

POLICY FUTURES

A Reform Agenda



Breaking the Cycle: Straight talking ex-offenders reduce recidivism

A successful prison system should not contain people who have committed offences; it should also improve their lives by preparing them for release. Reintegration is about more than stopping reoffending. It is about adjusting, adapting and transitioning successfully to a straight life on the outside.

Community safety improves when released offenders do not commit further crimes. If they go on to productively contribute to their communities, we benefit through decreased crime rates and increased social/economic capacity.

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Key Policy Recommendations

1

Peer Mentors and Advisors. Ex-prisoners as peer mentors and advisors to prison management, public servants, government ministers, and researchers would help inform policy and are proven effective agents for positive change. They lead their own agencies, employ former prisoners and help to deliver person-centred services.

2

Establish a rehabilitative mentoring program. My evidence to Victoria's 2017 Legislative Council's Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into youth justice centres recommends that the government establish a rehabilitative mentoring program and informed the Deakin University peer mentoring model development of 'Straight Talking' for young offenders.

3

Incorporate the voice, expertise and role of people with lived experience of prison across the design, delivery, evaluation and reform of the criminal justice system. This would enable expansion of the 'Straight Talking' program across Victoria would test the program's scalability and transportability for a national rollout.

4

Funding for the 'Straight Talking' program. Funding should come from existing government budgets, as occurs overseas, where such programs are integrated into the suite of resettlement services.

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