



CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN NSW

Member of Catholic Church Religious Group
ABN 52 476 362 010

November 12, 2008

The Hon John Hatzistergos BEc LL.M MLC
Gov Macquarie Tower Level 33
1 Farrer Pl
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

I write to you on behalf of the Social Justice Committee of the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes in New South Wales. As a group, we have had a long involvement with issues concerning the rights of prisoners and the extraordinary number of incarcerated people in NSW. We have had particular concern for women and children. For many years we have challenged the disproportionate number of prisoners held in NSW jails compared to other Australian states.

This time last year we were disappointed to hear that prisoners would not receive visitors on Christmas Day. This affects some 3,000 children, mothers, fathers, wives and husbands. It also affects prison chaplains who have a particular concern for the welfare of prisoners and their families at this time. Many prisoners take advantage of the Church services offered in prison. As with the general population, Christmas is a particular time when prisoners wish to attend religious functions.

We hear that prisoners will not be able to have visitors again this year and wish to voice our strong objection.

Taking away a person's liberty is the way our society chooses to punish people of all levels of criminality. Surely this is enough at this festive time without taking away additional rights of those in prison and those who try to continue to support them. You would be aware that the chances of not returning to prison are increased if one has family support on release.

We ask that you take this issue up with the Corrective Services Commissioner to ensure that NSW does not continue a process that can only build up ill will among those already holding anger with our society.

We look forward to hearing from you the action you will take on this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Sister Anne Lane
Chair Social Justice Committee

Social Justice Committee

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