yrs	20 mths - 12 yrs	n/a	2-12 yrs	16 mths - 12 yrs	n/a	4-14 yrs	2-15 yrs

In MHWP, it is evident that many mothers are happy to be self-sufficient in terms of pursuing activities, and most require little or no assistance from volunteers. A source of pride in this prison is the magnificent vegetable garden, established and cared for by the women. It was noticeable that many of the mothers took pleasure in showing their children the impressive results of their endeavours.



Vegetable Garden MHWP.

It is much the same in the RBMSP, although the June 2012 Kids' Day witnessed a father and his children participating for the first time, so the presence of volunteers to help initiate activities was welcomed. Many of the fathers and their children enjoy the opportunity to kick a ball outside on the lawn.

Occasionally, where an inmate has two or more children, they may opt to have just one child come to each of the Kids' Days in order to spend quality time with that child, particularly when the children are very young.

Kids' Days produce some memorable and heart-warming moments. Volunteers at the April 2012 day had the privilege of facilitating an event that allowed a 13 year-old girl to sit and spend two hours talking with her father. She had not seen him since she was two.

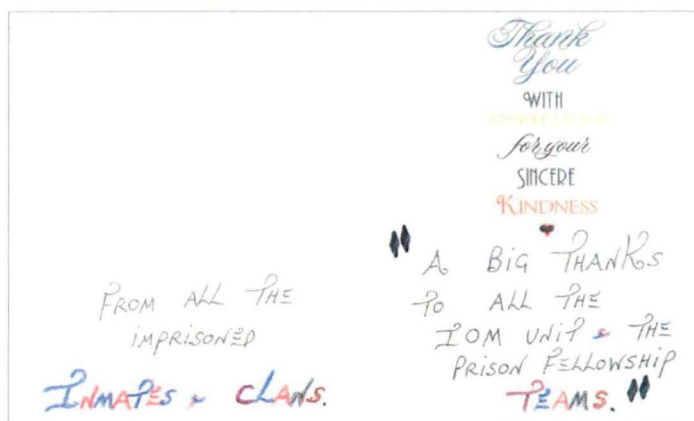
At the June 2012 Kids' Day, an inmate in RBMSP sat with his teenage son and helped him develop a resume, as well as suggesting places he could potentially apply for work during the school holidays and after school. At the end of the two hours, they had listed over 30 possibilities.

Again at the June 2012 Kids' Day, a female inmate came up to volunteers who were tidying the room at the conclusion of events. She said, 'This is the first time in months I have seen a smile on my son's face. This was the best day – ever. Thank you so much.'

Her son had to leave a little early, as his carer had an appointment and needed to pick him up in time to accommodate this. The boy, a young teenager, threw his arms around his mother and said, 'I love you, Mum.' It mattered not to him that she was dressed in prison-issue clothes, that her life is regulated by bells and the prison clock – this in no way diminished his love and respect for her.

One father had not seen his partner or children since his incarceration in January 2012. At the June 2012 Kids' Day his two young daughters were able to attend, with transportation to the prison facilitated by volunteers.

As the September 2012 Kids' Day in RBMSP finished, several inmates presented volunteers with a 'Thank You' card on behalf of participating fathers.



Conclusion

Chapter 3 articulates the underpinning assumptions of the research from a social constructionist perspective. The feasibility and ethical concerns involved in a study that relies on researching a difficult to access population are identified.

Specific research questions addressed in the study are:

- How do Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison help children connect with their incarcerated parents?
- How do programs such as Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison help incarcerated inmates parent from behind bars?

To answer these questions, the use of qualitative data is appropriate. Data collection for this study relied upon assistance from TPS and Tasmania Community Corrections practitioners. The study's strengths and limitations are recognised, acknowledging the absence of children's or carers' input. A description of Risdon Prison's Kids' Days is provided.



September 2012 Kids' Day Volunteers, Pastor Norm Reed as "the pilot" and Ruth Verkoeyen in foreground.

Chapter 4. Voices from Within Risdon Prison

Chapters 4 and 5 describe a study undertaken by the researcher into views and perspectives pertaining to Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison, both positive and negative, as well as some of the tangential and related aspects of parental incarceration as perceived by a range of stakeholders including:

- 2 inmates from Risdon Prison Complex (RPC) Maximum Security Prison
- 2 inmates from RPC Medium Security Prison
- 3 inmates from Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison (RBMSP)
- 3 inmates from Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison (MHHWP)
- 4 Correctional Officers
- 5 Integrated Offender Management Unit practitioners
- The Risdon Prison Director, Mr. Barry Greenberry
- Prison Fellowship Australia (Tasmania) Executive Director, Mr. Ray Metcalfe
- Kids' Day Co-ordinator for Prison Fellowship and Pastor, Christian Family Centre, Norm Reed
- 2 Kids' Days volunteers
- Greg Barns, barrister, author, political commentator, and spokesperson for the Prison Action Reform Group Inc.
- Professor Eileen Baldry (UNSW), 2009 Justice Medal recipient
- Dr. Vanessa Goodwin MLC, Shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Shadow Minister for Corrections.
- The Honourable Nick McKim MP, Tasmanian Greens Leader and Minister for Corrections and Consumer Protection

4.1 Risdon Prison Inmates

The participating inmates in each prison were asked a series of 'prompt questions' that were mostly open-ended (see Appendix A). The interviews took place in small rooms that were quite cold (both in atmosphere and temperature) and in RPC were acoustically very poor, in that a substantial echo factor detracted from protracted conversation. Risdon Prison's Child and Family Support Officer accompanied the researcher to each inmate interview, and made notes of interviews.

The nature of the research was discussed, and it was noticeable that inmates were enthusiastic about the subject of Kids' Days, and willing to provide their perspectives. While differences in expression were evident (for example, inmates interviewed in RBMSP and MHWP were generally able to convey their ideas articulately, whereas several inmates in RPC Medium and Maximum provided single sentence or one or two word answers to some questions) there was an overall consensus of opinion regarding many aspects of Kids' Days.

- Common Themes

All interviewees agreed that separation from children is the most difficult aspect of incarceration.

You don't just do this to yourself, you do it to your children (Inmate, MHWP)

Without exception, the word 'normal' was used by every inmate interviewed when asked about Kids' Days.

It felt like normality in a very un-normal place (Inmate, RBMSP)

It could have been any community hall anywhere (Inmate, RBMSP)

It felt like going to a little fair (Inmate, RBMSP)

Without Kids' Days, we [my son and I] wouldn't have normal bonding experiences.

It's relaxing – not the usual prison routine (Inmate, RBMSP)

The barbeque is commonplace on the outside. It's a social atmosphere, something normal (Inmate, RBMSP)

We have fun. There's lots to do. It's like normal (Inmate, RPC Medium)

Just sharing time together, normal stuff (Inmate MHWP)

For two hours, you feel like you're normal. You forget that you're in here (Inmate MHWP)

The food provided at Kids' Days also received unanimous approval, and was an important feature identified by all male inmates, although female inmates made less reference to it. Prison food is something about which many inmates convey dissatisfaction, and the opportunity to cook and eat food such as hamburgers, hotdogs, pizza or a barbeque,

especially when shared with their children, received their strong support. Several inmates in RPC told the researcher that they ‘hadn’t eaten breakfast’ on the morning of Kids’ Day, as they were ‘saving up’ for some ‘proper food’.

The food gets the thumb’s up! (Inmate, RBMSP)

The food is really good (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

The photos taken on the day and provided to children to take with them, and for inmates to order the following week (usually ten cents or less per photo) received overwhelming praise.

The photos are really good. These are the only photos I have of my kids (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

The photographs are really special – a fantastic memento. The kids sleep with them in bed (Inmate, RBMSP)

I ordered three copies of all the photos [90 photos in total]. I sent copies out and kept some for myself (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

- Parenting from Prison

While Kids’ Days are named as such because they are concerned with providing opportunities for children to connect with their incarcerated parent, and thus the focus is on the children, the opportunity for prisoners to be parents during this time is also recognised. For some of the men in RBMSP, parenting from prison has been the norm for a decade or more, and will continue until their children are well into adulthood.

For inmates, a parenting role in which they have sole responsibility for their children for two hours, occurs only at Kid’s Days. This was highlighted by a majority of participants, both men and women, who placed great value upon a shared experience with their children, unencumbered by primary carers.

In [regular] visits adults suck up a lot of your time. They don’t mean to but they do....The two children have different mothers, so it’s really difficult to talk about things when adults are there (Inmate, RBMSP).

The one-on-one time means you don’t have to split your time (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

[Child's] mum is working, so I don't get to see him much anymore, which makes Kids' Days even more important. It's an opportunity to be a dad (Inmate, RPC Medium)

[Child] off-loads his problems during Kids' Days. I'm able to offer him ways to stay out of trouble (Inmate, MHWP)

I like spending time, teaching him stuff. I feel like I need to have a hand in that. I regard my role as a parent as really important...I live for my kid...Any minute I can get with him is important. There's a huge difference than when he comes in with his mum. I have to speak with his mum and I can't do as much with him. I'm more of a parent at Kids' Days (Inmate, RPC Medium)

You feel like you're being a mum (Inmate, MHWP)

With regular visits, you gotta keep up the conversation with the adults. You don't really want to, but you have to. It's easier for my son to talk without other adults (inmate, MHWP)

Sharing time together, actually sitting together. We feed off each other's energy. Not having other adults who cause an argument (Inmate, MHWP)

Other issues that emerged during interviews were:

- The role of Correctional Officers.

Several inmates expressed appreciation for the fact that Correctional Officers remained unobtrusive during Kids' Days.

It is good not having the officers too present. Children tend to associate uniforms with the police and many children have had a bad experience with the police (Inmate, RBMSP)

- Carers

Attitudes to children's primary carers varied considerably, from amenable relationships to estranged or hostile. Most inmate participants recognised that their children could not participate in Kids' Days without co-operation from the child's primary carer. In some instances, Child Protection Service workers bring children to Kids' Days. In situations where

overtly antagonistic relations between the inmate and the child's carer exist, the opportunity for children to attend Kids' Days is put at risk.

The researcher witnessed the distress of a female inmate when, despite supposed agreement being reached between the Child and Family Support Officer and the children's carer with respect to Kids' Day attendance, the carer withdrew support shortly before the day was to commence (via a phone-call), leaving it to Correctional Officers and the Child and Family Support Officer to inform the inmate. Similar situations have arisen in RPC Medium and Maximum, with fathers eagerly awaiting the arrival of their children, only to be taken back to their unit upon being told that their children would not be coming.

An inmate in RPC Medium expressed the strong opinion that couples counselling should be something offered to inmates and their partners, especially parents who are attempting to deal with the various issues surrounding parenting in less than ideal circumstances. His child (now two) was born after he was incarcerated, and so Kids' Days represent his only opportunity to parent. He believes that counselling would assist both he and his partner to be 'on the same page' in terms of parenting expectations, but also added that other inmates with whom he is in contact would view counselling in a favourable light.

- Regular Prison Visits

Normal visits can also be jeopardised, even where inmate/carer relationships are quite harmonious. Two inmates have only seen their children at Kids' Days, with no 'in between' visitation, as their partners do not have formal identification, a necessary requirement for accessing the prison.

My partner has no photographic ID so she has not been able to visit. She doesn't drive. [For the last Kids' Day] the church picked up the children and brought them...I was the primary carer prior to coming to prison (Inmate, RBMSP)

I don't see them any other time [than Kids' Days]. My partner doesn't have ID. She doesn't have the money to get the birth certificate (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

A further concern expressed by an RPC Maximum inmate involved 'box visits'. These are literally what the term states – the inmate is in a 'box' (with a clear viewing screen) so there is no contact, quite a daunting experience for children:

I hate him coming in for box visits – it upsets both of us (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

- Other Parent/Child Communication

Levels of communication between inmates and their children over and above Kids' Days varied from none at all to daily communication. Inmates do not have access to email, and letter writing is not a common form of communication. Phone conversations are popular.

I phone him every day (Inmate, RBMSP)

I talk with my kids on the phone every night (Inmate, RBMSP)

We have phone calls every single day (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

I talk quite a lot to him on the phone (Inmate, RPC Minimum)

- Contract Levels

The Contract Level required for prisoners to participate in Kids' Days was another area identified by an inmate from RBMSP. Before December 2011, only Contract Level 4 inmates were permitted to attend Kids' Days. With the appointment of the Child and Family Support Officer prior to the December 2011 Kids' Day, and her belief that Kids' Days should be more inclusive, protocol was changed for 2012 to Contract Level 3 and 4. This has gradually seen even greater relaxation, so that regardless of Contract Level, inmates may submit a request to participate in Kids' Days, and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The point made by this inmate very much reflected a Human Rights position with respect to Kids' Day participation. He felt that Contract Level 4 was too severe:

You're punishing the kid by making it a harsh Contract Level 4, and this is wrong (Inmate, RBMSP)

- Parents with multiple children

For inmates with two or more children, Kids' Days can be challenging from several perspectives. The fact that 'hands-on' parenting cannot occur because they are incarcerated often means that this role does not come as easily as if it were performed on a daily basis. Very young children are often over-excited and demanding, taking time away from the inmate and his/her older children. Catering to food and drink needs, toileting demands, playing games that each child wants to do, and having time to engage with children individually, can be overwhelming for both children and parents. As a result, some parents

elect to have one child at a time attend the Kids' Day, so quality time can be spent with individual children.

A mother with four children aged five and under experienced the confusion of having all children attend the April 2012 Kids' Day, and as a result has now decided to have only one at a time. At the June 2012 Kids' Day, her oldest daughter (five years old) came, and mother and daughter had a rewarding time.

It was really good to see her smile. She actually giggled (Inmate, MHWP)

Her youngest son (age one) lives in the prison with her for three days a week – on the remaining days she attends TAFE, so his father cares for him.

A father in RPC Medium also stated that things operated more smoothly if only one of his children came to Kids' Day, rather than attempting to look after both. He said that both children were quite energetic and independent and it made things easier for him if only one at a time attended. In reference to his seven year old daughter he said, 'She just runs amok!'

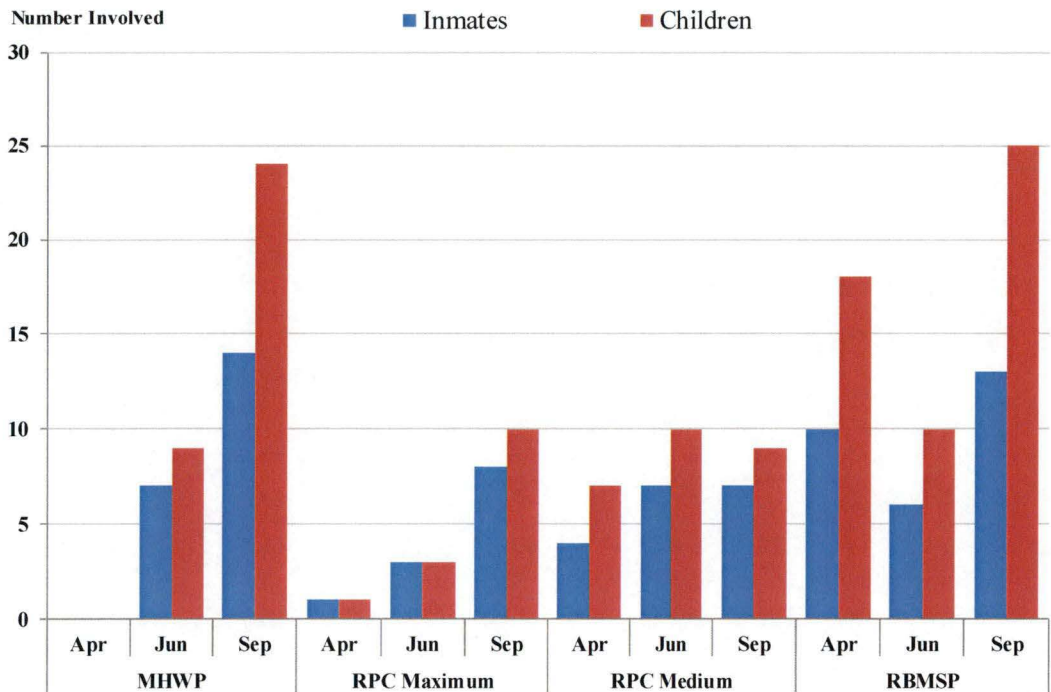
- Reasons for not doing Kids' Days.

Prisoners cited several reasons for non-participation in Kids' Days by other inmates in their particular prison.

1. Transport was identified as an impediment to participation, especially for families living in areas located a long distance from Hobart. While City Mission operate a monthly bus from Launceston (Northern Tasmania) to facilitate regular family visits, this service is not provided to transport children to Kids' Days, and so prison access is problematic.
2. The aspect of 'trust' has been slow to develop. Inmates stated that at times, activities have been assured, then failed to materialise. Broken promises and disappointment were best avoided, so the risk of signing up for Kids' Days, only to have them cancelled, was a chance they were not willing to take.

With this in mind, the Child and Family Support Officer, and the Prison Fellowship representative have ensured that each promised Kids' Day has eventuated. As knowledge of this permeates the prison, the numbers of participants has increased substantially with each successive Kids' Day (see Chart 2 next page).

Chart 2: Children’s Days Visits, April to September 2012



- ‘Spreading the Word’

Effective communication within the prison environment is notoriously difficult, and despite the best intentions of Kids’ Days organisers, not all parent inmates were aware of either the fact that they were being held, or when they were taking place. This process has improved substantially, with ‘flyers’ being distributed to each prison well in advance, along with personal approaches to inmates by the Child and Family Support Officer and Prison Fellowship. Application forms must be filled out by the inmates and sufficient time allowed for carers to be contacted, arrangements made, and Prison Management informed. This involves a considerable effort by organisers, as not all carers are approachable, and diplomacy is vital.

The other helpful addition has been the introduction of peer mentors within the prisons who are responsible for informing fellow inmates of impending Kids’ Days and making sure their forms are filled out correctly. One inmate in RPC Medium has been particularly instrumental in fulfilling this role, with positive results in terms of increased numbers of participants. It was evident throughout his interview that this was a source of pride for him. This was also true for a RBMSP inmate who said he has talked to other inmates and encouraged them to

join in Kids' Days. Part of his dialogue involved reassuring them that, bar a lockdown, the day was a 'sure thing'.

When asked if they talked to one another about their children, all but one inmate responded affirmatively.

It creates a bond between inmates when you meet their kids...our kids mean everything to us (Inmate, MHWP)

Plenty of people ask about Kids' Days (Inmate, RPC Maximum)

Our kids are the one thing you have in common with other inmates (Inmate, RBMSP)

However:

Other inmates don't talk about their kids with other inmates. It brings up hurt when they talk about their kids (Inmate, RPC Medium)

- Prison Programs

Part of the research process included speaking to inmates about their involvement in programs offered by the prison, and whether being a parent influenced their decision to participate. Of the ten inmates interviewed, seven have done, or continue to do, prison programs or further study through TAFE.

Three inmates have completed Newpin (parenting program) - one each from RPC Medium, RBMSP and MHWP. One female inmate commenced this program, but could not complete it when it was disbanded due to the high drop-out rate.

I was disappointed. It was giving me good tactics and keeping me motivated to find ways by helping me to help them (Inmate, MHWP)

A mother with four children aged five and under completed Newpin and reported great success.

It was brilliant! They are also helping my partner at home (Inmate, MHWP)

This mother also attends TAFE three days per week, doing a Community Services Certificate.

Another inmate said he felt he had been helped greatly by the prison program aimed at addressing (gambling) addiction ('Getting Smart') and made it clear that his children were the primary reason for embarking on this.

The family is paramount. You have a lot of time to think when you're in here...you want your kids to be proud of you (Inmate, RBMSP)

A maximum security father said that he had done the barista course as well as the 'Getting Smart' (addictive behaviours) program. He also had his forklift license and felt quite confident about obtaining employment upon release. He believed that this would contribute to his ability to gain custody of his son.

A minimum security father has completed a significant number of programs, including Pathways, Preparing for Change, 123 Magic, Anger Management and Newpin. As a result of his outstanding success in the latter program, he is currently undertaking the facilitator's course in order to assist with the delivery of Newpin. He was enthusiastic about this parenting program.

Newpin was awesome, one of the best programs I've done. Being able to put yourself in their headspace and not just thinking about me. They're like little sponges, they notice everything....

A female inmate, when asked if she had done the Newpin program, was mildly disparaging.

I don't need some outsider telling me how to be a good mother (Inmate, MHWP)

A father from RPC Medium said that, while he was not currently undertaking any prison programs or further study, he was keen to attend TAFE upon his release later this year and pursue a certificate in either Community Services or Disability Services. Of the inmates interviewed who identified as doing programs/study, he was the only one to state that having a prison record could potentially work against him in the employment market.

Inmates involved in the 'Getting Smart' program identified their children as a major influence in their motivation to combat addictive behaviour. Inmates pursuing further study also stated that providing for their children and having their children witness them both studying and working were motivational factors.

- Further Observations

Only one inmate specifically identified the issue of stigma as a concern, and stated that her son's last name had been changed in order to minimise this.

A father in RPC Medium suggested that the mothers/carers should be allowed to walk the children to the main door of RPC, rather than handing them to volunteers in VRC.

We're trying to teach them stranger danger (Inmate, RPC Medium)

He believed that more inmates would participate in Kids' Days if this were the case.

The location of the April, June and September 2012 Kids' Day in MHWP was changed from predominantly outside (December 2011) to the women's recreation room (a warm and inviting area with many books, two pianos, tables and chairs and carpet on the floor), permission being granted for this by Prison Management. This proved to be very successful (the December 2011 day having been quite cold and windy).

The rec room was great. It was good for [daughter] to see more of the prison, and to see that it's not that bad (Inmate, MHWP)

The notion of comforting children about where their parent lived was also expressed by several inmates, with Kids' Days providing an opportunity to reassure children about the nature of their parent's circumstances, particularly in MHWP where the normal visiting room is quite stark. Kids' Days allow mothers and children to go to a well-maintained lawn and garden area.

From two fathers:

It's like Disneyland! (Inmate, RPC Medium)

An amazing day – it makes me happy. It's also a reminder of what you're missing out on (Inmate RPC Maximum)

And from a mother:

He usually doesn't hug me, but he did (Inmate, MHWP)

One inmate expressed poignantly the meaning for him of Kids' Days.

You see so many things that aren't right. In your kids, you see a reason for you to move on and get out of here. You see them and realise what you're missing out on – that's why I don't want to be here. They're the reason I want to make parole. They're a shining example of what's right (Inmate, RBMSP)

4.2 Correctional Officers

The researcher spoke with four Correctional Officers who were supportive of Kids' Days. All stated that part of their role was to remain uninvolved, and not be overly visible. Interviewees will be referred to as CO1 (female officer, approximately 50, in role for past 11 years), CO2 (male officer, approximately 35, in role for last 9 years), CO3 (male officer, approximately 45 years, in role for 15 years) and CO4 (female officer, mid-twenties, in role for 18 months).

Because of organisational difficulties, it was not possible to interview those officers who had expressed scepticism of the days, and so information pertaining to this is secondary data, obtained from the four interviewed officers.

COs 1, 2 and 3 made reference to the fact that there are polarised views about Kids' Days amongst Correctional Officers. In their experience, there are officers who express the opinion that Kids' Days become all about the incarcerated parent, rather than the children. The days are seen as an opportunity to do something out of the ordinary, to eat 'normal' food, to escape the monotony of prison life. These officers argue that if parents genuinely cared for their children, they would be incentivised to avoid re-offending, and would remain clear of the 'revolving door' of the prison. Some officers see the same faces reappearing through the prison gates on a regular basis, and are cynical about the professed love of the parent for their child for this reason.

According to CO2, he has spoken to work colleagues who maintain that Kids' Days 'pamper' the inmate, and provide them with privileges that they (the officers) feel are not deserved. These officers are generally disparaging about the efforts of those who either run, or contribute to, Kids' Days.

They refer to you lot [volunteers] as 'Care Bears' and reckon it's all a waste of time. 'Molly-coddling' them – that's what they think (CO2)

A lot of the other officers say that these guys, they'll just get straight back on the drink and the drugs the moment they're out of here. I think that it's not always their fault that they end up in prison – sometimes they use drink and drugs to hide a whole heap of pain (CO3)

The Correctional Officers interviewed recognised the importance of Kids' Days to the children, rather than the inmate.

It's not the kids' fault [that their parent is imprisoned]. This is for the kids. Normal visits concentrate on the adult (CO1)

CO1 spoke about the demeanour of inmates in the week leading up to Kids' Days:

I can see the benefits to inmates, but they get more demanding before Kids' Day. They are always asking about it, pushing the boundaries. There is huge tension about whether the child will turn up.

CO1 also stated that there was a 'calmness' about the inmates after the children had gone, and also that non-parent inmates were usually nice to them, asking how the day went.

CO4 was particularly enthusiastic about Kids' days. At the time of the interview, she was assisting with the organisation of participating mothers in MHWP at the September 2012 day.

This is great. These women have been talking about this for days. The activities – sensational! The looks on their faces when their kids came through the gate – really moving.

Towards the end of the Kids' Day, which had been particularly busy with high numbers of both inmates and children, she said:

It's all worked so well. I thought it was going to be chaos, manic, but they've all been terrific. I'm dreading the kids leaving, though.

CO1 spoke at some length about the hardships that several of the incarcerated parents have faced, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse, their children at times witness to this. She also expressed concern at current court and sentencing procedures, whereby a mother who is sentenced may be transported straight to the prison with no opportunity to make arrangements to have her children collected from school, organise

their care, say goodbye to them and offer some explanation as to where she is going and why she will be absent from their life for a period of time. As a mother herself, she found this process insensitive and felt that it was an area requiring attention from criminal justice agencies.

When discussing the effect of the prison environment on some children, CO2 acknowledged the incomparable circumstances of prison with anything else.

People ask me 'What's it like?' I tell them you can't really describe it – it's a world all its own, like a different planet. When I come to work, I'm coming to a different planet.

The four Correctional Officers interviewed emphasised the importance of the inmates' children, and reported that a specific area of tension related to the dependency of the inmate upon the carer to facilitate normal visits, and the evident frustration on the inmate's part when visits either failed to eventuate, or went badly.

Some of them get so pissed off, but it's not my job to give them a shoulder to cry on. I do listen a bit, and actually I understand it, especially if they've been looking forward to a visit and end up arguing with their old lady or something, and don't get to talk to their kids....(CO3)

You've got to remember that some of these guys come from crap backgrounds, and haven't been given any opportunities. Their kids sort of represent a new start in a way, so yeah, stuff like Kids' Days are really important (CO2)

4.3 Integrated Offender Management Practitioners

The interviews conducted with IOM staff provided an historical perspective to Kids' Days, as well as highlighting both challenges and positive aspects associated with the days. Interviews were conducted with the IOM's Assistant Manager, the Sport and Recreation Officer, the Facilitator for Programs Intervention (conducted in conjunction with the Case Coordinator), and the Child and Family Support Officer.

- Historical Perspective

The format of Kids' Days has varied over the past decade. Previously, it was a less structured occasion run by RecLink (a non-government organisation that provide services to disadvantaged, socially excluded groups) and was more a Family Day than a Kids' Day. They would generally offer a barbeque and arrange for the family to come in. The Interventions

Programs Facilitator and Case Manager also organised Family Days. They highlighted the differences between what happened prior to December 2011 and current procedures.

- The days were less structured and not thematically-based.
- The days were aligned to completing a parenting program ('Good Beginnings')
- The days were not a fixture on the prison calendar
- Attendance at the days was considered an extra privilege for inmates
- Contract Levels were strictly enforced

The IOM Assistant Manager described the process through which the Child and Family Support Officer came to her role. Originally employed as a Project Officer within the prison, evaluating the effectiveness of the Parenting Program for inmates (as opposed to programs operating in a community setting), the need for a dedicated family support person became apparent, and thus the position of Child and Family Support Officer evolved.

One of the earliest recommendations made by this practitioner was a regular schedule of prison support at Kids' Days.

I wanted to make it a prison program so it was something the prison supported rather than something that other people were doing...something that we could specifically say 'This is one way that we support families, and children and the relationships.' One of the first things that we did was instigate a regular schedule of Kids' Days, because prior to that, they'd been ad hoc...I wanted to make it a proper prison program and that's what we've got now (Child and Family Support Officer)

... she's very much moved away from the family days, it's very much the Kids' Days and very much a focus on the kids and not about having to go through a parenting program to do it (IOM Assistant Manager)

- Programs

IOM facilitators identified several parenting programs that have been instigated at Risdon Prison aimed at improving parenting skills. The Intervention Programs Facilitator and Case Coordinator described an earlier program, 1,2,3 Magic, aimed at teaching parents how to deal with their children's difficult behaviour. This program is no longer in operation, and both practitioners felt this was because the program's basic tenet is one of discipline, rather than a

more rounded view of parenting. They also believed that it was not the most appropriate parenting program model for a prison environment.

It was a disciplinary program based on the fact that you have one, two, three chances and you're out – you're in the corner of time out (Intervention Programs Facilitator)

According to the Child and Family Support Officer:

What is more important when we're looking at preventing cycles of intergenerational offending which is really what we want out of a parenting program, is that we need to be looking at the past, the inmate's or the parent's parenting and then looking more at the inmate and how they react, relate to their children. It's looking more at the parent, in fact, than the child, and breaking that down, and then re-building them.

The Newpin parenting program is run by Unitingcare Tasmania, with facilitators travelling from Launceston (in the north of Tasmania) to Hobart each week. This has practical implications, especially if enrolled inmate numbers decline (sometimes due to inmates moving through the system), calling into question the program's viability. The issue of lockdowns also interferes with program operation.

It's one thing to get a cohort up to get facilitators in, but because it's a prison, stuff happens, you know. They can come down from Launceston and arrive on the doorstep, the prison's in lockdown and sorry, you can't see anybody. So there's all these obstacles ...it happens in every jurisdiction wherever you go (IOM Assistant Manager).

The incentive for prisoners who are parents to engage in programs was also touched on by the Child and Family Support Officer:

...we did a survey not this last Kids' Day but the one before [i.e. April]. We asked everyone for their feedback on Kids' Days and would they like to do the Parenting Program. Almost exclusively they all said 'yes'...A lot of that was, you know, it's easy to tick that box. Whether they in actual fact would as a result of doing Kids' Days is another question. But it raises awareness, it makes them think about their relationship with their children, more so than if we didn't have Kids' Days.

- Funding

Family Days in the prison were originally funded by RecLink, and while they continue to operate in the prison, this is an area that they re-assessed and decided not to continue with. The Child and Family Support Officer began organising Kids' Days with essentially no funding at all.

It was just me scraping around in my office and saying, well there's some colouring-in pencils and old play-dough and a few board games... On my understanding, prior to this, many years ago when people had been doing them on an ad hoc basis they had things like jumping castles. RecLink had organised things... but it was still relying on people coming up with things at the last minute, and there was still no program, but we did it, and they were well-received, but it wasn't sustainable because I was running out of play-dough... (Child and Family Support Officer)

The pastor from the Family Christian Church next door to the prison offered to assist on behalf of Prison Fellowship. The Church itself has made a considerable financial contribution to the running of Kids Days, as of December 2011. The pastor has recently received funding via two grants, one for material goods (for example, the three pizza ovens used at the September 2012 Kids' Day) and the other for ongoing expenses such as food and craft items. This has provided financial security for the future of Kids' Days.

- Negative Views

The main concern expressed by several IOM staff was the impact of Kids' Days on a child's attitude towards prison. Because of the essential character of the day, that is, brightly decorated surroundings, relaxed atmosphere, games and activities, unobtrusive officers, nice food and happy parents, it is possible that some children gain a distorted impression of what it is to be incarcerated, and adopt the belief that prison is not a particularly bad place to be.

The Interventions Program Facilitator, the Case Manager and the Sport and Recreation Officer all felt that in the case of some of the older children who had been visiting their incarcerated parent for a number of years, and had enjoyed the various forms of Kids' Days both pre-and post-December 2011, a certain acceptance of prison conditions and way of life was to some extent, present.

The kids that have been coming in for a long time are almost, not quite arrogant, but still pretty cock-sure of themselves when they're in here, and will kind of almost push the boundaries (Case Manager)

The researcher experienced a somewhat disturbing episode when carrying a 20 month old boy in the biometric scanner 'tube', an access procedure required for gaining entry to RPC Maximum and Medium. The scanner failed to recognise the researcher's hand, so access was denied and we were essentially trapped in the tube. The little boy grabbed the researcher's right hand (the correct one for the scanner), pushed it towards the pin-number key-pad and then placed it on the hand scanner. He had limited speech capacity – but he knew exactly how to access the Maximum security section of the prison.

The Child and Family Support Officer also raised the issue as to whether there were any negative effects on the children once they arrived home, and felt that it was important to follow up to ascertain whether attendance at Kids' Day had caused conflicted emotions.

- Positive Views

When asked about her immediate impressions of Kids' Days, the Sport and Recreation Officer said:

It's the kids. To see them with their mums and dads, to see how happy they are, I can't describe it. It's just great. All the activities set up and kids and parents sharing, just talking to one another. You know, some of these guys, especially those in Max [Maximum Security] on the other side of the wall are tough, cold, pretty shut-down. They have to be – it's like their defence mechanism. In here, they're like these big softies – just totally different people.

All interviewees emphasised the need for, and advantages of, maintaining the parent-child contact.

Most inmates will be released. They will go back into the community and they'll hope to re-engage with their family and their children. And if we keep them apart from all that for their entire sentence, we're already making it harder for them to do that when they are released. So if we can help them keep their family and their relationship with their children together while they're here, their chances of maintaining that when

they're released are much greater, I believe, than if we'd done nothing while they were here (Child and Family Support Officer)

Another important issue mentioned by the Child and Family Support Officer pertained to prisoners as parents.

That's a big thing that I want to focus on in the future, is helping them maintain their identity as a parent while they're here. I think it can be easy to forget that you're a mother or a father because you can't be doing all those day-to-day activities, but we need to find ways that they can still maintain that identity and still see themselves as a parent.

- Additional Thoughts

The interview with the Child and Family Support Officer was the longest of the IOM interviews, with supplementary points raised at this time.

1. Transport was identified as an area that could potentially benefit from the input of Prison Fellowship and the Family Christian Church.
2. The issue of carers could be a delicate one at times:

I am here to advocate for the inmate to a degree, but if the carer and the community don't want the child to come there may be a very good reason why, and I would listen to them. But essentially, it's their decision entirely if that child comes to visit or not, because I don't really know what their situation is, and it's easy for an inmate to say, 'I want to see my kids', but you know, the carer who has that child all the time has a story, but they may not want to tell me and it's not for me to intrude. But I'll ask and I'll listen, but it's entirely up to them if that child comes or not.

4.4 Prison Management

The current Director of Risdon Prison, Mr. Barry Greenberry, has been in the position since June 2012 and comes with almost 30 years' experience in British prisons, where well-resourced Visitors' Centres, staffed by sympathetic, knowledgeable workers have been a feature of many prisons for much of that time. He is enthusiastic about Kids' Days, recognising the value of strong family ties and the maintenance of parent-child relationships.

Looking at the family specifically, I think there's an opportunity to bring out the best in people as parents, as a member of a family, and if you look at it in that respect, there's a whole range of activities I think would help an individual, such as having not just Kids' Days, but actually having joint interventions where you get the partner of someone involved on the same drug course as the individual. Not just to provide moral support or physical support, but actually sometimes because it is in the home that these problems co-exist.

Mr. Greenberry suggested that programs such as 'Fathers Inside' (a British program) would be a worthwhile addition to prison programs, but a holistic approach to interventions needed to be adopted involving not only the family, but (1) victims to remind prisoners of harm caused, (2) successful peers (former offenders) to give them hope and (3) a mentor to help them upon release in times of crisis. He described prisoners as 'a subsection of a big circle: a little bit of a prisoner, little bit of a father, brother...'

If you're a member of the public you would describe someone completely as a criminal without any concept of the sort of onion layers that make up an individual or where they are at that particular moment. It is one part of someone's life and I think in this service we have to take the longest perspective and we need to believe that by giving more and more opportunities, some eventually would have the right button pressed. I genuinely believe that.

The more punitive, the more resentful, the more begrudged a community is, your criminal system will reflect that...the prison we're trying to run should have proportionality, decency, fairness, legitimacy, with proportionality being one of the most important.

Mr. Greenberry also referred to the subject of 'masculinities' and the notion of fathers who are prisoners living in a male-dominated world:

Overcompensation of the male macho psyche with those vulnerabilities, and you end up with conflict. And I suppose again, coming back to the point of Kids' Days, it's a way of actually allowing someone to demonstrate that they care about someone else in a way that is permissible in a male environment.

Furthermore:

And you also get some connection with staff, because the staff who put on these events then have something in common with the people who have attended them, and it's those relationships of bridge-building that actually help to build a safer environment.

Mr. Greenberry made an interesting point when asked about the Contract Level of participating inmates at Kids' Day, and whether it was fair to use time with their children as a behaviour modification tool.

There is a balance between understanding that when prisoners earn something, what you really mean is they're compliant. So if somebody's not compliant, then you could say there is a potential danger of risk to visitors....so by saying that one needs to earn it, I think what that really means is you need to be compliant in order to demonstrate that you are no risk to people coming in.

Mr. Greenberry attended the September 2012 Kids' Day in RPC Medium and expressed admiration for the way in which the day was conducted.

Conclusion

Interviewees were predominantly positive in their perceptions of Risdon Prison's Kids' Days. Of significance is the opportunity that Kids' Day participation offers to inmates to be a parent for two hours. Both staff and inmates contrasted this with normal visiting procedures where the relationship with children is impacted by the presence of other adults.

The link between Kids' Days and prison programs (or further study options) involvement was noted by IOM staff as well as inmates. While not an absolute, there is evidence to suggest that the role of parenting influences some inmates' decision to participate in program options.

Correctional Officers interviewed regarded Kids' Days favourably, but stated that discussions with colleagues revealed a more negative judgement, with some believing that inmates only cared about their children while incarcerated, such concern not being transposed to life outside prison walls.

Chapter 5. Voices From Outside Risdon Prison

5.1 Parolees

At the time of conducting this research, only two parolees in Tasmania suited the criteria of the study, that is, a parent who attended Kids' Days while incarcerated. Both (male) participants were keen to share their views about Kids' Days and issues associated with incarceration and their children. The interviewees will be referred to as P1 and P2.

P1 attended the previous format of Kids' Days, known as 'Family Days', where the criteria for participation were more stringent than the current arrangement. He also attended the December 2011 Kids' Day, run under the existing model. He noted several differences between the two arrangements, and was more positive about the December day than those that preceded it. The reasons for this were:

- In order to attend the Family Days, an inmate needed to have completed the parenting program ('Good Beginnings'). For some incarcerated parents, this was too difficult. He identified low literacy as one of the major impediments, along with a general boredom with the course material.
- As a result of the above criteria, he was one of only three inmates to attend the day, and he felt that this detracted from a 'fun time'. He said he mainly just talked with his son (at that time, aged seven), and played some games.

There was only three of us with our kids – it was a bit flat.

- Inmates needed to be Contract Level 4, non-negotiable. This, along with the parenting program requirement, meant that numbers had little potential to increase.
- Days were not thematically-based, as they are now. The relatively unstructured nature of the format meant that he struggled to 'entertain' his son.

P1 was enthusiastic about the December 2011 day, mainly from the perspective that it offered a wider range of activities, the Contract Level had been relaxed to allow Level 3 inmates, attendance was not contingent upon completion of the parenting program, and so participation levels were greater. P1 was in RBMSP at this time.

[Child] had a great time. He played with some of the other kids. The barbeque was really good. It felt like being normal.

P1 had regular contact visits with his son, facilitated by either the child's mother or P1's mother.

I saw him every week but the days with just him were good – I got to talk to him by myself without anyone else there.

P1 is not currently living with his son (who lives with his mother, separated from P1), but sees him most days when he picks him up from school. He also takes him to sporting engagements. P1 is not working, but hopes to obtain a job as a mechanic. The only course he did while incarcerated was the parenting program, which he undertook in part because he wanted to participate in Kids' Days, and also because he believed that it would be viewed favourably by the Parole Board.

Throughout the interview, P1 presented as a caring and concerned parent. He felt that incarceration had not changed the fundamental nature of his relationship with his son but attributed much of that to the support of family while in prison and the constant contact maintained with his son.

It's what got me through, what made me want to make parole – just to be with my kid.

P2 attended the April 2012 Kids' Day in RBMSP. (He was paroled shortly after.) He identified the difference between seeing his children at normal prison visits and having them come to Kids' Day as a significant factor.

...just the activities and things to do and stuff like that, and like they did face-painting and they made cup-cakes and all that sort of stuff, so yeah, basically just sitting there and dragging on for, you know, forty-five minute visit... So yeah, stuff to do because they haven't got much play equipment or nothing there so you basically just, you've got nothing there really... When they come for a normal visit, they just get a bit restless because there's nothing for them to do.

Prior to being housed in RBMSP, he was in RPC Medium and was reluctant to have his children (aged two and five) visit him there.

...they come and visit me a couple of times in Medium but, you know, because of what they've been through and that, I didn't like them coming through there, you know, with all that security stuff.

The children are in the custody of P2's brother, as their mother is only permitted to have supervised visits with them once a week. (According to P2, 'she's a little bit nutty....'). P2's brother and sister-in-law brought the children to Kids' Days, as well as regular visits.

P2 did not participate in any programs while incarcerated.

P2 was enthusiastic about Kids' Days.

It's like breathing again.

It was just like, you know, it was like a kid's birthday party really.

P2 is not currently employed, although he worked extensively in the kitchen at Risdon Prison, and was proud of the fact that he was 'in charge'. He did not provide any information about employment prospects and expressed reluctance to pursue courses offered by institutions such as TAFE. He is currently negotiating with Children and Family Services to re-gain custody of his children.

Both parolees were animated when talking about Kids' Days, and were extremely positive about the current format. They cited the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with their child(ren) as a key feature.

5.2 Prison Fellowship

The Executive Director of Prison Fellowship Australia (PFA) Tasmania, Mr. Ray Metcalfe, spoke about the challenges associated with parenting from prison, and also the impact that parental incarceration has on the children and families of inmates. While the Pastor of the Family Christian Church is the 'hands on' representative of PFA with respect to Kids' Days, Mr. Metcalfe is involved with the families of the inmates.

The parenting role is compromised. PFA is opening the doors to help families on the outside. They need to talk about their kids, and what prison does to families.

PFA also provides volunteer mentors to talk with inmates. In this role, he and other volunteers have heard some tragic stories from inmates, but also some uplifting ones as well.

One inmate was told when he was a child, upon presenting his artwork to the teacher, that his painting was terrible, and he would never be an artist. Since being in prison, he has re-discovered both his love of art and an ability to do it, and some of his work has been displayed.

Mr. Metcalfe is keen to have PFA's prison contribution formally evaluated. For example, one indicator might be the number of referrals by inmates for follow-up visits with the family.

He emphasised that PFA provides outreach to prisoners' families, and other means by which incarcerated parents and their children can remain connected (such as facilitating the giving of gifts by inmates to their children via the 'Angel Tree' and 'Happy Birthday' Programs – see Appendix I).

5.3 Volunteers

Pastor Norm Reed from the Christian Family Centre, located next door to Risdon Prison, became involved with Kids' Days in December 2011 at the request of the prison's Child and Family Support Officer and Mr. Ray Metcalfe (PFA). The day was organised in one prison only, with the help of two IOM staff. It was based around a Christmas theme, and was fairly simple. The next Kids' Day was Australia Day 2012, with an 'Aussie' theme run in three prisons (RPC Medium, Maximum and RBMSP). A barbeque was held in RBMSP, but not in the other two prisons. This day was instrumental in establishing the 'themed' nature of subsequent days, although at this stage, games and equipment were extremely limited.

Pastor Reed described the processes involved with getting the days operational – meeting with inmates to discuss what they would like, as well as establishing the 'trust' aspect with them (that is, these days *are* going to happen), and identifying potential issues such as going through security (especially with the boxes of equipment) and the nature of taking photos (e.g. no doors/locks allowed in the photos). A printer was also organised to do 'on the spot' photos.

The whole aim became 'how do we create an environment for dads and mums to build memories with their kids? That really, to me, is what I see Kids' Days as being. I think for a lot of these guys, they've got no good memories...because their lifestyle has drawn them into other things, they've never given the time to build memories.

One of the most memorable things I saw at the Australia Day one was a dad, and he sat with his daughter – first time he'd seen her for seven years – he didn't engage in any program, he sat outside under the awning, outside in the medium-maximum visit area and just talked with his daughter the whole time...

Everyone's smiling on the day. The kids are smiling, they're all having fun....I mean, how do kids connect with a dad who's locked away in a prison? What do they smile about? So again, it's creating these happy memories of something that's very positive.

Pastor Reed also spoke about the improved financial situation with respect to Kids' Days. They had previously been financed predominantly by the Church, but with the receipt of two grants (approximately \$8,000 in total), the purchase of materials was facilitated. Additionally, financial support will be given to assist children unable to access the days due to transport problems. This will take the form of petrol vouchers issued to the family upon arrival at the prison for Kids' Days.

Pastor Reed said that a common theme expressed by inmates is that they feel strongly about having their children staying out of prison. He believes that the opportunity provided by Kids' Days for parents to talk with their children serves to reinforce the notion of staying out of prison.

Ruth Verkoeyen is Pastor Norm Reed's sister, and assumes responsibility for numerous organisational aspects of Kids' Days. Not only does she put together many of the activities, she also takes many of the photos (with the help of the Child and Family Support Officer) and prints them out immediately for the children to take with them, and for inmates to order. She is passionate about Kids' Days (while not denying that they can be exhausting).

I just love to see the reaction between the children and the dads, and taking the photos, I get to sort of look at their faces and I'm concentrating on the kids' smiles and the dads looking at the kids, and I think just getting that shot when they're just so, you know, engrossed in each other...I think what I like about it is for the short-termers, or for the prisoners who are going to be let out of prison, they've got somebody in the family who is going to have good memories for them...

When asked about the planning prior to Kids' Days:

A lot of planning, especially the last one was an awful lot of planning because we introduced the passports [for the 'round-the-world theme] so they all had to be made...And then the games and activities and make sure we had all the right equipment and getting the stuff in and out of the prison, and making sure we didn't leave toothpicks lying around... (Every single item, including each toothpick, has to

be counted out of the prison by security, so the loss of even one toothpick has the potential to create great stress for volunteers).

With respect to volunteers, Mrs. Verkoeyen alluded to the fact that while having volunteers to assist was much-needed, coordinating their individual responsibilities was essential.

Both Pastor Reed and Mrs. Verkoeyen discussed the fact that the role of volunteers is quite delicate – a balance between not being helpful at all, to being overly invasive. They acknowledged that it is important for volunteers to ‘read’ the situation and know when and when not to offer assistance.

5.4 The Tasmanian Government

- The Honourable Nick McKim MP, Tasmanian Greens Leader and Minister for Corrections and Consumer Protection

Minister McKim referred to several significant issues during the course of the interview, particularly the need for rehabilitation as opposed to retribution.

One of my prime drivers as Minister is to run a prison based on delivering good outcomes to the community and if you want to make our communities safer, one of the most important things that you can do is run a good corrections system. And what we are doing in the prison is moving very strongly towards a bigger focus on rehabilitation and giving people the opportunity to improve themselves...

In reference to the effects of incarceration upon families, the Minister acknowledged that the imprisonment of a parent disrupts families.

It's dislocating to a family to have a mother or father sentenced to a term of custody, and nothing we can do will stop the fact that it is dislocating to a family and difficult and challenging...to take someone out of the family home and put them in prison, no matter how well you run a prison, is going to dislocate that family to a degree.

With respect to how best to minimise family disruption, the Minister perceived prisons as having a primary role as well as Health and Human Services supported by NGOs.

It's actually the partnership between different arms of government and the non-government sector.

When discussing the family's relationship with, and influence upon, the inmate:

Families are absolutely crucial to improving outcomes, including reducing recidivism. When you look at the big challenges that people have when they come out of prison particularly after a long term of imprisonment, the major immediate challenge is housing, employment and relationships. Family obviously sits right at the heart of a lot of people's relationships. Not everyone's, but most people have some kind of family relationship.

Minister McKim described the forthcoming construction of Tasmania's first integrated living centre at the prison, with open security, independent living in terms of shopping and cooking, and re-learning basic life skills. He views this as an ideal transitional arrangement.

The Minister regards intergenerational offending as a problem in Tasmania. He stated that it was a whole of Government issue, not just a Tasmanian Prison Service concern, and that despite everyone's best efforts, recidivism was a constant challenge. He felt that the opportunity for inmates to improve themselves while incarcerated was the best chance of not seeing them back in the system, and as a result of their improvements, of not seeing their children imprisoned.

On the subject of Kids' Days:

I absolutely support the Kids' Days, I think they provide real value to a lot of people in the system...they don't only provide value to inmates, in my view they provide value for the staff at the prison as well, because if the inmates are more content, they are therefore easier to manage, and you don't get the level of assaults on corrections officers and other things. So there are benefits for all the key stakeholders here.

- Dr. Vanessa Goodwin MLC, Shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Shadow Minister for Corrections.

Dr. Goodwin has volunteered at three Kids' Day – in April 2012 (RPC Medium), June 2012 (MHWP) and September (RBMSP). When asked about her initial impressions of Kids' Days:

Probably the excitement of the kids to be seeing their mother or father...the prisoners are actually having that opportunity to spend a few hours with their kids. And I guess the volunteers as well and how engaged they were in the process and just how important is to be able to establish links between the prisoners and their

children...they could be there for quite a period of time and it would be easy to lose those links with the children.

Speaking about the varying dynamics in the different prisons on Kids' Days:

It's interesting. I felt a bit more intrusive in the women's prison, because they know how to engage with their children and they really want that time – I got the sense that they just wanted that time alone with their children. Whereas the guys don't mind a bit of help if they need it...They have the responsibility of their children for several hours, they are the primary caregiver at that point in time...One of the good things about Kids' Days especially in relationship to the guys was the fact that there was a program of structured activity. For them I think this was quite important because some of them aren't used to engaging for several hours with their children.

Dr. Goodwin has conducted extensive research into intergenerational offending in Tasmania. The following are some of her comments relating to this problem.

The most important thing I believe is the parental skills that families have and not repeating the mistakes of previous generations. Lack of safe supervision, poor supervision, harsh and inconsistent discipline – things that we know affect later offending. So I think the better you can make parents in terms of their ability to engage with their children...and this is where the Kids' Days help because in these situations, they have to engage with their children for several hours, involved in activities as well as helping them.

Having strong family ties when you are released from prison is certainly important, but it's also important to have a different pathway, to have employment or to continue studying. [Without these] it can be quite easy to fall back into your old ways, especially if you hook up with old mates who happen to be offenders as well...chances are they will re-offend, and the family ties can be good because they can start to – while they're in prison – think about their children more, and what impact their offending has on them...

With respect to program delivery within the prison, Dr. Goodwin felt that NGOs were a viable way to do this (over and above what is currently offered by the IOM unit). She believes that there are less administrative and bureaucratic restrictions upon them. However, the main barrier to any program implementation is funding, and she commented that during

the time she has conducted research, a source of concern has always been the allocation of money for projects that are successful, resulting in heightened expectations, but funding may cease to be on-going, leaving programs vulnerable. She stressed the importance of the work of the IOM unit, and the vital nature of both pre- and post-release programs for prisoners.

5.5 A Prisoners' Rights Advocate

Greg Barns, barrister, author, political commentator and spokesperson for the Prison Action and Reform Group Inc. acknowledged that Kids' Days are a positive innovation, but believes they a small step in the desired direction, that is, a situation where children and incarcerated parents are not denied access to one another.

So you have the Kids' Day and they [parents and children] get together and that's fantastic. But what's done in between? One of the problems I have is that currently, the way the prison works is people lose visitation rights, contact visits: it's a form of discipline, punishment. And that's got to stop... From that perspective, it undermines what you're trying to do with Kids' Days. So the culture of the prison needs to be family-friendly, and not just in terms of rhetoric, but in terms of ensuring that you don't use taking away the rights of prisoners to communicate with their families, you don't use that as a punishment tool. It's using children as a tool of punishment.

Mr. Barns felt that systemic change would not arise from short-term methods (e.g. punishment in prison, such as using children for inmate behaviour modification) and that more long-term outcomes would be achieved by addressing the core reasons for familial breakdown and the core issues behind what might be preventing parents from being with their children. He also felt that improvements could be made in terms of the current physical settings in which inmates meet with their families.

I've watched prisoners meet with their children and in a sense it is a highly engineered and false environment. It's a setting which is not like a setting that you'd have anywhere out in the community and so I just wonder about the impact on children, of seeing their parent continually dressed in orange [the colour for RPC Medium inmates] in a space which is foreign to the child and foreign to most people. Why don't we at least have within prison grounds, settings which are essentially replicating a lounge-room, an outdoor area with swings, a garden with trees where

they can throw a ball around? Why are we so paranoid that we have to keep prisoners sitting on bolted down hard chairs and in a room that's got no views?

When asked about the perception of the prison as 'normal' for some children, Mr. Barns was of the opinion that it is undesirable to have young children exposed to the prison environment where they are subject to high levels of security, such as lining up for the sniffer (drug-detecting) dogs. In terms of the incarcerated parent:

What's got to be understood is that the deprivation of liberty is the punishment, and that you should never, then, impose these silly little petty disciplines, not allowing people to have a visit with their family. Because I'll tell you what it does – it helps to destroy families...

5.6 A 2009 Justice Medal Recipient

Professor Eileen Baldry's (UNSW) main areas of research and publishing are in: the criminal justice system focusing on critical criminology; disability studies development; vulnerable persons and minority groups; people with mental health disorders and cognitive disability; women and Indigenous persons; through-care, transition from prison, post-release and homelessness; criminal justice-human service system interactions; Indigenous social work; and community and social development in social housing.

Professor Baldry commented on the 'invisibility' of prisoners' children and some of the reasons behind this:

They're not acknowledged...A lot of it has to do, I think, with the ignorance about the implications for children of having a parent in prison. But the other aspect is, generally, society and politicians know that there are no votes in supporting prisoners...

With reference to intergenerational offending:

Even though they [politicians] know that this is a group of kids who, if they are supported better, you will reduce the number of them who end up in prison eventually themselves, they know that. But, you know, it's the thing about the public not wearing it. Now, the public probably would if it was put properly to them.

Professor Baldry has conducted extensive cost analyses of incarceration, and has demonstrated the financial implications of not only imprisonment, but of intergenerational

offending, and the failure of government to address this as both a social and a financial imperative.

A large number of people in prison have had their own parents in prison. And if you look at that trajectory in a structural form for all those people, and you look at age three, at age four, at age ten, there are these key points at which you can see that if the education system or if Child Protection had acted in a certain way, which was to build around that person the kinds of supports they needed, it would have been expensive at that point. I mean, that might have cost \$100,000. But when you're looking at \$100-\$200 million – you know, you've got just one person who might be \$4 million worth by the time they're thirty.

Professor Baldry discussed the often overlooked effects of short-term imprisonment upon parent-child relationships; research has generally focused on the impact of long-term incarceration.

The short-sentence people get missed because they are not in long enough to build up the capacity for people to visit. From my experience with SHINE [SHINE for Kids] my observation is that it usually takes two or three months to get to the point of getting the kids visiting... But if someone is only in for three or four months, then that's enough to completely disrupt their relationship with their children, to lose their house, to lose connections. So that group of people inevitably get missed in terms of both our research and in terms of them getting results.

Professor Baldry felt that there should be more recognition given to the differences between incarcerated mothers and fathers.

There is a completely different scenario between male parents and female parents. On the whole, the female parents don't have a man who sticks around... There's a high likelihood that a female partner, if a man goes to prison, will continue to care for his kids, and all the kids perhaps from other relationships. So the different needs and framework around which women or mothers exist and need their interaction with their children compared to fathers in prison is a really important consideration, which probably hasn't been built in to any degree.

In my view, the approach that's taken in many other countries should be the approach we take, which is one where you don't put women with children in prison if you can help it.

Professor Baldry made reference to the legal system, and believes that information pertaining to the parental status, especially for women, should be available during legal proceedings, so that this could be taken into consideration, especially at the sentencing stage.

She also commented on the role of volunteers working with children of prisoners, and stressed the need for these people to be well-trained to ensure not only working efficiency, but also that harm to children and inmates (for example, through tactless or inappropriate comments from untrained volunteers) could be avoided.

In summary:

What we're thinking here is how to change the dynamic for parents who are in prison, whether they're short or long term. We've got to broaden what we think is possible. In my view, it is completely possible to do useful and supportive things - we just have to keep pushing the boundaries. Things like Kids' Days that prove to be such a benefit and so useful and helpful. The next step is how are we going to assist keeping short-termers a bit closer to their kids.

Conclusion

While Kids' Days are considered to be an occasion for prisoners' children, a human rights perspective adopts the view that they are also important for inmates, upholding their right to maintain a connection with their children – deprivation of visits should not be used as punishment for prisoners. Recognition of differences between maternal and paternal incarceration requires further investigation, as does the implications of short-term sentences upon prisoner-child relationships.

The role of Prison Fellowship and volunteers is central to the operation of Kids' Days. Kids' Days have received support from the Tasmanian Government, with recognition given to the importance of families and children in preventing re-offending. The opportunity to parent while in prison is also acknowledged as a step towards reducing intergenerational offending.

Parolees highlighted the significance of Kids' Days and cited their children as a contributing factor in maintaining a stable parole status.

Chapter 6. Discussion

This investigation has identified the significance of Kid's Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison and provided information relating to parental incarceration and its effect upon prisoners and their children, with the inmate's view as central. A range of stakeholders have offered rich material about Kids' Days specifically, as well as matters aligned with this. There are several aspects that arise from the interviews that in a more comprehensive study would deserve greater consideration, particularly the links between inmates and their children, recidivism and intergenerational offending.

6.1 Positive Aspects of Kids' Days

- Kids' Days recognise the tenets of the United Nations Rights of the Child Convention (1989). This holds that a child has the right to know their parent, regardless of the status of the parent as a prisoner (provided it is in the child's best interests).
- The inmates interviewed for this study believe that Kids' Days enable them to connect with their children in a manner that is not possible during regular prison visits. This was supported by the views of parolees, who agreed that the presence of other adults during regular visits impacted on their capacity to engage with their children. The study clearly identifies the parent-child connection as the paramount feature of Kids' Days.
- The ability for children to converse one-on-one with their parent is noted by inmates as beneficial, particularly for teenagers - the reasons for staying out of prison, and how this might be achieved can be discussed.
- Kids' Days facilitate the re-connection of inmates and children who may not have had contact for long periods of time. This has been a key feature of several Kids' Days thus far.
- The opportunity for inmates to be a parent was emphasised throughout the research. A parenting role encourages pro-social behaviour, and mitigates the self-centredness that may dominate the inmate's general thought patterns - a characteristic of 'prisonisation'. For two hours, four times a year, an inmate's children are his/her sole responsibility.
- This responsibility also provides the inmate with a degree of agency. In conjunction with their children, they can decide how they will proceed with the day. The power to make decisions is not freely available in the highly regulated prison environment.

- The spirit of Kids' Days, which are conducted in an atmosphere promoting fun and an array of activities, is instrumental in reassuring children about where their parent lives.
- The notion of 'creating positive memories' is emphasised by Prison Fellowship and volunteers. Photographs taken on the day are cherished by inmates and children alike, and enable inmates to distribute pictures to friends and family, identifying them in the role of 'parent' rather than 'prisoner'.
- Kids' Days provide Correctional Officers with an occasion to view an alternative side to inmates (particularly those housed in RPC Medium and Maximum). As noted by TPS staff, some inmates are capable of hostility and belligerence but these characteristics are not evident while caring for their children. This is viewed by Tasmania's Minister for Corrections and the prison's Director as 'bridge-building' with the potential to generate a safer environment.
- Raised levels of trust by inmates towards Kids' Days facilitators are demonstrated by the increased number of participants at each successive day.
- While the connection between Kids' Days and enrolment in prison programs or TAFE courses could be considered tenuous, it is evident from inmate and IOM staff interviews that prisoners' children are a contributing factor in the decision to participate in programs, particularly Newpin. The idea that inmates want their children to be proud of them was expressed on several occasions by both male and female prisoners. Some inmates linked the completion of programs or courses to increased employment opportunities.
- The contribution of Kids' Days to the wider community is recognised by interested and concerned external stakeholders, who acknowledge the potential for improved parenting skills, reduced recidivism, and intervention into intergenerational offending.

6.2 Negative Aspects of Kids' Days

- Most of the criticism of Kids' days arose via anecdotal information from Correctional Officers. Some officers believe that Kids' Days grant an unnecessary and sometimes unearned privilege to inmates, and are sceptical as to the inmate's motivation to participate.
- Kids' Days are seen as an opportunity to eat 'normal' food and to escape the stringent routines of the prison for two hours.

- Officers question the depth of the ‘child-parent’ relationship. They maintain that if the inmate genuinely cared for his/her children, they would not re-offend. Officers often see the same faces returning to prison, and argue that if the prisoner’s children were all-important, desistance would be paramount.
- Some officers believe that inmates only care about their children while they are in prison, and are critical of ‘do-gooders’ providing activities such as Kids’ Days to people who they regard as likely to return to old habits as soon as they are released.
- The notion that the ‘party atmosphere’ of Kids’ Days may lead some children to believe that prison is not necessarily something to be avoided has also been proffered. IOM staff highlighted the fact that children who have been visiting the prison for a period of years, and have attended Kids’ Days, are bordering on being ‘over-confident’ in the prison environment, with an ‘it’s not so bad’ attitude.
- Kids’ Days represent much work for organisers and volunteers, and prison protocols can often impede their efforts. There is no storage space available at the prison for materials used on Kids’ Days, and so it must be transported to and from the prison. It is often problematic clearing security with the equipment, although this has improved with each successive Kids’ Day.
- Negotiations with children’s carers can sometimes be challenging, especially if the relationship between the carer and the inmate is strained. Despite constant communication with carers (by the Child and Family Support Officer and Pastor Norm Reed) and assurances from the carer that the children will be present, there are occasionally last minute withdrawals, resulting in intense disappointment for both inmates and children. Other carers simply refuse to have the children participate at all.
- Whilst there has been significant improvement, communication channels in the prison are often problematic; making sure that all eligible inmates are aware of forthcoming Kids’ Days requires a concerted effort on behalf of the Child and Family Support Officer, Pastor Norm Reed and inmate mentors.

6.3 How do the Findings Compare with the Literature?

This study suggests that the cost of crime/imprisonment for the inmates interviewed is very high in terms of lost connections with family and children, consistent with research conducted by Murray and Farrington 2005; 2008; Arditti *et al.*, 2003; Mumola, 2000; Tudball, 2000.

The benefits to inmates of staying connected with their children has also been well-documented (for example, Bartlett, 2002; Home Office, 2004; VACRO, 2006; Mills and Codd, 2007; LaVigne *et al.*, 2008; New Zealand National Health Committee, 2009) and this study has provided evidence of the importance placed on this connection by inmates at Risdon Prison and parolees, and by extension, their children. Maintenance of parent-child relationships may serve to act against recidivism (Bales and Mears, 2008; Arditti *et al.*, 2005; King, 2005), and some of the interviewed inmates expressed a desire to act appropriately while imprisoned in order to make parole, and to obtain suitable accommodation and employment.

Research by Jarvis *et al.* (2004) concludes that key experiences have the potential to help prisoners construct alternative, non-violent narratives, especially if they themselves have been the victim of violence and/or abuse, or engaged in violence themselves (also see Walker, 2010). The researcher's interviews with inmates and parolees revealed a sense in which parenthood was one of the key dimensions of their lives that caused them to reflect on their incarceration with respect to its effect on their children.

The study suggests that in this particular adverse context (imprisonment), meanings and understandings of parenthood can be positive and productive. Ferguson and Hogan (2004) make the observation that in general, vulnerable parents (inmates) do not love their children any less than any other parent. This is evident at Risdon Prison's Kids Days, where the love between inmates and their children is manifest. These days generate hope that children of prisoners will avoid the mistakes of their parents, and that these parents view their children as a source of inspiration to desist from crime.

6.4 Recommendations

The operation of Kids' Days has evolved into an efficiently-run occasion, with little to criticise. Recommendations relate primarily to the use of volunteers, and are made based on perspectives offered by Pastor Norm Reed, Mrs. Ruth Verkoeyen, and Professor Eileen Baldry.

- Volunteers should be adequately informed prior to Kids' Days about prison protocols, and preferably have their security clearance authorised beforehand. This saves time and confusion on the day and allows for a more seamless entry to the prison, particularly RPC.

- Before Kids' Day commencement, volunteers should ideally be given a specific task, with accompanying explanations of what it involves, and be able to perform this task at the Kids' Day in each prison. This reduces the need for job allocation on the day, and provides purpose and direction to the role of volunteering.
- Volunteers need to be sensitive to the needs of inmates and children, and be able to discern when it is or is not appropriate to intervene with offers of assistance.
- Volunteering on a regular basis is advantageous to children, inmates and organisers to facilitate continuous connections.
- Training of volunteers would be beneficial.

The research process has highlighted the following issues that might be contemplated by criminal justice agencies.

- Consider children's needs at sentencing.
- Devise and implement sentences that encourage accountability to children. It is impossible for incarcerated parents to assume parental responsibilities from behind bars. Alternative sentences should be examined, not just from the rehabilitative aspect, but to allow and encourage parents to fulfil their obligations to children.
- Include a family impact statement in pre-sentence reports. This would include an assessment of the potential effects of a given sentence on both children and parents, and recommendations for the 'least detrimental alternative' sentence in this context.
- Given the powerful role of child/parent relationships identified throughout this research, officials in Corrections should consider opportunities to utilise the positive role of families and children to enhance the wellbeing and stability of prisoners.
- Create a child-centred visitation policy. Contact between children and parents should be construed as a child's right, not an inmate's 'privilege' – visiting should not be withheld for disciplinary reasons, except when safety demands such a restriction.
- Opportunities for extended contact visits should be supported.

6.5 Future Research

This study has acknowledged gaps in identifying the role of carers in facilitating children's participation at Kids' Days, and has excluded children's perspectives. An investigation into the views of both would add a valuable and worthwhile component to the current literature.

The effects of short-term imprisonment on incarcerated parent-child relationships is worthy of future investigation.

The differences between female and male parental imprisonment in Australia would benefit from additional research.

The pragmatic challenges of conducting research in this area have also been outlined, specifically the ethics associated with studies involving vulnerable groups of people. This is an area that merits further consideration, by offering proposals for appropriate and applicable methodologies.

Conclusion

This thesis suggests that the promotion of inmate-child relationships through initiatives such as Kids' Days at Risdon Prison creates improved outcomes for both incarcerated parents and their children.

It was almost normal – words spoken by a young child as he said goodbye to his father after a Kids' Day; also a sentiment echoed by inmates during interviews. Observing the interaction between parents and children, a gift taken for granted outside prison walls, one could nearly believe that it was indeed 'almost normal'.

Without exception, these parents want the best for their children, and if they, through their own experience of incarceration, are able to impart the vital message that prison is not a good place to be, then no further justification for running Kids' Days is necessary.

Within our neighbourhoods, within our communities, and particularly within our criminal justice system, children of prisoners remain in the shadows. Yet they are undeniably a recipient of the sentence handed down to their parent, and if we truly seek to uphold the tenets of UNROC, this situation requires formal recognition. Children of incarcerated parents should not be labelled 'someone else's problem' – they are part of the future of our neighbourhoods, our communities. They should not be the future of our criminal justice system.

Kids' Days are instrumental in drawing prisoners' children out from the shadows, creating patches of sunshine by offering warmth, friendship, acceptance – and fun. Above all Kids' Days provide a forum in which to foster and maintain one of the most important bonds of all – that between a parent and child.

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Appendix A

Master of Criminology and Corrections

'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Aide Memoire

Prompt questions for interviews with practitioners from the Integrated Offender Management Unit, Risdon Prison

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The project is looking at Kids' Days at Risdon Prison, and I am interested in your observations of the days you have been a part of. I am interested in gaining your perspective on how Kids' Days might impact upon other areas of an inmate's life, if at all, and also the logistics and practicalities behind the actual running of a Kids' Day. You may have observed differences in inmate demeanour either before or after participation in Kids' Day, and this too would provide a unique insight.

Please remember that you are able to withdraw from this project at any time.

1. What impact, if any, does inmate participation in Kids' days have on other areas of the inmate's prison experience?
2. How has the format of Kids' Days changed over time, and what are the advantages of this?
3. How do you disseminate information about Kids' Days amongst inmates?
4. What are the differences that you have observed between Kids' Days and normal visits?
5. Have you noted any differences in inmate behaviour either pre- or post-kids' Day?
6. Do you discuss Kids' Day with the inmates after the event?
7. Do you have any suggestions for changes/modifications to the current format of Kids' Days? Upon what model are Risdon's Kids' Days based?

Prompt questions for Correctional Officers

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The project is looking at Kids' Days at Risdon Prison. I am interested in your thoughts about the days you have witnessed, as well as your perspective as to their inclusion in the 'prison calendar'.

Please remember that you are able to withdraw from this project at any time.

1. Did you work at the prison before the introduction of Kids' Days? If so, did you have a view about their introduction?
2. Do you regard Kids' Days as being of benefit to inmates? If not, why not? If so, why?
3. Does the running of Kids' Days affect your role as a Correctional Officer in any way?
4. Are there any noticeable changes in participating inmate behaviour either prior to or post-Kids' Days?

5. Do inmates talk to you about Kids' Days?
6. In your opinion, what do you see as the main differences between 'normal' visits and Kids' Days?
7. If you were to suggest changes to the current format, what would they be?

Prompt questions for Volunteers/Prison Fellowship

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The project is looking at Kids' Days at Risdon Prison, and I am interested in your observations of the days you have been a part of. You may have some thoughts about the particular challenges that Kids' Days present to volunteers, and I would like to know about these.

Please remember that you are able to withdraw from this project at any time.

1. How many Kids' Days have you been a part of?
2. What are some of the positive aspects that you have witnessed? Anything negative?
3. If you were to suggest changes to the current format, what would they be?

Prompt questions for Inmates

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The project is looking at Kids' Days at the prison, and I'm interested in your thoughts about how the days are run, and what parts of those days you and your children really value. There may also be aspects of the days that you feel are of little benefit and it would be good to know about these. You may have some ideas about how the days are organised, especially the way in which you are informed about Kids' Days and how information about Kids' Days is distributed in the prison. You may also have suggestions about activities that you think would make the day more enjoyable.

It is important for you to remember that you can stop participating in this project at any time, not just during this interview, but also if you decide a little later that you don't want me to use the information you have provided.

1. How many children do you have? (If more than one) Have they all participated in Kids' Days?
2. What parts of the day do you and your children enjoy most?
3. What positive results (for either you or your children, or both) can you see from participating in Kids' Days?
4. Have you made any changes in your life as a result of coming to the Kids' Days?
5. Do you feel that your children regard this as a positive experience?

Do you have any suggestions that you think would make Kids' Days better?

Appendix B

Master of Criminology and Corrections

'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Aide Memoire

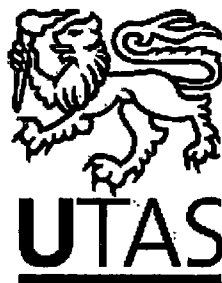
Prompt questions for interviews with clients of Community Corrections who are parents and who participated in Kids' Days while at Risdon Prison

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The project is looking at Kids' Days at the prison, and I'm interested in your thoughts about how the days were run, and what parts of those days you and your children really valued. There may also be aspects of the days that you feel were of no benefit and it would be good to know about these. You may have some ideas about how the days were organised, especially the way in which you were informed about Kids' Days and how information about Kids' Days was distributed in the prison. You may also have suggestions about activities that you think would have made the day more enjoyable.

It is important for you to remember that you can stop participating in this project at any time, not just during this interview, but also if you decide a little later that you don't want me to use the information you have provided.

1. How many children do you have? (If more than one) Did they all participated in Kids' Days?
2. How many Kids' Days did you and your children participate in?
3. Was there sufficient communication from prison authorities and organisers that Kids' Days were coming up? Were you given enough time to fill in the necessary forms and to ask questions about how the day would run?
4. What parts of the day did you and your children enjoy most?
5. What positive results (for either you or your children, or both) can you see from participating in Kids' Days?
6. Did you make any changes to your life as a result of attending to the Kids' Days?
7. Do you feel that your children regarded Kids' Days as a positive experience?
8. Did your children visit on occasions other than Kids' Days?
9. Do you continue to have a good relationship with your children?
10. Do you and your children play any sports together or do special activities that you both enjoy?
11. Do you live with your children?
12. If not, how often are you able to see your children?
13. Do your children ever refer to Kids' Days?
14. Do you have any suggestions that you think would make Kids' Days better?

Appendix C



Information Sheet for Risdon Prison Participants

Date _____

'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Chief Investigator: Dr Max Travers

Masters Student: Julie-Anne Toohey, Dip. T., B.A., Grad. Dip (Crim/Corr)

Thank you for your interest in this research project.

This study is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters in Criminology and Corrections for the candidate Julie-Anne Toohey. The project will be supervised by Dr. Max Travers, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Tasmania.

My research will look at Kids' Days at Risdon Prison and record what you think about them. We would like to find out if you have made any other changes in your life as a result of joining in the Kids' Days. We would also like your ideas about any possible changes that you believe would make the days better. The research will also look at how Kids' Days are run in other parts of Australia and compare similarities and differences with the ones you are involved in. We would like to make more people aware of the importance of Kids' Days, and perhaps be able to secure additional funding, particularly to assist those children who live a long distance away from Risdon Prison.

Personal details of participants will not be included in the report, and participants will not be identified in any way in the report.

If you agree to participate, I will conduct an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. This will ask your views as to what is and isn't working well with the Kids' Days, and how they might have been of assistance to you and your children.

The interview will take place by arrangement at Risdon Prison. Julie Bunyard, the Child and Family Support Officer for Risdon Prison, will also be at the interview. With your permission, she will take notes of our conversation. You are welcome to see and change the material you contribute before the report is submitted. A copy of the final thesis will be made available for you to read should you wish to do so.

The interview notes will be held securely for five years at the University of Tasmania and will then be destroyed.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you don't have to answer any question that you don't want to. You can also withdraw from the process at any point in time. If you don't want your notes to be used, please let us know by 15 October 2012. You will be asked to sign a consent form before we start the interview.

If you have any questions about the study you can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Max Travers Max.Travers@utas.edu.au, or Masters student Julie-Anne Toohey, JulieAnne.Toohey@utas.edu.au

Ethics approval

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H12644.

If you would like to see the final report, a copy will be made available to you through the Prison Library.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. You will be given copies of the information sheet and your signed statement of informed consent to keep.

Dr Max Travers (Chief Investigator)

Julie-Anne Toohey (Masters Student)

Appendix D



Information Sheet for Community Corrections Clients

Date _____

'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Chief Investigator: Dr Max Travers

Masters Student: Julie-Anne Toohey, Dip. T., B.A., Grad. Dip (Crim/Corr)

Thank you for your interest in this research project.

This study is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters in Criminology and Corrections for the candidate Julie-Anne Toohey. The project will be supervised by Dr. Max Travers, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Tasmania.

My research will look at Kids' Days at Risdon Prison and record what you think about them. We would like to find out if you have made any other changes in your life as a result of joining in the Kids' Days. We would also like your ideas about any possible changes that you think would have made the days better. The research will also look at how Kids' Days are run in other parts of Australia and compare similarities and differences with the ones you were involved in. We are hoping to make more people aware of Kids' Days at Risdon Prison, and perhaps even be able to obtain some more funding to buy games and play equipment, as well as help with transporting children who live a long way from the prison and are unable to come to Kids' Days.

Your personal details will not be included in the report, and you will not be identified in any way in the report.

If you agree to participate, I will conduct an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. This will ask your views about what worked well with the Kids' Days and

also things that you feel didn't work as well. We would also like to know if they were of assistance to you and your children.

The interview will take place by arrangement at the Community Corrections premise that you are associated with. With your agreement I will record the interviews. You are welcome to see and change the material you contribute before the report is submitted. The interview notes will be held securely for five years at the University of Tasmania and will then be destroyed. A copy of the final thesis will be made available for you to read should you wish to do so.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may decline to answer any question and withdraw from the process at any point in time, up to 15 October 2012. You will be requested to sign a consent form prior to participation.

If you have any questions about the study you can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Max Travers, Max.Travers@utas.edu.au, or Masters student Julie-Anne Toohey, JulieAnne.Toohey@utas.edu.au

Ethics approval

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H12644.

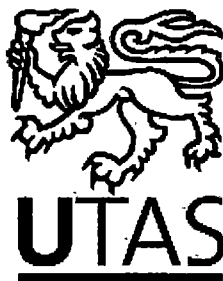
If you would like to see the final report, a copy will be made available to you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. You will be given copies of the information sheet and your signed statement of informed consent to keep.

Dr Max Travers (Chief Investigator)

Julie-Anne Toohey (Masters Student)

Appendix E



Information Sheet for IOM Practitioners, Correctional Officers, Volunteers and Prison Fellowship.

Date _____

'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents.

Chief Investigator: Dr Max Travers

Masters Student: Julie-Anne Toohey, Dip. T., B.A., Grad. Dip (Crim/Corr)

Thank you for your interest in this research project.

This study is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters in Criminology and Corrections for the candidate Julie-Anne Toohey, and is the Thesis component of the Masters' Degree. The project is being supervised by Dr. Max Travers, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Tasmania. The thesis will comprise a brief exploration of relevant academic literature, consideration of similar programs in other jurisdictions, some statistical analysis and investigation into the views of those working in the field as to the direct and indirect benefits of Kids' Days to inmates and their children, and any modifications they feel would enhance the current format. As well as positive feedback, there is scope for any negative views which, in the interests of a balanced report, will be included.

My research seeks to examine the importance of Kids' Days at Risdon Prison, in light of the release of 'Breaking the Cycle', the Tasmania Corrections Plan 2010-2020' (Chapter 5 Outcome 3: 63-73). This highlights the positive nature of effort invested in developing and maintaining healthy relationships between offending parents and their

children, and the advantages of designing programs in which families and children can be involved (64, 65).

A valuable component of the research will be the input of inmates who have participated in Kids' Days. Interviews with inmates will seek to identify the outcomes the participants themselves attribute to their involvement in the program.

Personal details of participants will not be included in the report. While data and information gathered during the research phase of this project may be published, no participants' names or positions will be identified, except where permission is granted to use a position title or a generic term such as 'prison staff'. Inappropriate or potentially harmful comments will be excluded from the report.

If you agree to participate, I will use a simple questionnaire to guide an interview lasting between 30-45 minutes. This will seek your views as to which aspects of the Kids' Days are working effectively and those which, in your view, require some form of amendment or reform in order to increase the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, it will ask your opinion as to the wider benefits of Kids' Days for inmates, children and the broader community.

The interview will take place by arrangement at Risdon Prison (for participants employed by the Tasmanian Prison Service), or at a location convenient to you (volunteers and Prison Fellowship). With your agreement I will record the interviews and take notes. You are welcome to view, verify, modify or edit the material you contribute before the report is submitted. The interview notes will be retained securely for five years at the University of Tasmania and will then be destroyed. You may elect to withdraw any data supplied at any time, up to 15 October, 2012.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may decline to answer any question and withdraw from the process at any point in time. You will be requested to sign a consent form prior to participation. A copy of the the final thesis will be made available for you to read should you wish to do so.

If you have any questions about the study you can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Max Travers, on 62262186 or Max.Travers@utas.edu.au, or Masters student Julie-Anne Toohey, JulieAnne.Toohey@utas.edu.au

Ethics approval

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to

receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H12644.

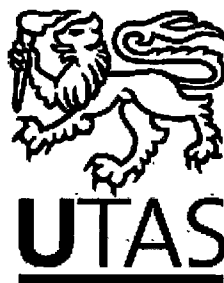
Participants have the opportunity to receive a copy of the final report, which will be available on completion and will be held at the School of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Tasmania.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. You will be given copies of the information sheet and your signed statement of informed consent to keep.

Dr Max Travers (Chief Investigator)

Julie-Anne Toohey (Masters Student)

Appendix F



'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Master of Criminology and Corrections Thesis

CONSENT FORM (For IOM Practitioners, Correctional Officers, Volunteers and Prison Fellowship involved with Kids' Days at Risdon Prison)

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this report.
2. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves discussion, verbally recorded and in writing, for up to 45 minutes, about my perceptions of the effectiveness and value of the Kids' Days at Risdon Prison and my suggestions for their improvement.
4. I understand that participation involves a general discussion about Kids' Days.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years, and will then be destroyed.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and that, if I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.
8. I am aware that I am able to review transcripts before inclusion in the thesis, and edit, modify or withdraw information if desired, up to and including 15 October 2012.
9. I understand that any information I supply will be used only for the purposes of the research.
10. I understand that research data gathered intended for the thesis on Kids' Days at Risdon Prison may be published provided that I am not named as a participant.

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Statement by Investigator

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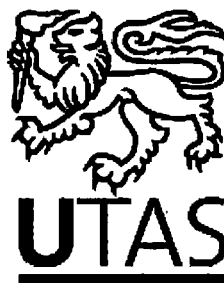
I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that s/he understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator:

Signature of investigator:

Date:

Appendix G



'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Master of Criminology and Corrections Thesis

CONSENT FORM (for Risdon Prison Inmate Participants)

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this report.
2. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves discussion, verbally recorded and in writing, for up to 30 minutes, about my experience of Kids' Days at Risdon Prison. I am also able to offer my suggestions for their improvement.
4. I understand that I will not be identified in any way in any material published using the information provided in the interview.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years, and will then be destroyed.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and that, if I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.
8. I am aware that I am able to review transcripts before inclusion in the thesis, and edit, modify or withdraw information if desired, up to and including 15 October 2012.
9. I understand that any information I supply will be used only for the purposes of the research.
10. I understand that research data gathered intended for the thesis on Kids' Days at Risdon Prison may be published provided that I am not named as a participant.

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Statement by Investigator

☐

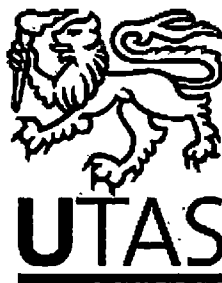
I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that s/he understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator:

Signature of investigator:

Date:

Appendix H



'It was almost normal': The Significance of Kids' Days at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in Maintaining Connections Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents

Master of Criminology and Corrections Thesis

CONSENT FORM (for Community Corrections Clients)

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this report.
2. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves discussion, verbally recorded and in writing, for up to 30 minutes, about my experience of Kids' Days at Risdon Prison. I am also able to offer my suggestions for their improvement.
4. I understand that I will not be identified in any way in any material published using the information provided in the interview.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years, and will then be destroyed.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and that, if I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.
8. I am aware that I am able to review transcripts before inclusion in the thesis, and edit, modify or withdraw information if desired up to and including 15 October 2012..
9. I understand that any information I supply will be used only for the purposes of the research.
10. I understand that research data gathered intended for the thesis on Kids' Days at Risdon Prison may be published provided that I am not named as a participant.

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Statement by Investigator

☐

I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that s/he understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator:

Signature of investigator:

Date:

Appendix I



Christmas Gifts for your Children



Would you like Prison Fellowship to deliver a gift to your children this Christmas?



The gifts will be delivered to your child at home by church volunteers with a card saying the gift is from you.



Complete the Angel Tree gift request in The Insider. Choose the type of gift you wish to give from the Gift Guide (available from a custodial officer). If you choose a sporting gift please specify the type of sport.



Give the request form to your Chaplain or send it to - Coordinator Family & Child Support, IOM Unit
Must be received before the 15th November

Happy Birthday

Prison Fellowship can also deliver your children a present from you on their birthday for as long as you are in prison and they are living at home.

Children have to be under 18 and part of the Angel Tree program. If you would like this to happen tick the box on the Angel Tree form.

Delivery will start for birthdays in February 2013.

Prison Fellowship will be covering the cost of all presents.



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