

Australia Day 2009

Mr Christian Porter  
Attorney-General and Minister for Corrective Services  
WA Government  
29th Floor, Allendale Square  
77 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Attorney/Minister

We ask you to make a personal commitment that, by Australia Day 2010, you will have lowered the current rate of imprisonment of indigenous West Australians from 42.3% of the 3913 West Australians in jail (as reported in the article by former Premier, Peter Dowding, in *The West Australian* on p20 of 21 January 2009).

We suggest that a target for the next 12 months should be to reduce the percentage to less than 40%. As well as setting a target 12 months, we suggest you set targets for 5, 10 and 20 years ahead.

You are in a unique position, with your dual roles, to provide the leadership needed to correct the “social tragedy of the cycle of drug and alcohol-fuelled crime, leading to imprisonment and release back into the community with no intervention, (that) has escalated the prison population”, as Mr Dowding describes the current situation.

The world has seen in the past week how strong leadership – with clear, precise statements of purpose, direction and end point, as with the new US President, Mr Obama – can change a nation’s attitude and culture in the space of a few days. We feel sure that you could provide equivalent leadership in WA in terms of tackling the tragedy that is indigenous imprisonment in the State.

Should you decide that, to achieve the aims you finally decide on, you need the help of a community consultative body, we would be happy to suggest one of our members. Mr Dowding, of course, would be an excellent choice for such a committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kristine Klugman  
President

