

SECTION F VOLUNTEERING & CARING FOR PRISONERS

For various reasons – privacy, security, practical and organisational - it can be difficult to visit people in prison. Families and friends are encouraged to visit and the local community may wish to support them before and after visits.

There are, however, many other ways to care for prisoners.

See also:

Section G: Preparing for Release

Section H: People, Organisations & Resources

Section I: Advocacy

Caring for Prisoners

- You can pray for politicians and the community to address the causes of crime through better community services.
- Support governments to provide proper community care for those with mental illness.
- Encourage and support employers who are willing to employ ex-prisoners on release.
- Encourage governments to provide adequate housing, accommodation and support services for prisoners and their families on release so that they can assimilate well to life on the outside.
- Volunteer to become part of a Circle of Support & Accountability, which cares for individual prisoners on release.
- Push for the development of legal processes that focus on Restorative Justice to bring reconciliation and healing between victim, offender and the community.

The Rev. Jonathan Chambers

Senior Chaplain, Anglican Criminal Justice Ministry – Victoria

Refer page 8 <http://www.ncca.org.au/files/sjs-2011-screenfile1.pdf>

Department of Correctional Services: Volunteering (extract from DCS website)

The department's Volunteer Unit provides support to offenders in prison and the community through a wide range of services provided by around 100 registered volunteers across the State. Volunteer involvement is a cost-effective way of offering a range of opportunities that add value to offender plans. Volunteers are a vital link between the department and the community, and are actively involved in prisons and Community Correctional Centres throughout South Australia.

Since the Volunteer Unit's inception in 1973, the type of support provided to offenders has continually adapted to meet the complex needs of present day offenders. Volunteers within the department undertake around 3 000 tasks and provided nearly 10 000 hours of support to offenders. The range of support provided by volunteers included the following services:

Transport

The provision of transport is by far the busiest area of support provided to offenders. Volunteers provided a transport service to assist prisoners with pre-release needs. This service also provides for the movement of offenders in the community to attend appointments and departmental programs.

Transitional Release Program

Volunteers provided practical support for prisoners attending Court or released from prison to assist with the transition to supervision in the community.

High Intensity Offender Support

Volunteers provide support to high intensity/high profile offenders with intensive supervision conditions, by providing transport to reach appointments, or by assisting with supervision and social supports.

Mentor Program

Volunteers visited socially isolated offenders to provide pro-social supports in prison and in the community. The support provided is adapted to meet the individual needs of the offender.

Learners Permit Assistance Program

Volunteers at Cadell Training Centre provide theoretical and practical driving tuition to prisoners. A theory based Learners Permit Program for offenders in the community was also provided by volunteers at Port Adelaide Community Correctional Centre with successful outcomes for a number of offenders.

Library Support

Volunteers provided support services to prison libraries. These support services are expected to increase across the department, in line with an increased focus on offender literacy.

Education

With the implementation of Shaping Corrections, the use of volunteers within education increased at a number of institutions. With a focus on basic literacy and numeracy, volunteers provide support to Yatala, Mobilong, Adelaide Women's Prison, James Nash House and Cadell.

If you would like further information about becoming a volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Unit on 8440 3608 www.corrections.sa.gov.au/community/volunteering

Every effort had been made to ensure that the information in this Section is correct at the time of being written. SA Council of Churches accepts no liability for errors, omissions or for actions taken based on this information. We invite you to send us any suggested changes.
