



**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION**  
of Australia Inc

## **PRISON HEALTH: MINIMUM NATIONAL HEALTH STANDARDS FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AND JUVENILE DETENTION**

### ***The Public Health Association notes:***

1. The high correlation between the use of alcohol and other drugs, violence, crime and incarceration is a public health issue of national significance
2. That 60% of Australia's inmates are convicted of illicit drug, or alcohol-related crimes
3. Changes in sentencing policies have been responsible, in part, for imposing custodial sentences on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Australia
4. The lack of Commonwealth Government action and intervention to prevent over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in custody across all jurisdictions; this situation is even more extreme in institutions of juvenile detention
5. The prevalence and incidence of communicable diseases in the prison setting and the associated risk of transmission to the prisoner population and general community
6. The lack of Commonwealth and State and Territory cooperation to enforce national standards to protect, promote and maintain the health and well-being of people held in custody
7. The increasing rate of female incarceration in Australia
8. The increasing prevalence of prisoners with mental illness
9. The unacceptable rate of post-release mortality of Australian prisoners
10. The lack of post release services for prisoners
11. Current policies related to incarceration impact unequally and unfairly on the children, extended families and communities, closest to prisoners.

### ***The Public Health Association of Australia affirms the following principles:***

12. Incarceration should be used as a punishment of last resort. Incarceration of mothers of infants should not prevent them breast feeding their babies.
13. Culturally appropriate services should be available for all groups representing minority populations – applies transculturally
14. National action, lead by the Commonwealth Government, is required to foster innovation in the development and implementation of sentencing options that provide for effective diversion from custody.
15. National minimum standards to protect, promote and maintain the health and well-being of people held in custody must be developed and monitored to ensure the protection of people held in custody across all jurisdictions.
16. Health care for people deprived of their liberty must be guided by evidence that supports effective, appropriate and confidential services.
17. Health service policy and provision in prisons and juvenile detention facilities must be provided independent of corrections authorities.

***The Public Health Association of Australia recommends that:***

18 A harm minimisation approach be incorporated into health policy, services and standards of care in correctional services

19. Programs for perpetrators of sexual abuse and assault and prevention of re-offending programs should be developed and implemented during the custodial sentence.

20. The Commonwealth Government support a national approach to establish minimum standards to protect, promote and maintain the health and well-being of people deprived of their liberty by the criminal justice system; separate standards for adults and juveniles will need to be developed

21. An independent National Corrections Standards and Monitoring Authority be established to monitor and review the agreed national minimum standards for prisoner health care. The National Authority would progress the implementation of all the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody as a matter of urgency.

***The Public Health Association of Australia resolves to undertake the following actions:***

22. PHAA will develop and promote model public health standards for use in Australian corrections and juvenile detention institutions.

23. PHAA will develop and promote guidelines for creating healthy prison environments.

***References:***

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**First Adopted 1999**

**The PRISON HEALTH: MINIMUM NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES was Adopted at the 1999 Annual General Meeting of PHAA and archived in 2006.**

***This policy was revised in June 2007 and passed at the PHAA AGM with the name changed to***

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