

## **Incarceration Conference - Human Rights,...Human Wrongs,...Human Costs**

### **Brisbane 2003**

The delegates endorsed the following resolutions:

#### Conference Resolution 1

- The excessive incarceration of Australian citizens, and the inappropriate use of 'deprivation of liberty' for citizens with mental health and drug & alcohol conditions is noted with regret.
- The recent reversal of incarceration rates in Western Australia is applauded.
- All jurisdictions are called upon to use 'deprivation of liberty' as a punishment of last resort, and to strive to contain the current abuse of power upon ill citizens

#### Conference Resolution 2

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience of incarceration, and the impacts of incarceration on families and communities is acknowledged.
- The recent reversal of Aboriginal incarceration rates in Western Australia is applauded.
- All jurisdictions are called upon to address the issue of disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a matter of urgency.

#### Conference Resolution 3

- The lack of progress in developing national minimal standards for health care of Australian inmates and detainees is noted.
- All jurisdictions are called upon to plan toward the conduct of a national inmate health survey by 2006, as the basis for evidence-based definition of health needs of inmates, detainees and their families.

#### Conference Resolution 4

- The long-term detention of asylum seekers is noted with abhorrence.
- The detention of children and their families, under any circumstances, is rejected.
- The introduction of short-term reception centres in central locations in place of existing detention centres in remote areas is called for.
- The immediate release of all children and their families in immigration detention is called for.

### Conference Resolution 5

- The early stages in the development and promotion of model health standards for use in Australian correctional and juvenile detention institutions is noted.
- All jurisdictions, through the Australasian Council of Prison Health Services, are called upon to further develop these standards, with reference to the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates.

### Conference Resolution 6

- The lack of progress in developing and promoting a healthier prison environment for the mutual benefit of staff and inmates, and their families is noted.
- All jurisdictions, through the Australasian Council of Prison Health Services and the Australian Correctional Ministers Advisory Council, are called upon to further develop prisons and detention centres as 'healthy settings', consistent with the Principles of the Ottawa Charter.

The conference resolutions were carried with an overwhelming show of hands. There was one abstention, and no delegate voted against them.

The Public Health Association of Australia's continued commitment to health and incarceration includes:

- seeking membership from sufficient numbers of people concerned for the public health issues around detention and incarceration;
- encouraging the formation of a Prison Health Special Interest Group; and
- considering sponsoring a 3rd National Conference in 2007.