



PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICE INC

CHAINMAIL

INFORMATION BROADSHEET FOR PRISONERS OF QUEENSLAND

104th Edition April 2017

JUSTICE BEHIND BARS

PAROLE SYSTEM REVIEW & LEGAL REFORM

Mr. Walter Sofronoff, QC was commissioned to review the Queensland parole system and to report on recommendations for reform of the system. In light of the report, the Queensland Government responded by supporting 89 of the 91 recommendations put forth by Sofronoff.

Prisoners' Legal Service supports the much-needed reform of the Queensland parole system and is encouraged by the majority of these recommendations. We are optimistic given the Queensland Government's response in supporting these reforms, particularly with the expansion of services to rehabilitate prisoners, the parole application process, conditions of parole and the breach of parole process.

On 16 February 2017, The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, the Hon. Mark Ryan MP, introduced the *Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017*. We advise that this is **not** currently enacted and is still before parliament. Some of the proposed changes in this Bill involve:

- Changes to the legislative timeframe in which the Parole Board has to consider a prisoner's parole application to 120 days. (Clause 5)
- Changes to conditions of parole and directions to prisoners subject to parole (Clause 7-8)
- The process which is to be followed when amending a prisoner's parole order (clause 9-10)
- The breach of parole process, this would change how a parole order can be suspended (Clause 11)
- The set up and operation of the Parole Board (Clause 12)

There are many other recommendations in the report that the Queensland Government are prioritising including the following:

- Expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre, to commence by November 2017
- Reinstate the Drug Court in Brisbane by the end of 2017
- Appoint a Parole Board president-designate to guide the establishment of the new Parole Board
- Introduce "no body, no parole" legislation during 2017
- Expand the use of GPS technology to monitor parolees, commencing in high risk areas
- Expand rehabilitation, drug and alcohol and mental health treatment services in prison
- Expand the opioid substitution treatment in Queensland prisons starting in northern Queensland
- Expanding re-entry services, targeting female prisoners
- Strengthened end-to-end case management by providing up to 243 additional and better trained probation and parole officers over the next four years
- Expand prisoner mental health services

Prisoners' Legal Service Inc.
Postal Address: GPO Box 257, Brisbane QLD 4001

Justice Behind Bars
Free Advice Line: Tues, Wed, Thurs from 9am to 1pm

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The two notable exceptions in the government's response relates to recommendation 7 and 58.

- Recommendation 7 sought to grant sentencing judges the discretion to depart from mandatory non-parole periods.
- Recommendation 58 sought a review of the policy that currently restricts placement of sexual offenders and prisoners convicted of murder or serious violent offences in low security placement, with the view of allowing appropriate candidates to be placed in low security facilities.

These recommendations have not been supported by the government due to the potential risk that it posed to community safety.

We are unable to provide specific legal advice in relation to how this may potentially impact your parole until the Bill is enacted and corresponding Government policies and procedures are amended. Please contact us if you would like a copy of the Government's response to the Sofronoff recommendations to be mailed to you.

SAFE WAY HOME NORTHERN PRISON VISITS FOR 2017

The Safe Way Home Program will be visiting the following prisons over the next few months to provide assistance to prisoners with parole matters. Regardless of what section of prison you are in, posters will be displayed in the Centres the week prior to our arrival so you can put your names down. Alternatively, you can put in a request at Shop Front to have your name added to the list.

Centre	Visit Dates
Townsville Correctional Complex	Thursday 20 April 2017 Friday 21 April 2017
Lotus Glen Correctional Centre	Monday 29 May 2017 Tuesday 30 May 2017
Capricornia Correctional Centre	Monday 19 June 2017 Tuesday 20 June 2017

NOTICE: OUR POSTAL ADDRESS

Please ensure you have our correct postal address.

It is GPO Box 257, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Mail sent to old addresses will no longer be forwarded to us.

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