

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

What has changed in 18 years?



**A Survey of imprisoned parents in New South Wales in 1999,
with children under 16 years of age**

Compared with an identical Survey taken in 1981.

A Research Project of the
Children of Prisoners Support Group

Dr. Derek R. Brookes
Chief Researcher
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Dr. Derek Brookes

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Children of Prisoners Support Group, Co-op, Ltd.

'The Cottage',

Holker St., Silverwater NSW

P.O. Box 67

ERMINGTON, 2115

AUSTRALIA

Ph. (02) 9648 5866

Fax. (02) 9648 5669

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
<i>The Prisoner-Parents</i>	8
Age, Gender and Nationality	8
Current Marital Status.....	8
Sentencing.....	9
Classification	9
Correctional Centers and Jail Transfers.....	9
<i>The Children</i>	10
Number and Ages	10
Contact with Prisoner-Parents	10
Caregivers	11
Living Arrangements	11
Knowledge of Parents' Imprisonment	12
On Release of Parent	12
Frequency of Visits.....	12
Person who brought Children to Visits.....	13
Travel for Visiting	13
Difficulties in Visiting	13
Non-Contact Visits	14
Contact Visits.....	15
Visiting Conditions.....	15
Day leave	17
Services Used by Prisoner-Parent or Carer	17
Children in Substitute Care.....	17
METHODOLOGY	19
Summary.....	19
Number and Characteristics of Participants	19
New South Wales Correctional Centres included in the Sample	19
Identification and Recruitment of Participants	20
Selection of the Investigatory Population and the Sample Size	20
The Methods of Investigation used with the Participants.....	21
Incentives Offered to the Participants to Participate	21
Data Storage and Handling.....	21
Ethical Considerations	21
Informed Consent	22
RESULTS	23
Table 1. Age	23
Table 2. Gender	23
Table 3. Country of birth.....	23
Table 4. Aboriginality	24
Table 5. Current marital status	24
Table 6. Single parent status prior to imprisonment	24
Table 7a. Changes to marital status since imprisonment.....	24
Table 7b. <i>Prisoner-parents' description of change (1999 only)</i>	25
Table 8. Sentenced / on remand	25

Table 9.	Sentence	25
Table 10.	Non-parole period	26
Table 11.	Sentence served.....	26
Table 12.	Classification.....	26
Table 13.	Jails	27
Table 14.	Jail transfers since imprisonment.....	27
Table 15.	Number of children	27
Table 16.	Children's ages.....	28
Table 17.	Living arrangements of siblings.....	28
Table 18.	Living with children before imprisonment	28
Table 19.	Regular contact with children	28
Table 20.	When prisoner lost regular contact with children	29
Table 21.	Children's caregivers	29
Table 22.	Caregivers main source of income.....	29
Table 23.	Informal arrangements for childcare made with friends or relatives	30
Table 24.	Source of income of caregivers (i.e. Friends or relatives)	30
Table 25.	Number of different caregivers since imprisonment	30
Table 26.	Prisoner-Parent's relationship with caregivers	31
Table 27.	Children's current accommodation	31
Table 28.	No. of homes children have lived in since imprisonment.....	31
Table 29.	Whether children know about parent's imprisonment.....	31
Table 30a.	Reasons for children's not knowing about imprisonment	32
Table 30b.	<i>Comments on why children did not know</i>	32
Table 31.	Intention to live with their children on release	33
Table 32.	Parent needs special help or support in adjusting to children on release.....	33
Table 33.	Frequency of visits.....	33
Table 34a.	Person who brought children to visit	34
Table 34b.	Details of persons who brought children to visit	34
Table 35.	Frequency of visits considered sufficient	35
Table 36.	Distance children traveled to visit.....	35
Table 37.	Method of travel to visit jail.....	35
Table 38a.	Difficulties in visiting	36
Table 38b.	<i>Comments and other difficulties</i>	36
Table 39.	Reasons for turning away children at jail gate.....	37
Table 40.	Contact visits.....	37
Table 41.	Non-contact visits for previous three months	37
Table 42.	Permitted hours per contact visit.....	37
Table 43.	Usual hours per contact visit.....	38
Table 44.	Visiting conditions	38
Table 45.	Contact with children while on leave.....	39
Table 46a.	Services used by inmate or carer	39
Table 46b.	Other services (1999 only).....	39
Table 47a.	Usefulness of services (1981 only).....	40
Table 47b.	Usefulness of services (1999 only).....	40
Table 47c.	<i>Comments on usefulness of services (1999 only)</i>	41
Table 48.	Families that lost contact	42
Table 49a.	Children placed in substitute care	42
Table 49b.	Children in substitute care: before vs. after prison	43
Table 49c.	<i>Explanations for concern about re-gaining custody</i>	44
Table 50.	Residence prior to imprisonment (1999 only)	45

PRISONER-PARENT COMMENTS.....	47
The Current Situation	47
Prison visiting arrangements.....	54
Other types of contact wanted with their children	60
Help or support needed in jail to help them with their kids.....	63
Help or support for their families and kids outside	66
Other things which would help their families and kids cope better	68
Problems to do with their kids that might arise when they are released and what might help to overcome these problems.....	70
 QUESTIONNAIRE	 78
Consent Form	78
Instructions for Survey Administrators.....	80
Questionnaire (pp. 1-25)	81

INTRODUCTION

In October 1981, the first comprehensive survey of imprisoned parents in New South Wales was carried out. The results were published in 1982 as part of the *Children of Imprisoned Parents* report, issued by the Ministry of Youth and Community Services of New South Wales.

Sixteen years later, the NSW Parliament's Standing Committee on Social Issues published a second study on the issue, a *Report into Children of Imprisoned Parents* (Report No. 12, July 1997). The committee's investigation collected evidence from 38 individual and corporate submissions, visited correctional centers in Australia and overseas, and surveyed existing international research on the subject.

The 1997 report made a number of serious and carefully crafted recommendations to the NSW Government, many of which, sadly, were simply a re-statement of the recommendations made in the 1982 report. The NSW Government's Response was published in March 1998, and reflected the confident poise of a clear conscience. However, a close analysis of the Response would suggest that children of prisoners have yet to achieve the political significance which would motivate serious and genuine reform.

Recommendations which might have alleviated the suffering of thousands of children in NSW were 'not supported' due to various inconveniences or 'impracticalities'. For instance, the 1997 Report recommended that children and their carers should be informed when visiting times are disrupted by industrial disputes or lock-downs so that they do not embark on a 2 or 3 hour journey only to be turned away at the prison gate (Recommendation 18, p. 85). The Response states that this recommendation was not supported because it was 'not practicable' (p. 11). Yet one could be quite certain that 'impracticability' would not be an issue if, say, a Government Minister was scheduled to visit a jail. And if the Minister could not be notified of the disruption in advance, there is no doubt that means would be found to accommodate the visit regardless. The Government's Response simply betrays the attitude that *the interests of children of prisoners are not considered a priority*.

Other recommendations were said to be 'implemented', but these often turned out to involve a program or procedure that bore some similarity to the recommendation, but which failed to match the full content or spirit of the recommendation. To take one example, the 1997 report recommended that the Department of Corrective Services collect statistics on the number of children of prisoners in NSW (Recommendation 3, p. 38). Unfortunately, the recommendation failed to state that the data should not only be collected, but also *collated*. Hence the data was duly collected, but not entered into the computer-based Offender Management System for collation; so the data was useless (Response, p. 2).

The most disturbing aspect of the NSW Government's Response is its failure to address the issue at its most basic level: virtually every child of an imprisoned parent will face severe trauma and hardship, simply by virtue of the fact that their parent is involuntarily behind bars, out of reach and unavailable in their day-to-day lives. No reform of visiting conditions will alleviate this form of deprivation.

In other words, the Government has yet to confront the issue of why it continues to imprison parents in the face of the known social consequences. For most prisoners, there are now workable alternatives, such as home detention, community service, reparative schemes and family group conferencing. These alternatives would do more to safeguard the welfare of children and keep families together than the most well-funded support agency or the most finely-tuned visiting program. Such alternatives are also more likely to address criminal behaviour and the needs of victims than the blunt, retributive mechanism of caging human beings.

It was in this context that the *Children of Prisoners Support Group* considered it necessary to conduct a third study of imprisoned parents in New South Wales. Whilst the 1997 Report gathered important material, it did not conduct any statistical research of its own. Indeed, it depended to some extent on the view that little had changed since the 1982 report, but no comparative survey was taken to validate this claim. Hence, it was felt that a survey identical to that taken in 1981 would be the most effective way of:

- (a) providing empirical confirmation of the *continued* unnecessary suffering and hardship experienced by children of prisoners; and
- (b) exposing the systematic failure of government agencies to regard the best interests of this particular group of children as a priority, as required by Australia's ratification of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989).

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” (Article 3.1)

This Report, then, begins with an *executive summary*, which presents the most significant statistical evidence, as it relates to the two aims above. This is followed by an account of the *methodology* used to conduct the survey and analyse the data collected. The third section presents a complete record of the *results* of both the 1981 and the 1999 surveys, side by side for comparison.

Finally, toward the end of this report is a transcription of *comments written by prisoner-parents*, as collected in the 1999 Survey. It is heartbreaking to work through these stories, piecing together what has happened to each child as a result of their parent's imprisonment. One after another, they describe the kind of suffering and anguish that would shock the conscience of the public. The fact that this state of affairs has been known by those with political power for the past eighteen years makes it particularly disgusting. Since first being 'officially' alerted to the problem in 1981, not nearly enough has been done to provide the measures necessary to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Thousands of innocent children continue to suffer from severe hardship as a consequence of the NSW Government's persistent failure to regard their best interests as a priority. Eighteen years is long enough. It is time for serious and genuine reform in the policies and procedures of those institutions and agencies involved with children of prisoners and their families.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey of imprisoned parents in New South Wales was carried out as part of a commission by the Children of Prisoners Support Group (COPSG) to write an education package for Schools in the Western Suburbs of Sydney.

The main objectives of the survey were:

1. To determine the special needs and circumstances of prisoner-parents and their children in NSW, and
2. To determine the extent to which these needs and circumstances have changed since 1981, when an identical survey was taken.

200 questionnaires were completed by prisoner-parents in November 1999, as compared to 244 in October 1981.

Please note, this summary of the results only mentions the 1981 statistics if a) they differ significantly from the 1999 results, or b) the lack of difference is itself significant. See the tables in the section 'Results' for more detail.

THE PRISONER-PARENTS

Age, Gender and Nationality

- ❑ The average age of participants was 31 years. The oldest parent was 53, the youngest 18.
- ❑ 28% were female, as compared to 11.1% in the 1981 survey.
- ❑ The most common countries of birth, following Australia (77.5), were New Zealand (5%), Asia (3%), the UK (2.5%) and the Pacific Islands (2%).
- ❑ 23% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, as compared to 7.4 % in 1981.

Current Marital Status

- ❑ There were significant differences between 1981 and 1999, with the trend moving from marriage to de facto relationships or singleness:
 - 14 % were married, as compared to 33.6 % in 1981
 - 44% were in de facto relationships, 27% in 1981
 - 10% were divorced or separated, 26.6% in 1981
 - 28% were single, 3.2% in 1981
 - 3% were widowed
 - 24.5% were single parents prior to their imprisonment, a significant rise from 13.5% in 1981. As the 1981 report states "This group would be in a particularly vulnerable position with respect to contact with and guardianship of their children." (Appendix, p. 4)

- ❑ There were no major differences in regard to changes in marital status since imprisonment:
 - 2% had married or started a new relationship
 - 10.5% had a relationship breakdown,¹ most of which were attributed to imprisonment (e.g. “I was in a de facto relationship but due to my 3 year sentence she left me and moved to Victoria”)

Sentencing

- ❑ 85% were sentenced, as compared to 95.5% in 1981.
- ❑ 13% were on remand, 3.3% in 1981.
- ❑ Significantly more parents were serving shorter sentences in 1999. This may be due to the 1999 survey having limited access to maximum-security jails (see *Classification* below):
 - 43% were serving 1 or 2 years, as compared to 11% in 1981.
 - At the other extreme, only 1 prisoner was serving life in 1999, 21 were in 1981
- ❑ The majority of respondents in both surveys had served 2 years or less of their sentence. The 1981 report makes the conjecture that “family dislocation suffered by those who have served longer periods is so severe that a questionnaire on family relationships was irrelevant for them.” (Appendix, p. 2). The 1999 findings are consistent with this conjecture:
 - 73% served 2 years or less, as compared with 66.4% in 1981

Classification

- ❑ Most prisoner-parents in 1999 were classified as Minimum Security (57%), whereas most in 1981 were Maximum (46%).²
- ❑ Most female prisoner-parents were in Category 1 (3%) or 2 (21%). Only 3% were in Categories 3 and 4 and none were in Category 5.

Correctional Centers and Jail Transfers

- ❑ Most respondents for the 1999 survey were in Silverwater (28%), Long Bay Industrial Training Center (21%), and Mulawa (19.5%).³ In 1981, most respondents were in Cessnock (19.3%) followed by Paramatta (14.3%).

¹ “It is likely that the relationship breakdown rate was higher than indicated, as some prisoners may have changed relationships without altering their status (e.g. by ending one de facto relationship and beginning another)—a process which may be as difficult for the children involved as a status change.” (Appendix, p. 5, 1981)

² Female prisoners were not given a separate classification in 1981, so the 1981 Maximum / Minimum includes female prisoners. Nevertheless, the vast majority of female prisoners in 1999 were Category 1 or 2 which is roughly equivalent to a Minimum Security classification.

³ These larger percentages were due entirely to the good fortune of there being either a welfare officer or program manager at these Centers who kindly offered to accompany the Chief Researcher and/or assistants through pods or cell divisions, distributing and collecting the surveys and assisting prisoner-parents with questions.

- ❑ The remaining five Correctional Centers in 1999 each constituted 10% or less of the total; the remaining eight in 1981 constituted 11% or less (See Tables for details).
- ❑ Almost half of the prisoner-parents surveyed had been transferred to one or more other jails during their sentence. This is one of the key sources of frustration, confusion and anxiety for children of prisoners. Yet the Department of Corrections has not taken *significant* steps to address this problem over the past 18 years:
 - Since imprisonment, 44.5% had 1 or more transfers, as compared to 65.6% in 1981
 - 13% experienced between 4 and 8 transfers, as compared to 9.4% in 1981
 - 42% are assumed to have had no transfers,¹ 25% in 1981

THE CHILDREN

Number and Ages

- ❑ The total number of children recorded was 424, as compared to 469 in 1981.
- ❑ As in 1981, most prisoner-parents had only 1 child:
 - 41% had 1 child, 25% had 2, and 28% had 3-4
- ❑ Again as in 1981, most children were from 2 to 13 years of age:
 - 33% were from 2 to 5 years of age, 29.7% from 6 to 9, and 20.3% from 10 to 13
 - 8.7% were from 0 to 2, and 8% from 14 to 16

Contact with Prisoner-Parents

- ❑ 73.5% of imprisoned parents lived with all or some of their children before imprisonment; 25% did not.
- ❑ There has been no significant change in the number of parents who lost regular contact with their children since being imprisoned:
 - Less than half of the parents surveyed (48.5%) could say that they now have regular contact with *all* their children; the figure was 45.9% in 1981
 - 16% now have regular contact with *some* of their children, 5.3% did so in 1981
 - 30% claim to have *no* regular contact with their children, 37.7% in 1981
- ❑ Of the 30% of parents who had no regular contact with their children, 70% stated that this occurred *since imprisonment*, as compared to 78.4% of the 37.7% who had no regular contact with their children in 1981.

¹ This number is calculated on the assumption that participants who did not write an answer to this question had not moved. But it is likely that some (perhaps many) participants did not wish to respond to the question.

Caregivers

- ❑ The majority of caregivers for the children were, once again, the other parent; but the figures suggest that almost *half* of the 424 children recorded in the 1999 survey had suffered the disintegration of their family, and were now living apart from both parents:
 - 54.9% of the children were cared for by the other parent, significantly less than the 69.9% recorded in 1981
 - 23.5% were being cared for by a relative, as compared with 10.2% in 1981
 - 4.2% were cared for by friends, foster homes, and residential homes
- ❑ Almost half (47.5%) of the caregivers' main source of income was a government pension or benefit, which is little different from the 1981 figure of 50.4%.
- ❑ Most children appear to have had no change in caregiver since their parent's imprisonment, but a minority continues to suffer from this hardship:
 - 69.5% respondents indicated that their children had no change in caregiver since their imprisonment, as compared to 83.2% in 1981¹
 - 4.5% stated their children had 1 to 2 changes, as compared to 7.4% in 1981
 - 2.5% had 3 or more changes, 1.2% in 1981
- ❑ 63.5% of prisoner-parents said that they 'get on well' with their children's caregiver, compared to 70.1% in 1981. 15% said there were 'difficulties', as compared to 10.7% in 1981.

Living arrangements

- ❑ 20% of prisoner-parents said that their children did not live together, as compared to 13.1% in 1981.
- ❑ More than half (53.2%) of prisoner-parents said that their children were living in rented accommodation, 50% in 1981.
- ❑ 30% of these were renting from the Housing Commission, as compared with 23.8% in 1981.
- ❑ Only 18.7% of respondents indicated that their children were living with a carer who was buying or owned their home, showing little change from the 20.9% in 1981.
- ❑ 15% of respondents stated that their children had moved once since their imprisonment, as compared with 27% in 1981. 4.5% said their children had moved 2 or more times, compared with 18% in 1981.

¹ The wide difference here may (or may not) be due to the fact that 20% of the 1999 respondents did not answer this question.

Knowledge of Parent's Imprisonment

- ❑ Most children knew that their parents were in prison:
 - 67.5% of parents said that their children knew they were in prison, 67% in 1981
 - 17.5% of respondents claimed their children did not know they were in prison
 - 8.5% were unsure
 - For 5.5%, some of their children knew, while the others either didn't know or the respondent was unsure whether they knew
- ❑ Respondents gave various explanations for why the children did not know:
 - 15% said they were too young (e.g. "My son was 8 months when I came in so he doesn't understand.")
 - 4% told their children they were elsewhere (e.g. "My wife and I tell them Daddy is working.")
 - 5% either lost contact with their children or said that it had been the caregiver's decision not to tell the children they were in prison. (e.g. "My son's mother left me for my friend and I haven't been able to contact them.")
 - 2.5% had decided not to tell for various other reasons. (e.g. "So they are not looked down at school and other places.")

On Release of Parent

- ❑ Almost half (46.5%) the respondents intend to live with *all* their children on release, 4.5% with *some* of their children, and 14.5% with *none*.
- ❑ 17% of respondents thought they would need 'special help or support in adjusting to their children on release', 43% said they would not, and 18% were unsure.

Frequency of Visits

- ❑ Only 71% of prisoner-parents received visits from their children, compared with 60.2% in 1981. Of these:
 - Only 21.5% received weekly visits, with little change from the 23.8% in 1981
 - 14.5% received visits every 2 weeks, 10.2% did so in 1981
 - 13% were visited monthly, 5% every 2 months, 2% on school holidays only, 9.5% less often
- ❑ Only 27.5% thought the frequency of visits was sufficient, and even these were often qualified (e.g. "What you must also consider is that jail visits are boring for children.").

Person who Brought Children to Visit

- ❑ Of those who received visits, 46.5% said that the person who brought their children was the other parent, compared with 79.1% in 1981. 18.3% said that their children were brought by relatives, 6.8 in 1981.
- ❑ Only 6.3% of respondents who received visits said their children had been brought by an official or voluntary agency. This is an increase of merely 3.7% over 18 years! Taking a child to visit their parent is one of the most basic support mechanisms which can be offered by a government or non-government agency. In light of how many parents lose regular contact with their children *as a result of imprisonment*, this statistic can only reflect the NSW Government's persistent refusal to provide adequate funds or institutional structures to support children of prisoners.

Travel for Visiting

- ❑ Only half (50.7%) of those who received visits stated that their children were brought by private car, a statistic which has scarcely changed since 1981 which recorded 51.4%.
- ❑ 23.2% came by public transport, 16.2% by some combination of public transport, private car or taxi. Again the percentages in 1981 are very similar: 26.4% for public transport, and 13.5% for the combination.
- ❑ The NSW Government *continues* to place parents in jails which are long distances away from where their children live, making transport *still* the most cited obstacle to visiting.
 - More than half (53.7%) of those who received visits stated that their children had to travel 50 km or more to visit the jail
 - 26.7% had to travel 100 kms or more
 - 6.3% traveled between 200 and 500 kms, 7.7% traveled between 500 and 1600 km

Difficulties in Visiting

- ❑ The list of difficulties for children wanting to visit their parents in prison *still* require only genuine institutional reform and government assistance to be removed.¹ Whilst the statistics appear to show some improvement, this can provide no grounds for self-congratulation, given the 18 years it has taken to produce even these marginal changes.
 - 34.5% of prisoner-parents cited transport problems, 42.6% in 1981
 - 32.4% cited prison visiting restrictions, 59.5% in 1981
 - 31% cited money problems, 55.4% in 1981
 - 28.2% said that the prison environment was inappropriate for children, 23% in 1981
 - 16.9% said that the caregiver won't bring children more often, 13.5% in 1981
 - 13.4% said that the visiting hours were inconvenient, 20.3% in 1981
 - 13.4% stated that a Court Order prevents children from visiting more, 20.3% in 1981

¹ As the 1981 report stated: "Difficulties in visiting seem to originate mainly in the prison and welfare systems, rather than in personal factors such as conflict with the caregiver or in legal restrictions (court orders)." (Appendix, p. 8)

- 13.4% said that their children's ages make it difficult, 26.4% in 1981
- 10.6% said that there was no one to bring their children to visit, 10.1% in 1981
- 8.5% said that their children had been turned away at the jail gate, 22.3% in 1981
- ❑ Of those who said their kids were turned away at the jail gate, the following reasons were given:
 - 38.5% said that their children and/or caregiver had insufficient or no identification
 - 7.7% had had their permitted quota of visits
 - 7.7% said their kids were turned away because it was a public holiday
 - 15.4% cited administrative error (e.g. "They were told their father was in the wrong jail.")
 - 7.7% stated that their kids were told they were 'unavailable' (e.g. "Doing punishment in cell for defending myself.")
 - 15.4% did not know why their children were turned away

Non-Contact Visits

- ❑ The statistics show only a marginal decrease in children being forced to have 'box' visits with their parents (i.e. where a screen-barrier is placed between the parent and their child so they cannot have any physical contact):¹
 - Of those parents who received visits, 10.6% were forced to have some non-contact visits, as compared to 16.5% in 1981
 - Of those who were forced to have some non-contact visits, 53.3% had had no contact visits in the past 4 months, 33.3% had between 2 and 6 contact visits, and 13.3% had 7 or more

This is one of the most brutal forms of deprivation that can be inflicted on a child. Imagine what a small child must feel not being able to hug, kiss or even touch her parent. Yet, since first being alerted to the inhumanity of this practice 18 years ago and again in the 1997 report, there has been no serious policy change. Box visits continue to be used in most correctional centers in NSW. The official explanation for this cites the procedural inconvenience of alternatives and insufficient numbers of correctional staff to ensure the safety of the children.² Such 'obstacles' - easily removed by the provision of adequate facilities and funding - merely reflect a failure by the NSW Government to regard the interests of children as a priority, even in one of the most glaring instances of institutionally imposed suffering.

¹ Even this decrease may be due merely to the 1999 survey having limited access to maximum security jails, where non-contact visits are more likely to be used.

² The NSW Government's Response to the 1997 Report's recommendation that box visits be removed entirely was as follows: "Following a trial period at the John Morony Correctional Centre it is now standard procedure at that centre for children to be permitted to visit their imprisoned parent when their visitor parent has been placed on box visits. The child is taken to the doorway separating the visiting cubicles and the inmate is escorted to the same doorway. The child is then transferred to the inmate parent. The physical 'handover' of the child is made by the parents under the close supervision of officers. Such a procedure has not been introduced at any other correctional centre at this stage. Many 'box visits' consist of a screen placed between a number of inmates and the visitors wishing to visit those inmates. If the child is allowed behind the screen the child is in contact not only with his/her parent but also with other inmates. It is not always possible for staff to see what is going on behind the screen and to attend to their other duties during visits. Only when Corrective Services is sure that no child will be at risk will the Department expand the trial presently being conducted at John Morony Correctional Centre. Staff at John Morony Correctional Centre are currently exploring ways in which a visit by the children of an inmate could be made in a case where the child's parent is a banned visitor." (p. 13).

Contact Visits

- ❑ There was no significant change in number of hours permitted during any contact visit:
 - 49.3% stated that they were permitted 1 to 3 hrs per visit, 59.5% in 1981
 - 33.1% were permitted 4 or more hours, 15.5% in 1981
- ❑ Most children appeared to stay for as long as they were permitted or, as one prisoner-parent explained: "Till they either get tired or bored."
 - 51.4% stated that their children usually stayed for 1 to 3 hrs, 68.2% in 1981
 - 17.6% said that their children usually stayed for 4 or more hours, 9.6% in 1981

Visiting Conditions

- ❑ There was some improvement on whether prisoners could choose to sit inside or outside when their children came to visit:
 - 54.9% of prisoner-parents said they could choose, as compared with 21.6% in 1981
 - 12% said they could *sometimes* choose, 10.8% in 1981
- ❑ The majority of parents stated that the visiting areas are usually too crowded. The NSW Government, in not providing adequate facilities, thereby refuses to allow children to spend the few hours they have with their parents each week in a reasonably quiet, private and uncongested environment:
 - 55.6% stated that the visiting area is *usually* too crowded, 61.5% in 1981
 - 28.2% said that the area is *sometimes* too crowded, 17.6% in 1981
- ❑ The NSW Government prevents kids from bringing any toys inside the prison, and then either provides no toys or not enough to go around. It does not allow the prisoner-parent to give their children toys as presents. What little play equipment exists is sometimes unavailable or prohibited for older children, and there is not even enough room to run about safely.

It is not difficult to imagine why children might not be terribly enthusiastic about the idea of spending 2 or 3 hours on their weekends in a prison environment, sitting still in a chair, probably answering a barrage of questions from a dad or mum they rarely see, and, in some cases, hardly know.¹ What might have been a time children would look forward to, a time when seeing their parent would be associated with positive feelings and images, is instead tainted with boredom, frustration and anger.

But apparently the NSW Government thinks that depriving children of their parents at a crucial stage in their development is not punishment enough? It *also* forces them to maintain contact in an environment which is *least* likely to enhance or nurture the parent-child relationship² - a state of affairs which has not essentially changed in the past eighteen years:

¹ As one prisoner-parent stated: "All kids hate sitting in one spot and we as prisoners must sit in a certain spot at the table and not move."

² When published in 1998, the NSW Government Response promised various improvements to visiting areas. "The Visits Management Plan has resulted in significant improvements to the visiting facilities throughout the State. Corrective Services plans to establish a children's playroom with toys and a baby change area in every correctional centre. Of the 25 correctional centres in NSW, 23 currently have children's playrooms (either dedicated for the purpose or used for the purpose during visits) and 20 have at least a baby change table." According to the statistics above, this promise was either inadequate to the task or has yet to be fulfilled.

- 51.4% stated that their children do not have enough room to run about, 52% said the same in 1981. Some prisoner-parents in the 1999 survey explained that running would be too dangerous: “chairs are bolted down so when children run into chairs they are hurt”.
- 23.9% said that swings, climbing frames or toys were unavailable, 33.8% in 1981
- 17.6% said that swings, climbing frames or toys are *sometimes* unavailable (e.g. “There is a chalkboard for the kids, but no chalk”; “not suitable for young teens”; “one small slide for all the kids”; “very limited”; “not enough”).
- 2.1% said that children can bring their own toys into the jail, compared with 19.6% in 1981
- 5.6% said that children can *sometimes* bring their own toys into the jail, 15.5% in 1981. This was qualified: “If they bring anything in, it is put in a red bag and sealed until they leave.”
- 4.9% said they were allowed to hand their children presents, 9.5% in 1981
- 21.1% said they were *sometimes* allowed to hand their children presents, 12.8% in 1981. Again there were qualifications: “Only if you get their permission”; “only if it is approved by the reception room”, “under very special circumstances”.
- 62% said they are *never* allowed to hand their children presents, 71.6% in 1981
- ❑ The most significant change since 1981 is that, in most correctional centers, children can now buy snacks and drinks in the visiting areas. However, the only food available is ‘junk food’, e.g. chocolate bars and soft drinks. Many parents and caregivers cannot afford to purchase these snacks, and occasionally the dispenser is broken. Most children are still not allowed to bring food in with them, the only concession being milk for babies:
 - 86.6% stated that their children can buy drinks or snacks, compared with 35.8% in 1981
 - 6.3% stated that food or drink could be brought in, 20.9% in 1981
 - 2.1% stated that only milk can be brought in for babies, 2.7%
- ❑ There was little change in the attitude of some correctional officers to children:
 - 62% stated that their children have *never* been rudely treated or called to order by the custodian staff, compared with 56.1% in 1981
 - 29.6% said their children have *sometimes* been so treated, 23.6% in 1981
 - 3.5%, said their children had *often* been so treated, 6.1% in 1981
 - 2.1%, claimed their children had only been called to order ‘when they deserved it’, as compared with 7.4% in 1981

Day Leave

- ❑ Since 1981, the percentage of parents who are even *eligible* for day leave has decreased, and only a fraction of these actually *obtained* day leave. Of the 8 parents who applied for compassionate leave to see their kids, only 1 was granted. And only half the 40 parents who requested contact with their kids in an emergency were given permission. Of all the parents surveyed in 1999, only 4 were given the opportunity to support their children at sport or work outside the prison.

Hence, it appears that there has been no serious attempt by the NSW Government even to *explore* alternative means of nurturing the child-parent relationship outside the severe restrictions imposed by the prison environment.

- 81% were *not* eligible for day leave, compared with 69.9% in 1981
- 4.6% obtained day leave (most often monthly), 17.3% in 1981
- 2.6% spent all day with their children, 10.3% in 1981
- 5.2% applied for compassionate leave for reasons to do with their children, 21.8% in 1981. 0.7% had their application granted, 5.1% in 1981
- 26.1% requested contact in an emergency to do with their children, 29.5% in 1981. 13.7% had their requests granted, 17.9% in 1981
- 2.6% saw their children at sport or work activities outside the prison, 5.8% in 1981

Services used by Prisoner-parent or Carer

- ❑ Less than half of the prisoner-parents surveyed ever tried to get help or advice on family matters from government or voluntary services or agencies. Prisoner-parents' comments on these services (p. 42), suggest that this small percentage may be due to at least three main factors: (a) little or no information about the services, (b) inadequate funding for the number of children involved, or (b) incompetence and insensitivity on the part of the agencies:
- The main official agencies from which help was sought included Jail Welfare Officers or Psychologists (8.5%), Department of Community Services (DOCS) (9.5%), and Social Workers (6.5%)
- The main voluntary agencies included St. Vincent de Paul, Smith Family or Salvation Army (6.5%), Prisoner's Aid (3%), and Children of Prisoners Support Group (1%)

Children in Substitute Care

- ❑ In 1999, sixteen respondents (8% of the entire sample) said that their children (28 altogether) had been fostered, made Wards of the State, or put into children's homes. For half of the prisoner-parents, this occurred *after* the imprisonment.
- ❑ In 1981, those whose children had been taken into substitute care *since* their imprisonment were significantly disadvantaged (e.g. not knowing about their rights) compared with those who had lost guardianship *before* being imprisoned. Surprisingly, this was not the case in 1999. Nevertheless, the statistics are highly disturbing. Far too many parents – whether inside prison or out - are disadvantaged by a lack of information, resources or understanding.

Those who lost custody of their children after imprisonment were:

- more likely to have known that their children had gone before a court (50% vs. 31.3%). In 1981 the ratio was 50% vs. 87.5%
 - more likely to have known of their right to be present at the court hearing (37.5% vs. 31.3%). The ratio in 1981 was 25% vs. 35.7%
 - more likely to have been present at the court hearing (37.5% vs. 25%), compared with 7.1% vs. 62.5% in 1981
 - more likely to have had a lawyer (31.3% vs. 18.8%), compared with 21.4% vs. 50% in 1981
 - less likely to be satisfied with the care their children were receiving (12.5 vs. 18.8), which matches the ratio of 21.4% vs. 37.5% in 1981
 - more likely to know so little about their children's current situation that they could not assess the quality of their care (37.5% vs. 25%), also matching the ratio of 57.1% vs. 25% in 1981
- ☐ Most children had been either made Wards of the Minister for the Department of Community Services (12 children) or committed to the care of a private person (7). This was also the case in 1981 (except, of course, that DOCS was called 'Youth and Community Services').
 - ☐ In 1999, the status of one child out of the 28 was unknown by its parent, as compared to one child in five in 1981.

METHODOLOGY

Summary

A questionnaire was distributed to prisoners with children under 16 years of age, and who were in regular contact with the parent before their imprisonment. Assistance was provided to the prisoner in completing the questionnaire either on a one-to-one basis or in group sessions. This assistance was provided by either the Chief Investigator, COPS staff members, or other individuals who had ready access to prisoners (e.g. welfare officers, psychologists, education officers).

The questionnaire was identical to that used in 1981 for the *Children of Imprisoned Parents* report, issued in 1982 by the Family and Children's Services Agency, Ministry of Youth and Community Services of New South Wales. The questionnaire was therefore designed to gather data which would provide a detailed comparison with the 1981 report. (A copy of the 1999 questionnaire is located at the end of this report).

The data gathered from the questionnaires has been analysed and presented in the form of percentages in tables identical to those in the 1981 report, except that the 1981 and the 1999 figures are presented side by side (see 'Results').

Number and Characteristics of Participants

The survey set out to include as many participants as there were prisoner-parents in NSW prisons who could be identified, who consented to participate, and to whom this project could gain access within the limited time-frame available and the restrictions set by the Department of Corrections. As intended, this survey approximated the number of questionnaires returned in the 1981 study (i.e. 1999: 200, 1981: 244).

Only three characteristics were a pre-requisite for each participant included in this study:

1. Being a prisoner in NSW, whether sentenced or on remand.
2. Being the parent of a child under 16 years of age.
3. Being in regular contact with their child prior to imprisonment.

For the purposes of this survey, participants were *not* selected on the basis of their security classification, the security classification of the correctional centre in which they are held, their legal status, the type of sentence they are serving, or their offence(s)/charge(s).

New South Wales Correctional Centres included in the Sample

1. Emu Plains Correctional Centre
2. Industrial and Training Centre, Long Bay
3. John Moroney Correctional Centre
4. Lithgow Correctional Centre
5. Metropolitan Reception and Remand Centre
6. Mulawa Correctional Centre
7. Parklea Correctional Centre
8. Silverwater Correctional Centre

These correctional centres was selected on the following grounds:

- They approximate the number, type and location of the correctional centers covered by the 1981 survey. (An approximation is necessary as several Centres in the 1981 sample no longer exist or have been amalgamated).
- Together, these Centres enabled the survey to cover the widest possible range of variables possible within the project's limited time-frame and resources.

The project gained permission to distribute the questionnaire at five other Correctional Centers: Goulbourn, Bathurst, Grafton, Cessnock, and Paramatta. Unfortunately, the Chief Researcher did not have sufficient funds or time to visit these Centers in person. Following telephone conversations with the governors and/or program managers at Grafton and Cessnock, it was agreed that questionnaire forms could be mailed to the Centers, and that these would be distributed to prisoners who indicated an interest in participating and then mailed back to the Chief Researcher. Unfortunately, no forms from either Center were ever returned.

Identification and Recruitment of Participants

Participants were identified and recruited by three means:

1. A flyer was placed on notice boards in prisons to notify inmates of the survey, and to request that they contact their welfare officer if they wish to participate.
2. Children of Prisoners' Support Group staff invited inmates with whom they had contact to participate in the survey.
3. Welfare officers and program managers were informed of the survey and invited to ask relevant inmates to participate either individually or in group sessions.
4. An invitation was put out over the Public Address system, notifying the general prison population that a researcher would be in a certain room in 10-20 minutes distributing questionnaires to prisoners with children, and that anyone wishing to participate should present themselves at the room in question.
5. The Chief Researcher, accompanied by a welfare officer or assistant, visited each 'pod' or cell division within a Correctional Center and invited individual prisoners to fill out the survey, which were then collected after approx. 20-30 minutes. This turned out to be the most successful approach to identifying and recruiting participants.

Selection of the Investigatory Population and the Sample Size

The **selection** of the investigatory population was justified on the following grounds

1. The perception of the prisoner-parents is an essential component in determining the needs and circumstances of their children.
2. For comparative purposes, the investigatory population needed to have the same selection characteristics as that used in the 1981 survey.

The **sample size** of the investigatory population was justified on the following grounds:

1. The survey method used set out to draw general conclusions from a representative sample base. The ideal sample population for this purpose consists of the widest possible range of characteristics relevant to the conclusions drawn. Unfortunately, it could not be determined whether the participants would have (many of) these specific characteristics in advance. However, the likelihood of obtaining a representative sample would be raised as the sample size increased. Hence the project sought to obtain as many completed questionnaires as possible within its limitations of time and resources.

2. For comparative purposes, the investigatory population needed to have a similar sample size to that used in the 1981 survey, which yielded a return of 244 usable questionnaires. This project achieved its aim in yielding a return of 200 usable questionnaires.

The Methods of Investigation used with the Participants.

Questionnaires were handed out by the Chief Researcher or research assistants (e.g. COPSG staff members, welfare officers) to prisoner-parents either:

1. in a class room setting. The questionnaire would be distributed as prisoners arrived in the allocated room and collected upon their completion by the CR or research assistant.
2. in the 'pod' or cell divisions. The CR or research assistant approached individual prisoners in their cells or common areas, explained the purpose of the questionnaire and invited them to fill in the form, to be collected in approx. 20-30 mins.
3. in a one-to-one interview setting. Where literacy skills were a problem, the CR or research assistant would ask the inmate the questions on the form and write down the prisoner's reply. Despite a warning from several officials that literacy would be the main obstacle for a written survey, only six of the 200 completed surveys required this form of assistance.

Incentives Offered to the Participants to Participate.

Inmates were told only that the survey would:

1. help the Children of Prisoners' Support Group to identify and meet their needs and the needs of children of prisoners, and
2. raise awareness in schools and the wider community about issues which they and their children face.

No material or financial incentive was offered.

Data Storage and Handling

Upon completion, each questionnaire was collected by the CR or the research assistant and immediately placed in an envelope. The questionnaires did not contain the name or any other identifying number or characteristic of the inmate. Signed consent forms were not attached to or placed in the same envelope as the completed questionnaires.

The questionnaires were stored in a locked location in either the Children of Prisoners' Support Group office, or the private home of the CR. During the study, statistical information was stored in the private computer of the CR.

The questionnaires were shredded at the conclusion of the study.

Ethical Considerations

It was acknowledged that the questionnaire was likely to uncover a number of distressing issues for prisoner-parents. Persons who administered the questionnaire were therefore be instructed to be sensitive to the prisoner's emotional or psychological condition, and either to assist the inmate in their professional capacity or make a relevant referral.

It was also acknowledged that the project might instill in the participants the perception that completing the survey would bring about some degree of improvement to their situation, or the situation of their children. Persons who administered the questionnaire were therefore instructed to refrain from making any concrete 'guarantees' or promises that positive changes would result from the project.

Finally, it was recognized that some of the information provided by the prisoners in the questionnaire could be, in some way, used against them or their children. Persons who administered the questionnaire were therefore instructed to treat the contents of each completed questionnaire as highly confidential: that is, the information therein was, under no circumstances, to be disseminated without the informed consent of the inmate. (see Instructions for Administrators, p. 80)

Informed Consent

The person who administered the questionnaire explained the nature and purpose of the survey immediately prior to administering the questionnaire. This person also acted as a witness to the participant's written consent (see Consent Form, p. 78-79).

No information recorded by prisoner-parents has been used for any purpose other than in this report. Anything written on the questionnaires which could be used to identify the prisoner-parent or anyone connected to them (names of children, family members, places, and so on) has been removed.

RESULTS

TABLE 1A. AGE

	1981	1999
AVERAGE AGE	30.9	31
OLDEST RESPONDENT	61	53
YOUNGEST RESPONDENT	18	18

TABLE 2. GENDER

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
MALE	215	88.1	144	72
FEMALE	27	11.1	56	28
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 3. COUNTRY OF BIRTH

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
AUSTRALIA	196	80.3	155	77.5
NEW ZEALAND	6	2.5	10	5
UNITED KINGDOM	10	4.1	5	2.5
GERMANY	1	0.4	2	1
GREECE	2	0.8	1	0.5
ITALY	1	0.4	1	0.5
NETHERLANDS	3	1.2	0	0
YUGOSLAVIA	6	2.5	1	0.5
OTHER EUROPE	2	0.8	2	1
AMERICA (North or South)	1	0.4	3	1.5
ASIA	1	0.4	6	3
PACIFIC ISLANDS	na	na	4	2
MIDDLE EAST	8	3.3	1	0.5
NOT STATED	7	2.9	9	4.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 1B. AGE (1999)

AGE	No.
18	2
19	4
20	5
21	4
22	4
23	8
24	11
25	12
26	11
27	8
28	13
29	15
30	16
31	9
32	14
33	4
34	7
35	5
36	9
37	8
38	9
39	4
40	2
41	1
42	2
43	1
46	3
47	1
48	2
49	1
50	2
53	1

TABLE 4. ABORIGINALITY

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
ABORIGINAL	18	7.4	44	22
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER	na ¹	na	2	1
NEITHER	226	92.6	104	52
NOT STATED	na	na	50	25
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 5. CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
MARRIED	82	33.6	28	14
DE FACTO	67	27.5	88	44
DIVORCED OR SEPARATED	65	26.6	20	10
SINGLE	7.8	3.2	56	28
WIDOWED	9	3.7	6	3
NOT STATED	na	na	2	1
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 6. SINGLE PARENT STATUS PRIOR TO IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
SINGLE PARENT	33	13.5	49	24.5
NOT SINGLE PARENT	211	86.5	145	72.5
NOT STATED	na	na	6	3
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 7A. CHANGES TO MARITAL STATUS SINCE IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
MARRIED OR NEW RELATIONSHIP	13	5.3	5	2
RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN	22	9	21	10.5
PARTNER DIED	3	1.2	na	na
DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT (UNSPECIFIED)	10	4.1	na	na
NO CHANGE OR NOT STATED	196	80.3	174	87
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

¹ The 1981 report did not ask whether participants were Torres Strait Islanders.

TABLE 7B. PRISONER-PARENTS' DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE (1999 only)

Relationship Breakdown		10. Mediation resulted in the relationship working for period - in jail also	17. De facto also in jail
1. Wife placed AVO on me and said we were finished		11. I was in a De facto relationship but due to my 3 yr sentence she left me and moved to Victoria	18. She wanted a break
2. Fiancée left me when I came to jail		12. I was de facto when imprisoned and since then the relationship deteriorated	19. Became single through out my sentence
3. Moved on		13. We've split up	20. Was De facto - split up over my prison incarceration
4. We were just fixing our difficulties.		14. Separated from De facto	21. Separated
5. Separated		15. She didn't wait for me	
6. Divorced while serving sentence		16. My de facto left me after 5 yrs together when I became imprisoned. (Female)	Married or New Relationship
7. We were going out for 2 yrs			1. About to get married.
8. She left me because I come back to jail.			2. Have a girlfriend
9. Separated now			3. De facto
			4. De facto (Female)
			5. De facto (Female)

TABLE 8. SENTENCED / ON REMAND

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
SENTENCED	233	95.5	170	85
ON REMAND	8	3.3	26	13
NOT STATED	3	1.2	4	2
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 9. SENTENCE

SENTENCE (YRS)	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	14	5.7	51	25.5
1 to 2	13	5.3	37	18.5
2 to 5	50	20.5	40	20
5 to 7	33	13.5	17	8.5
7 to 10	24	9.8	11	5.5
10 to 15	25	10.2	5	2.5
15+	26	10.7	3	1.5
BREACH OF PAROLE	13	5.3	0	0
LIFE / GOVERNOR'S PLEASURE	21	8.6	1	0.5
ON REMAND	8	3.3	26	13
NOT STATED	25	10.2	9	4.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 10. NON-PAROLE PERIOD

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	61	25	4	2
1 to 2	30	12.3	10	5
2 to 5	54	22.1	16	8
5 to 7	17	7	6	3
7 to 10	12	4.9	0	0
10 to 15	6	2.5	4	2
BREACH OF PAROLE	13	5.3	0	0
LIFE / GOVERNOR'S PLEASURE	21	8.6	1	0.5
NOT APPLICABLE OR NOT STATED	30	12.3	159	79.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 11. SENTENCE SERVED

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	na	na	135	67
1 to 2	162	66.4	32	16
2 to 5	na	na	24	12
5 to 7	na	na	3	1.5
7 to 10	na	na	2	1
10 to 15	na	na	0	0
NOT STATED	na	na	4	2
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 12. CLASSIFICATION

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
MALE INMATES				
MAXIMUM SECURITY (A)	104	42.6	12	6
MEDIUM SECURITY (B)	30	12.3	5	2.5
MINIMUM SECURITY (C)	87	35.7	114	57
FEMALE INMATES¹				
CATEGORY 1	na	na	6	3
CATEGORY 2	na	na	43	21.5
CATEGORY 3	na	na	5	2.5
CATEGORY 4	na	na	1	0.5
CATEGORY 5	na	na	0	0
ALL (ESCAPE)				
E1	na	na	5	2.5
E2	na	na	2	1
NOT STATED	23	9.4	14	7
TOTAL:	244	100	207 ²	100

¹ The 1981 report did not record female or escape classifications as they were non-existent at the time.

² Total is 207 as the E classification is given in *addition* to the other classifications.

TABLE 13. JAILS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
CENTRAL INDUSTRIAL PRISON	27	11.1	na	na
CESSNOCK	47	19.3	na	na
EMU PLAINS (MOTHER & CHILD UNIT)	na	na	4	2
EMU PLAINS CC	na	na	13	6.5
GOULBURN	27	11.1	na	na
JOHN MORONEY	na	na	20	10
LITHGOW	na	na	4	2
LONG BAY INDUSTRIAL TRAINING CENTER	na	na	42	21
M.R.R.C	na	na	11	5.5
MALABAR TRAINING CENTRE	29	11.9	na	na
METROPOLITAN RECEPTION PRISON	20	8.2	na	na
METROPOLITAN REMAND CENTRE	2	0.8	na	na
MULAWA	23	9.4	39	19.5
NORMA PARKER CENTRE	4	1.6	na	na
PARKLEA	na	na	10	5
PARRAMATTA	35	14.3	na	na
SILVERWATER	8	3.3	56	28
SPECIAL CARE	4	1.6	na	na
OTHER	5	2	na	na
NOT STATED	13	5.3	1	1.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 14. JAIL TRANSFERS SINCE IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
NO MOVEMENTS	61	25	85 ¹	42.5
MORE THAN 1 JAIL	160	65.6	89	44.5
BETWEEN 4 to 8 JAILS	23	9.4	26	13
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 15. NUMBER OF CHILDREN

	1981		1999	
	No. Prisoners	%	No. Prisoners	%
1	109	44.7	83	41.5
2	80	32.8	50	25
3 to 4	44	18	57	28.5
5+	10	4.1	8	4
NOT STATED	1	0.4	2	1
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

¹ This number is calculated on the assumption that participants who did not write an answer to this question had not moved. But it is likely that some (perhaps many) participants did not wish to respond to the question.

TABLE 16. CHILDREN'S AGES

Age (yrs)	1981		1999	
	No. Children	%	No. Children	%
0 to 2	53	11.3	37	8.7
2 to 5	131	27.9	141	33.3
6 to 9	156	33.3	126	29.7
10 to 13	89	19	86	20.3
14+	36	7.7	34	8
NOT STATED	4	0.9	0	0
TOTAL:	469	100	424	100

TABLE 17. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF SIBLINGS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
TOGETHER	208	85.2	141	70.5
DIFFERENT PLACES	32	13.1	41	20.5
NOT STATED	4	1.6	18	9
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 18. LIVING WITH CHILDREN BEFORE IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
ALL OR SOME	186	76.2	147	73.5
NONE ¹	51	20.9	50	25
NO ANSWER	4	1.6	3	1.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 19. REGULAR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
ALL	112	45.9	98	48.5
SOME	33	5.3	32	16
NONE	92	37.7	61	30.5
NO ANSWER	7	2.9	9	5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

¹ This number may include some whose children were born since they were imprisoned.

TABLE 20. WHEN PRISONER LOST REGULAR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
SINCE IMPRISONMENT	98	78.4	65	70
BEFORE IMPRISONMENT	14	11.2	14	15
NO ANSWER	13	10.4	14	15
TOTAL:	125 ¹	100	93	100

TABLE 21. CHILDREN'S CAREGIVERS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
OTHER PARENT	328	69.9	234	54.9
RELATIVE	48	10.2	100	23.5
FRIEND	5	1.1	6	1.4
FOSTER HOME	8	1.7	10	2.3
ADOPTED	3	0.6	0	0
RESIDENTIAL HOME	14	3	2	0.5
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION	5	1.1	0	0
OTHER	13	2.8	0	0
NOT STATED / DOESN'T KNOW	45	9.6	74	17.4
TOTAL:	469	100	426	100

TABLE 22. CAREGIVERS' MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
GOVERNMENT PENSION OR BENEFIT	123	50.4	97	47.5
OTHER	51	20.9	39	19.1
DON'T KNOW, NOT STATED OR NOT APPLICABLE ²	70	28.7	68 ³	33.3
TOTAL:	244	100	200 ⁴	100

¹ The 1981 report calculates the data as follows: "Of the one hundred and twelve who did not see all their children regularly and who answered the question about when contact was lost, ninety eight (87.5%) reported that it was only since being imprisoned that they had not seen their children." Since, according to Table 25, there were 125 who did not see all their children regularly, I have assumed that the figure of 112 includes only those out of the 125 who answered the question about when contact was lost. I then calculate the percentages out of 125, not 112 as the 1981 report does above.

² Not applicable since children are institutionalised.

³ Four inmates in this sum were caring for their own children in the Emu Plains Mothers and Babies Unit.

⁴ The figures above add up to 204 because the children of four inmates had at least 2 carers with different sources of income. (The percentages are out of 204.)

TABLE 23. INFORMAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDCARE MADE WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES (NOT OTHER PARENT)

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
MADE	24	9.8	22	10.9
NOT MADE ¹	na	na	58	28.9
NOT STATED	na	na	121	60.2
TOTAL:	244		201 ²	100

TABLE 24. SOURCE OF INCOME OF CAREGIVERS (i.e. FRIENDS OR RELATIVES)

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
WAGES	14	58.3	5	19.2
UNEMPLOYMENT OR DISABILITY PENSION	5	20.8	7	26.9
OTHER PENSION	na	na	6	23.1
CHILD SUPPORT	na	na	3	11.5
FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCE	na	na	0	0
DON'T KNOW	na	na	4	15.4
NOT STATED	5	20.8	1	3.8
TOTAL:	24	100	22 ³	100

TABLE 25. NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAREGIVERS SINCE IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
1 to 2	18	7.4	9	4.5
3 +	3	1.2	5	2.5
NO CHANGE	203	83.2	139	69.5
DON'T KNOW ⁴	na	na	7	3.5
NOT STATED	na	na	40	20
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

¹ The 'not made' and 'notstated' stats was not recorded in the 1981 report.

² The figures above add up to 201 due to one inmate who made informal arrangements for one child, but not for the other. (The percentages are out of 201.)

³ The figures above do not up to 26 as some caregivers were on two or more sources of income, or some children had two or more caregivers on different sources of income. (The percentages are out of 26.)

⁴ Not recorded in the 1981 report.

TABLE 26. PRISONER-PARENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CAREGIVERS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
GET ON WELL	171	70.1	127	63.5
DIFFICULTIES	26	10.7	30	15
NO CONTACT WITH CHILDREN OR NO REPLY	47	19.3	43	21.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 27. CHILDREN'S CURRENT ACCOMODATION

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
RENTED PRIVATELY	64	26.2	47	23.2
RENTED FROM HOUSING COMMISSION	58	23.8	61	30
OWNED OR BUYING HOME	51	20.9	38	18.7
GROUP HOME OR INSTITUTION	na	na	4	2
DON'T KNOW	na	na	12	5.9
NOT STATED	na	na	41	20.2
TOTAL:	244	100	203 ¹	100

TABLE 28. NO. OF HOMES CHILDREN HAVE LIVED IN SINCE IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
2+	44	18	9	4.5
1	66	27	30	15
NONE	92	37.7	na	na
DON'T KNOW / NO ANSWER	42	17.2	161	80.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 29. WHETHER CHILDREN KNOW ABOUT PARENT'S IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
YES	148	60.7	135	67.5
NO	63	25.8	35	17.5
UNSURE	31	12.7	17	8.5
YES / NO / UNSURE ²	na	na ³	11	5.5
NO ANSWER	2	0.8	2	1
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

¹ The figures above add up to 203 due to three inmates who indicated a different kind of house for two different caregivers. (The percentages are out of 203.)

² For the same inmate, some children know, while the rest either don't know or the inmate is unsure whether they know.

³ Not recorded in the 1981 survey.

TABLE 30A. REASONS FOR CHILDREN'S NOT KNOWING ABOUT IMPRISONMENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
TOO YOUNG	40	16.4	30	15
TOLD PARENT WAS ELSEWHERE	na	na	8	4
LOST CONTACT / CAREGIVER'S DECISION	14	5.7	5.7	5
PRISONER'S DECISION	13	5.3	5	2.5
NO ANSWER / NO EXPLANATION	177 ¹	72.5	147	73.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 30B. COMMENTS ON WHY CHILDREN DID NOT KNOW**'Too Young'**

1. They are very young
2. Too young to know any different, which is good, I think
3. Haven't told them - too young
4. 3 year old too young
5. Because of his age
6. My son was 8 months when I came in so he doesn't understand
7. Youngest doesn't understand
8. Not old enough to understand
9. My son is 2 1/2 roughly and knows that I am unable to come home for a while, but doesn't understand exactly what jail is.
10. She doesn't understand yet: still a baby.
11. I don't know if the oldest understands where it is that she comes to see me.

'Parent Is Elsewhere'

1. My wife and I tell them daddy is working.
2. He thinks I'm in a big school : uniform - green.
3. They think I'm at work
4. He thinks I'm away working.
5. May sort of know, but at first they thought I was on holidays
6. He thinks I'm in hospital
7. She thinks I'm at work. When she comes to visit I tell her I will finish work soon

'Lost Contact Or Caregiver's Decision'

1. My daughter lives with grandparents, and they told her I've just run off.
2. My sons (11,10) are with my ex. I don't know where they are or what they have been told.
3. She's not in my custody
4. Her father doesn't want her to know.
5. They are in DOCS care with aboriginal foster family.
6. Don't know what her mother tells her.
7. My husband chose not to tell them
8. My son's mother left me for my friend and I haven't been able to contact them
9. No contact with them
10. The mother doesn't want to tell him

'Prisoner's Decision'

1. For the simple reason that it could affect my baby, and I don't think baby needs to know yet.
2. So they are not looked down at school and other places.
3. Too young and I don't want to tell him.
4. Because they don't need to know that
5. Because I want to wait till sentence; then if I get a couple of years, I'll tell him

¹ This figure is not given in the 1981 report; however, no other explanations are provided.

TABLE 31. INTENTION TO LIVE WITH THEIR CHILDREN ON RELEASE

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
WITH	134	54.9	93	46.5
APART	28	11.5	29	14.5
WITH SOME	11	4.5	9	4.5
DON'T KNOW / NO ANSWER / NO CONTACT	71	29.1	69	34.5
Total:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 32. PARENT NEEDS SPECIAL HELP OR SUPPORT IN ADJUSTING TO CHILDREN ON RELEASE

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
YES	40	16.4	34	17
NO	204 ¹	83.6	87	43.5
UNSURE	na	na	36	18
NO ANSWER	na	na	43	21.5
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

TABLE 33: FREQUENCY OF VISITS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
WEEKLY	58	23.8	43	21.5
EVERY 2 WEEKS	25	10.2	29	14.5
MONTHLY	23	9.4	26	13
EVERY 2 MONTHS	10	4.1	10	5
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS ONLY	9	3.7	4	2
LESS OFTEN	22	9	19	9.5
DIFFERENT FOR EACH CHILD OF SAME INMATE	na	na	11	5.5
NO VISITS ²	96	39.3	58	29
NOT STATED	1	0.4	0	0
TOTAL:	244	100	200	100

The remainder of the description of visits and the calculation of percentages is based only on those 148 (1981) and 142 (1999) respondents who - according to table 33 - received them.

¹ This figure not explicitly given in 1981 report.

² It is assumed in the 1981 report that no answer to this question on the frequency of visits indicated that the respondent had NO visits. For consistency, the 1999 report has made the same assumption. The 1981 report includes one 'Not Stated' respondent, presumably because this individual went on to answer the remaining questions on visitation. No individuals did so in the 1999 report.

TABLE 34A. PERSON WHO BROUGHT CHILDREN TO VISIT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
OTHER PARENT ¹	117	79.1	66	46.5
RELATIVE	10	6.8	26	18.3
FRIEND	5	3.4	1	0.7
OFFICIAL OR VOLUNTARY AGENCY	3 ²	2	9	6.3
COMBINATIONS	0	0	15	10.6
NOT STATED	13	8.8	25	10.6
TOTAL:	148	100	142	100

TABLE 34B: DETAILS OF PERSONS WHO BROUGHT CHILDREN TO VISIT

OTHER PARENT	No.	RELATIVE	No.	OFFICIAL AGENCY	No.
MOTHER	38	GRANDPARENTS	2	DOCS	4
FATHER	1	GRANDMOTHER	10	COPSG	3
WIFE	9	GRANDFATHER	2	WELFARE WORKER	1
EX-WIFE	1	AUNT (on inmates side)	6	FOSTER PARENT	1
DE FACTO	11	UNCLE (on inmates side)	2	TOTAL:	9
EX-DE FACTO	2	MOTHER IN LAW	1		
GIRLFRIEND	2	ELDER BROTHER OF CHILD	1		
FIANCEE	2	RELATIVES (unspecified)	2		
TOTAL:	66	TOTAL:	26		

TABLE 34B (Continued)

COMBINATIONS ³			
FATHER / GRANDPARENTS	2	GRANDMOTHER / GREAT GRANDMOTHER / AUNTY / UNCLE	1
MOTHER / GRANDMOTHER	2	CARER TO GATE, OTHER PARENT BRINGS THEM IN	1
FAMILY / GRANDPARENTS	1	DE FACTO / EX-GIRLFRIEND	1
AUNT / GRANDMOTHER	2	PRISONERS' AID / COPSG	1
AUNT / GRANDPARENTS	1	TOTAL:	15
UNCLE / COPSG	1		
MOTHER / DOCS or Welfare	2		

¹ For the 1999 survey, this figure includes not only persons explicitly designated as 'mother/father' but also 'de facto', 'ex-de facto', 'wife', and 'ex-wife', 'girlfriend', 'ex-girlfriend', 'fiancee'—since these persons are more likely than not to also be parents of the children. More detail is given in Table 35B.

² At least 19 children were in the care of such agencies.

³ Each mention of an individual or agency in this section has NOT been incorporated into the figures in the other sections in this table.

TABLE 35. FREQUENCY OF VISITS CONSIDERED SUFFICIENT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
YES	23	15.5	39	27.5
NO	110	74.3	80	56.3
YES & NO ¹	0	0	2	1.4
NO ANSWER	15	10.1	21	14.8
TOTAL:	148	100	121	100

TABLE 36. DISTANCE CHILDREN TRAVELLED TO VISIT

	1981 (miles)		1999 (kms)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Miles ('81) Kms ('99)				
3- 20 ²	61	41.2	48	33.8
21- 50	28	18.9	28	19.7
51-100	14	9.5	16	11.3
101-200	18	12.2	18	12.7
201-500	4	2.7	9	6.3
501-1600	15	10.1	11	7.7
NOT STATED	8	5.4	12	8.5
TOTAL:	148	100	142	100

TABLE 37. METHOD OF TRAVEL TO VISIT JAIL

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
PRIVATE CAR	76	51.4	72	50.7
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	39	26.4	33	23.2
PUBLIC TRANSPORT & PRIVATE CAR OR TAXI	20	13.5	23	16.2
TAXI ALONE	7	4.7	0	0
PLANE	3	2	1	0.7
NOT STATED	3	2	13	9.2
TOTAL:	148	100	142	100

¹ The most likely reason for indicating both is best captured by the following explanation given by one inmate: "Y (I don't like my daughter coming here), N (but I miss her)."

² The shortest distance traveled was 3 miles (no child lived within walking distance of the prison); the longest was 1,600 miles.

TABLE 38A. DIFFICULTIES IN VISITING¹

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
Transport problems	63	42.6	49	34.5
Prison visiting restrictions	88	59.5	46	32.4
Prisoner doesn't want children in prison environment too much	34	23	40	28.2
Money problems	82	55.4	31	21.8
Other difficulties	27	18.2	29	20.4
Caregiver won't bring children more often	20	13.5	24	16.9
Children's ages make it difficult	39	26.4	19	13.4
Visiting hours inconvenient	30	20.3	19	13.4
No one to bring children	15	10.1	15	10.6
Children turned away at the jail gate	33	22.3	12	8.5
Court order says children can't visit more	4	2.7	3	2.1
No problems	0	0	3	2.1

TABLE 38B. COMMENTS AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. "Because the mother doesn't want to come out." | 15. "Crowded, not enough room to play with my daughter." |
| 2. "They start to cry when it's time to go." | 16. "School, as my child attends a special school 3 days a week - 1 day is Monday (i.e. visiting day at the jail)." |
| 3. "DOCS is preventing more contact. If she could she would be here every week (daughter)." | 17. "Their ages and they don't understand." |
| 4. "Also because my grandmother can't go anywhere without the machines she's on to keep her alive." | 18. "When it is raining my daughter will get soaked coming here and that's when I know no one will come." |
| 5. "She always cries, saying that she does not want me to work any more." | 19. "Mum of children works on weekends and has to have a day off work to come." |
| 6. "Going through a stage where he finds it difficult to visit in a prison environment." | 20. "Too confined on visits; not enough to do with your kids." |
| 7. "Happy with the current arrangements." | 21. "No visits during the week." |
| 8. "Mother charged me with rape and I have no rights." | 22. "Any excuse you can possibly in your wildest dreams come up with." |
| 9. "The dogs [prison officers] keep urinating on me by putting me on box visits." | 23. "Rainy days/cold days as I would hate for my son to get sick coming out to see me." |
| 10. "Don't wish him to be devastated more than he already is." | 24. "They are in SA." |
| 11. "It really isn't the best of places to bring your children." | 25. "Too far away." |
| 12. "My son lives with my parents in Melbourne. They need to travel from Melbourne and find accommodation while in Sydney, so it is difficult." | 26. "Their father has AIDS and can't get them here." |
| 13. "Wife's mother is selfish with the children." | 27. "We live in Maroubra and our family lives on the central coast and Wollongong." |
| 14. "My 18 month old comes once a month for 1 hour but I'd like to see her more." | 28. "When they go home I miss them." |
| | 29. "My daughter has been searched and been refused to bring in any little thing she wants to show me." |

¹ Percentages add to more than 100, as respondents could give more than one answer.

TABLE 39. REASONS FOR TURNING AWAY CHILDEN AT JAIL GATE

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	%	%
Insufficient or no identification	na	na	5	38.5
Administrative error	2	6.1	2 ^(a)	15.4
Do not know	5	15.2	2 ^(b)	15.4
Prisoner's unavailability	2	6.1	1 ^(c)	7.7
Administrative problem	na	na	1 ^(d)	7.7
Prisoner had permitted quota of visits	10	30.3	1	7.7
Public holiday	1	3	1	7.7
Bad weather conditions and inadequate facilities	3	9.1	0	0
Prison officers on strike	2	6.1	0	0
Visiting facilities full	2	6.1	0	0
Change of visiting criteria	1	3	0	0
Child told that parent was too dangerous	1	3	0	0
TOTAL:	33	100	13	100

TABLE 40. CONTACT VISITS

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
ALL CONTACT VISITS	118	79.7	126	88.7
SOME NON-CONTACT VISITS	24	16.2	15	10.6
NO ANSWER	6	4.1	1	0.7
TOTAL:	148	100	142	100

TABLE 41. NON-CONTACT VISITS FOR PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS

	1981		1999	
	No. since Aug '81	%	No. since June '99	%
NON-CONTACT VISITS	6	25	8	53.3
BETWEEN 2 AND 6	7	29.2	5	33.3
7 OR MORE	5	20.8	2	13.3
TOTAL:	24 ¹	100	15	100

TABLE 42. PERMITTED HOURS PER CONTACT VISIT

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
1-3 PERMITTED	88	59.5	70	49.3
4 OR MORE PERMITTED	23	15.5	47	33.1
NO ANSWER	37	25	25	17.6
TOTAL:	148	100	142	100

^(a) Examples: "Officer told them I was on boxed visits which I wasn't". "They were told their father was in the wrong jail". "Going on escort after she had rung and they said I was NOT on escort."

^(b) Example: "My wife was strip searched by two male officers, then had to wait for 4.5 hrs, only to be turned away."

^(c) "Doing punishment in cell for defending myself."

^(d) "Governor would not allow the visit as my children's visit form had not yet been approved."

¹ Those whose visits were not all contact visits. The average number of non-contact visits this group reported receiving over the 3 month period was four.

TABLE 43. USUAL HOURS PER CONTACT VISIT

HOURS	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
1-3 USUAL	101	68.2	73	51.4
4 OR MORE USUAL	14	9.5	25	17.6
NO ANSWER	33	22.3	44 ¹	31
TOTAL:	148	100	142	100

TABLE 44. VISITING CONDITIONS²

Hours	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
Inmates can choose whether to sit inside or outside during visit	32	21.6	78	54.9
Inmates can <i>sometimes</i> choose whether to sit inside or outside	16	10.8	17	12
Visiting area is <i>usually</i> too crowded	91	61.5	79	55.6
Visiting area is <i>sometimes</i> too crowded	26	17.6	40	28.2
Children do not have enough room to run about	77	52	73 ^(a)	51.4
Swings, climbing frames or toys are unavailable	50	33.8	34 ^(b)	23.9
Swings, climbing frames or toys are <i>sometimes</i> unavailable	na	na	25	17.6
Inmates are not permitted to use swings, climbing frames or toys with children	14	9.5	0 ³	0
Children can buy drinks or snacks	53	35.8	123 ^(c)	86.6
Food or drink can be brought in by the children	31	20.9	9 ^(d)	6.3
Food or drink can <i>sometimes</i> be brought in by the children	4	2.7	3 ^(e)	2.1
Children can bring their own toys into the jail	29	19.6	3 ^(f)	2.1
Children can <i>sometimes</i> bring their own toys into the jail	23	15.5	8	5.6
Inmates are allowed to hand their children presents	14	9.5	7	4.9
Inmates are <i>sometimes</i> allowed to hand their children presents	19	12.8	30 ^(g)	21.1
Inmates are <i>never</i> allowed to hand their children presents	106	71.6	88	62
Children have never been rudely treated or called to order by the custodian staff	83	56.1	88 ^(h)	62
Children have <i>sometimes</i> been so treated	35	23.6	42	29.6
Children had <i>often</i> been so treated	9	6.1	5	3.5
Children had only been so treated when they deserved it	11	7.4	3	2.1

¹ One answer was: "Till child either gets tired or bored."

² Total percentages add to more than 100, as respondents could give more than one answer.

(a) "Chairs are bolted down so when children run into chairs they are hurt"; "Too dangerous."

(b) "There is a chalkboard for the kids, but no chalk"; "no swings"; "they have a TV with videos", "there is a bird in cage outside jail"; "no swings, no toys"; "not suitable for young teens"; "very few"; "not for older kids"; "one small slide for all the kids"; "not much!"; "not for teenagers"; "very limited"; "only toys"; "not adequate enough"; "not enough".

³ This question was (unintentionally) omitted from the 1999 survey.

(c) "Because have no money"; "kids are too young"; "when machine is working", "the prices are too dear".

(d) "Not allowed. That's bad for a low security jail."

(e) "If a baby", "Only milk bottle for baby", "milk".

(f) "If they bring anything in, it is put in a red bag and sealed until they leave."

(g) "Only if you get their permission"; "only if it is approved by the reception room", "have to put in application"; "under very special circumstances"; "no provisions to purchase any".

(h) One prisoner wrote: "only by other kids".

TABLE 45. CONTACT WITH CHILDREN WHILE ON LEAVE¹

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
Eligible for day leave	39	25	13	8.5
Not eligible	109	69.9	124	81
Don't know	na	na	16	10.5
Intend to apply for day leave	na	na	56	36.6
Do not intend to apply	na	na	45	29.4
Don't know	na	na	17	11.1
Not stated	na	na	26	17
Applied for day leave, but knocked back	na	na	10	6.5
Obtained day leave (most often monthly)	27	17.3	7	4.6
Number of applications made before obtaining day leave	na	na	7 (obtained first time they applied)	4.6
Saw their children while on day leave	24	15.4	4 (2 of the 7 didn't answer this question)	2.6
Spent all day with their children	16	10.3	4	2.6
Applied for compassionate leave for reasons to do with their children	34	21.8	8	5.2
Applications granted	8	5.1	1	0.7
Requests for contact in an emergency to do with their children	46	29.5	40	26.1
Requests granted	28	17.9	21	13.7
Saw their children at sport or work activities outside the prison, most often fortnightly.	9	5.8	4 (how often not stated for any)	2.6

TABLE 46A. SERVICES USED BY INMATE OR CARER²

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
Youth and Community Services / DOCS	48	19.7	19	9.5
Jail Welfare / Psychologist	49	20.1	17	8.5
Social Workers	28	11.5	13	6.5
St. Vincent de Paul, Smith Family or Salvation Army	27	11.1	13	6.5
Community Health Centre	19	7.8	8	4
Prisoners' Aid	19	7.8	6	3
Church Groups	16	6.6	6	3
Marriage Counselling	12	4.9	5	2.5
Montrose: other child abuse	2	0.8	0	0
Other	14	5.7	7	3.5
Total no. who used services	96	39.3	94	47

TABLE 46B. OTHER (1999)

	NO.	%
Ombudsman	1	0.5
COPSG	2	1
Aboriginal Media Service	1	0.5
Family support	1	0.5
Chaplain	1	0.5
Children Service	1	0.5

¹ The percentages are based on 156 (1981) and 153 (1999) respondents who completed the question on leave. Note also that the total percentages add to more than 100, as respondents could give more than one answer.

² Percentages are based on 244 / 200 inmates surveyed. Note also that percentages do not add to 100, as respondents may have used no services, or more than one.

TABLE 47A. USEFULNESS OF SERVICES (1981 ONLY)¹

Service	1981	
	No.	%
Helpful	14	19.7
Some were useful	3	4.2
None useful	18	25.4
Staff don't care about the needs of prisoners' families	8	11.3
Tried to be helpful but were ineffective	6	8.5
Most were not useful	6	8.5
Not yet seen any result from the agency	5	7
Services are prevented by their structure from being useful	3	4.2
Most do not make themselves known or available to prisoners	3	4.2
Operations are too short and/or inefficient	2	2.8
Do not give enough information	2	2.8
Do more harm than good	1	1.4
Total:	71	100

TABLE 47B. USEFULNESS OF SERVICES (1999 ONLY)

	Least	Most
Service	No.	No.
Prisoners' Aid	na	3
Jail Welfare/Psychologist	2	2
Social Workers	1	3
DOCS	5	3
St. Vincent de Paul, Smith Family or Salvation Army	1	3
Other	0	2
COPSG	0	1
Psychologist	0	1
Neither	2	0
Same	1	0

¹ The 1981 Report states that, in addition to the above, "users of services were asked to name the most and least useful agencies they had approached. Most, having used none or only one were unable to reply. The most outstanding result was that of the eighteen respondents who specified a 'least useful' service, seven (38.9%) designated the Department of Youth and Community Services." (p.)

TABLE 47C. COMMENTS ON USEFULNESS OF SERVICES (1999 ONLY)

-
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "DOCS are trying to justify their jobs and destroy kid's lives and emotions, DOCS will get their day. DOGS!" 2. "Not very helpful when you need them." 3. "Help us more, because we need help. More contact with services is needed." 4. "Should be more of them [i.e. services]. Should be easier to access. COPSG took 2 months before they came to see me." 5. "The DOCS are a government team of liars licenced to tell lies about how we lost our children." 6. "Welfare in jail has helped me a lot, they're there to talk and help if they can." 7. "St. Vincent de Paul and family support have been very helpful. DOCS are rude and tell lies." 8. "To get us visits with the kid's own mums if they are in jail too. More visits so we can see them both." 9. "I lost my home last year when I came to prison. I was homeless when released and had full custody of three children. I have no family and could get no help. DOCS then took my children but gave me no help." 10. "Children of Prisoners do need funding and help. They are a very lovely organization that do help us inmates as best they can." 11. "More help for welfare to assist Canberra prisoners in NSW gaols." 12. "Child welfare are appalling and obstructive and provocative." | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. "Men can get badly treated when it comes to the children's custody issue." 14. "Shut down DOCS." 15. "I would cut off my arm just to see my son for a day." 16. "I know the mother of my child does need help in her every day living." 17. "Keep up the good work Children of Prisoners." 18. "They are powerless without the mother's cooperation. Without money, I am powerless to proceed in regards to gaining access to my babies - and everyone supports the mum, because she has the kids 'obviously'." 19. "Excellent (St. Vincent De Paul)." 20. "I have tried all services but all have said this is a family (private) matter and so not their jurisdiction; so they have given me no help." 21. "None positive." 22. "Disgusting." 23. "Good and helpful." 24. "Wake up to themselves and listen and put me on the phone to talk." 25. "Both services [Prisoner's Aid and Children of Prisoners] gave professional assistance when needed equally even though Children of Prisoners couldn't give subsidies such as food vouchers, etc." 26. "All have no funds, no cooperation with mother, no visit with children." 27. "My de facto didn't want anything to do with jail welfare." |
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TABLE 48. FAMILIES THAT LOST CONTACT ¹

	1981		1999	
Characteristics of inmates without contact (WS) as compared to total sample (TS)	% WS (=19)	% TS (=244)	% WS (=12)	% TS (=200)
Maximum security	63.2	42.6	8.3 (1)	6
Single parents	42.1	7.8	41.7 (5)	24.5
Divorced or separated	42.1	26.65	2	10
Currently married	10.5	33.6	0	14
Change in marital status since imprisonment	31.6	19.7	2	13
Relationship breakdown since imprisonment	26.3	9	1	10.5
Prison had destructive effect on relationship (unspecified)	5.3	4.1	0	na
Lived with all or some their children before imprisonment	57.9	76.2	9	73.5
Lived with none of them	42.1	20.9	4	25
Lost contact with children since imprisonment	52.6	78.4	11	70
Not their decision to cease seeing their children.	89.5	na	10	na
Had tried to see the children	68.4	na	8	na
Had written to them	21	na.	7	na.
Telephone contact	10.5	na	5	na
Received letters from their children	0	na	4	na
Did not know who was currently caring for their children	57.9	9.6	2	na
Planned to try to contact them on release	68.4	na	12	na
TOTAL:	19	244	12	200

TABLE 49A. CHILDREN PLACED IN SUBSTITUTE CARE

	1981		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
Child put into home, fostered or made a ward <i>before</i> parent was imprisoned	10	41.7	6	3
<i>After</i> parent was imprisoned	14	58.3	8 ^(a)	4
Some before, some after	na	na	2	1
Number of children put into substitute care either before or after imprisonment	39	8.3 (out of 469)	28	6.6 (out of 424)

¹ These were classified in the 1981 report as "respondents who were receiving no visits from their children and described themselves as knowing nothing about their children's situations at the time of the survey. A few of these respondents had made phone calls to their children, but it was clear that all intimate contact between them had ceased." (Appendix, p. 13)

^(a) One female inmate commented: "My new baby will go into care if I can't have it at Emu Plains".

TABLE 49B. CHILDREN IN SUBSTITUTE CARE: BEFORE vs. AFTER PRISON

	<i>Before Prison</i>				<i>After Prison</i>			
	1981		1999		1981		1999	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
These children went to a court		87.5	5	31.3		50	8	50
Parent knew they had the right to be present at the court hearing		35.7	5	31.3		25	6	37.5
Parent was at the hearing.		37.5	4	25		7.1	6	37.5
Parent had a lawyer for themselves		50	3	18.8		21.4	5	31.3
Child is a Ward of the Minister of DOCS			7	43.8			5	31.3
Committed to the care of a church or a charitable agency			0	0			0	0
Committed to the care of a person			1	6.3			6	37.5
Don't know			0	0			1	6.3
Official of DOCS has explained to the parent what is happening to their children and what they will have to do to get them back			2	12.5			1	6.3
Parent feels they understand it all properly			2	12.5			3	18.8
Parent thinks they had enough say in decisions made about their children			2	12.5			0	0
The person or institution looking after the children keeps in regular contact with parent about how their children are			1	6.3			2	12.5
Parent is satisfied with how their children are being cared for		37.5	3	18.8		21.4	2	12.5
Parent doesn't know enough to say how their children are being cared for		25	4	25		57.1	6	37.5
Parent wants to live with their children when they get out			5	31.3			10	62.5
Parent doesn't know enough to say whether they want to live with their children when they get out			2	12.5			0	0
Parent is worried that they might not get the kids returned to their care			5	31.3			8	

TABLE 49C. EXPLANATIONS FOR CONCERN ABOUT RE-GAINING CUSTODY

1. "DOCS seem to have their sway and don't want them returned to us."	10. "As they are in care for 2 yrs so father and myself can prove ourselves."
2. "If the kids decide to stay with me that's ok - if they decide to stay with their mother that's ok too."	11. "Welfare has been lying and cheating and acting unlawfully."
3. "Because of my past crimes which caused imprisonment."	12. "My son might not know me or he might believe what he has been told and hate me. Family court will fail again."
4. "My wife's mother has them and she's very selfish with us seeing the children."	13. "Because I've never had DOCS involved with my family."
5. "I've got nowhere to go."	14. "Because of my record in prison."
6. "I would love to have my son full time but I can't live with the mother under the same roof."	15. "DOCS has him."
7. "Because of my crime I have committed."	16. "I would love to live with my children though I am separated and it will be a different living arrangement."
8. "Because I am homeless."	17. "Because their mum needs to know that my heart is for her and the children so please help her."
9. "Because I've been on drugs and I have to find a permanent residence."	

TABLE 50. RESIDENCE PRIOR TO IMPRISONMENT (1999 ONLY)

	1999				
TOWN / SUBURB	No.				
ALEXANDRIA	1	FORBES	1	PRESTONS	1
AMBARVALE	1	GEORGES HALL	1	PUNCHBOWL	1
APPIN	1	GLEBE	3	QLD	2
ASHFIELD/ROCKDALE	1	GOSFORD	2	QUEANBEYAN	1
BANKSTOWN	2	GREENDALE	1	RAYMOND TERRACE	1
BATHURST	1	HORNSBY-SURREY HILLS	1	REDFERN	3
BEACONSFIELD	1	KARIONG	2	REVESBY	1
BLACKTOWN	1	KARUAH	1	RIVERWOOD	1
BLUE MOUNTAINS	1	KIAMA	1	ROCKDALE	1
BONDI BEACH	2	KING'S CROSS	2	SHANE PARK	1
BONNY RIGG	1	KINGSGROVE	1	SPAIN	1
BONNYRIGG	1	KINGSTON, CANBERRA	1	ST CLAIR	2
BOSSLEY PARK	1	KINGSWOOD PENRITH	1	ST JOHN PARK	2
BRUNSWICK HEAD	1	LAKE MUNMORAH	1	ST MARYS	2
CABRAMATTA	2	LIDCOMBE	1	STRATHFIELD	1
CAMPBELLTOWN	2	LIVERPOOL	7	SURRY HILLS	2
CANLY VALE, ORANGE	1	MACQUARIE FIELDS	1	SUTHERLAND	1
CARLINGFORD	1	MAITLAND	1	SYDNEY	4
CASULA	1	MAROUBRA	2	TELOPEA	2
CENTRAL COAST	4	MARRICKVILLE	1	THE ENTRANCE, CENTRAL COAST	1
CHESTER HILL	1	MARYLANDS	1	TOONGABBIE	1
COFFS HARBOUR	1	MASCOT	1	TURKEY	1
CONNAMBLE	1	MELBOURNE	1	UMINA	1
COOGEE	1	MERRYLANDS	1	WAHROONGA	1
CORRIMAL	1	MILLER	1	WANDERING WA	1
COWRA AND CANBERRA	1	MINTO	2	WARILLA	1
CROKAN NSW	1	MT DRUITT	8	WARWICK FARM	1
CRONULLA	1	MT PRITCHARD	1	WATERLOO	1
DAPTO	1	MUDGEES	1	WESTMEAD	1
DARLINGHURST	1	MUSWELLBROOK	1	WILLOUGHBY	1
DEAN PARK	1	NARRANDRA	1	WINDALE	1
DENISTONE EAST	1	NELSON BAY	1	WINDSOR	2
DOONSIDE	5	NEWCASTLE	6	WOLLONGONG	5
DUBBO	2	NEWTOWN	1	WOY WOY	1
DULWICH HILL	1	NORMANHURST	1	NOT STATED	19
EMU PLAINS	1	NORTH AVOCA	1	TOTAL	200
ERKINESVILLE	2	NOWRA	4		
FAIRFIELD	5	NSW	1		
FAIRFIELD WEST	1	NUNDAH, QLD	1		
FIVE DOCK	1	PARAHN, VICTORIA	1		
		PARAMATTA	1		
		PENRITH	5		

PRISONER-PARENTS COMMENTS

THE CURRENT SITUATION

1. "Children live with mother and grandfather. They are all treated fine & well. Grandfather is often sick, so it is hard to see my children that's all. I am so far away from my children. I wanted to stay at Grafton gaol but was told I couldn't, so now we aren't close enough for visits."
2. His mother has a Housing Commission place and he lives with her. I have sent her money to help him and her have a more comfortable living."
3. "Son does not get on with the Stepfather. He also became a parent himself at age 15½. When he found out child was not his and could not approach them he did a runner. I am very worried about him as he is not very streetwise."
4. "My children are living with their father until I get out in December this year."
5. "My children live with their father and grandmother. They will be travelling over to see me at Christmas time and, all going well, my youngest will be staying with me."
6. "Son lives with father and has regular contact with my de facto and his paternal grandparents. Has a lot of emotional support. Doing as well as can be expected."
7. "They live with my parents. They are attending school and day care. They know that I am in jail, but my mother refuses to let them see me even though I have legal access on weekends. I really miss them and want to see them."
8. "My 8 year old daughter is now being treated by a psychiatrist for the trauma of me being taken away from her. My 11 year old son now lives with his father but is unhappy; and my 6 year old daughter cannot understand that she isn't allowed to stay with me."
9. "My 14½ month old daughter is living with my mother who is 70 yrs of age. I feel I'm losing my bond with her as she hardly sees me. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THAT BOND, she's my only child."
10. "I came down here from Qld after living up there for 6 years to find a job and got arrested for the balance of my P-D-C and I'm now doing 10 months. Since I've been in custody my de facto has not written any letters to me. I've got some info from my eldest son."
11. "My children live with in-laws, but they don't bring them. It's not good. They should be here every week, and DOCS don't care. They should help us. More so for the kids. They suffer more, not us; and you can't change what DOCS do. My kids are mentally f_____d up thanks to DOCS."
12. "My middle child is well cared for by my mother and he is going good. My other 2 are with their (in my opinion) unstable mother. She is constantly moving, as she does not pay rent or the bills. I lost contact with these children two months ago."
13. "My eldest daughter is getting into a lot of trouble at school. She frets for me to be home with all of them, and my son doesn't understand why his dad can't come home with them when it's time to go."
14. "I feel distant with him every time I ring him. I feel prison has disconnected us from each other."
15. "All my children are living in Spain. I really miss them so much, and I need to give them a good future."
16. "I'm divorced, but I have two daughters living with their mother. One is 23 and the other is 15. My other daughter who is 22 is living with her boyfriend and their two young kids, ages 5

and 2 yrs old. I have a girlfriend who is 8 months pregnant and due to have her baby next month. I will take full responsibility for her and her baby's well being."

17. "My two girls are living with my wife (mother) who is living at her mother's. They are sleeping on the floor and my wife's mum sleeps on the lounge. My wife and I have been waiting for housing for the last 3yrs. They don't think we meet immediate housing requirements. The tension is high with my wife and her mum and it is not the right environment for the children to be in. Especially being cooped up in a room most of the day, unless they go out shopping, or to a park for a walk. My wife is doing the best she can with the conditions she is under."
18. "I know that she lives with her mother and her boyfriend. I haven't seen her for about six years because her mother caused trouble for me when I was seeing her on an access visit. But I also did the wrong thing by fighting with her boyfriend, which never helped much with me having access to see her. But I plan on taking her back to court when I get out."
19. "They are living with a lovely Mother and being well looked after. I'm glad they're with their mum because I wouldn't want it any other way."
20. "They go to school and live with their mum as far as I know."
21. "When I was sentenced to jail, I had custody of my son. Now that I'm in jail, his so-called mother is supposed to be looking after him. But she gave him up to me before I came to jail, because she had no time for him whatsoever. All that selfish bitch (excuse the French) had time for was shooting up, the lowlife piece of trash. So when I was sentenced, my parents were looking after my son for about a month. Then she came back and took him off them. So now I don't know the whereabouts of my son, or if he is being cared for, because she couldn't care for him before. All she cares about is her bad habits."
22. "I'm upset about the whole situation. I just want to see them before I get out because I miss them and love them."
23. "My daughter is with her mother interstate and they are moving here so we can sort out our relationship and so my daughter can meet me. I last saw her or was with her when she was 1. She is now 7½. When they are here, I'll phone daily and get visits weekly."
24. "I would like to know how they are and where they are living, like any parent would."
25. "Well, my kids sleep with their mother at my friend's home till I get out."
26. "Our children are being slowly taken; their minds are being turned against us as they live with my wife's mother. She rarely drops the children over to us and is always buying them gifts. Children naturally look to the people who buy these gifts and have more respect for the buyer of these gifts. My wife knows she's lost them to her mother but she doesn't realize she is losing them as far as respect goes."
27. "Before I came to jail, my 2 boys and I were very close, closer than their mother. My younger boy who is 3 cries for me on average once a week and gives his mum a hard time. My 9 year old knows I'm here and I just keep telling them I'll be home soon, which is untrue. Their behaviour is a little bit out of control with their mum as she works all the time and can't do the things I used to do with them. I know they miss me so much and I just have to hang in there for them. I always try and have little gifts for them when they see me, but it is hard to do so I often can't."
28. "Children have a very good mother, but she doing it hard financially."
29. "Shit happens and it's my fault through drugs."
30. "My oldest son's mother didn't keep in contact and just vanished. My oldest girl has been taken into DOCS care because of what has happened to her mother."
31. "He lives with my de facto girlfriend and is getting all the proper care that he needs. I will be living with them when I get out."

32. "Eldest Child - I know nothing about what's happening now. Youngest child - he's with his mother and her new bloke in Victoria, and doing fine."
33. "This has happened because her mother feels I don't have any right to be involved in her life as I am only her father and didn't give birth to her."
34. "Since I have been in jail I do know that the mother is finding it hard to survive outside and my little girl has been missing school. My de facto has to pay \$200 a week plus pay electricity and buy food. I know it's because I'm in here and I cannot help her with any of the bills. I'm finding it hard to relax in here, it is making my jail very hard. If possible I would like to talk to someone about this situation."
35. "They are being looked after by their mother."
36. "My son is fine. Started going to day care this year 3 times a week."
37. "Since my wife has been incarcerated for not completing 200 hrs community service, my children have been with her mother. She's a good lady and tries hard. But we still have trouble coping. It's like the loss of a hand."
38. "Since I came into jail, my son went to live with my parents. He is going to school near their house and next year he begins secondary college. His studies and his life were interrupted by my problems, but he has gotten over this. With my parent's love and care he has established a new life there while waiting for me and I am proud of him. He comes up to see me with my parents when they can (every 3-4 months). I ring them on the phone every day, so I stay in touch with him that way. When I go home in 10 months we will start our life over together, he and I."
39. "My children are looked after by their uncle. However they lack the of support of parents as my wife passed away years ago."
40. "My son and new-born girl live with their mother and are well looked after by their mother. But it's hard to visit because the bus drops them right down the bottom of road. If it rains they won't come out."
41. "I think that my daughter is well looked after."
42. "My son lives with his mother and her de facto. He is a happy kid and loves me heaps. It is hard for them to visit as the bus drops them off on Sunnyside Rd and it is a 20-30min walk from the road to the prison. My ex-wife would bring him more if transport was easier. Also all kids hate sitting in one spot and we as prisoners must sit in a certain spot at the table and not move."
43. "My son is with my ex-girlfriend. He goes to school and writes to me regularly. He is 3 yrs old. The other 2 children go to school and live with my de facto's mother as she is currently in jail. They write as well and one is 3, the other is 7."
44. "My 16 yr old has started an apprenticeship as a mechanic. My 6 yr old is going to a Catholic school, but has to go to hospital a lot."
45. "I separated from my wife 5 yrs ago. In that time, she at first didn't let me see my son. Now it's been better as we have started talking again. In the last 2 yrs I've been able to see my son on a regular basis. Now I'm in gaol, I haven't told him that, but I ring him every week and tell him I'm away working. My ex-wife and I are communicating good now and when I get out, if I stay off the drugs, she says I can see him full-time. That would be good. I look forward to that."
46. "They are staying with their mother, my wife. There is very little available money for anything as the house payments take most of the income."
47. "My child is being looked after by her mother."
48. "It upsets me that I can't see them, as the youngest one does not know who I am. I was very close to the girls and I worry what they are being told about me, and why they can't see me."

49. "They are going to school. Their friends don't know that I'm in jail. My wife told them not to tell anyone where I am. I'm not happy about that, but my wife says it is better for them not to tell. They are getting out of control not listening to their mother. They keep saying that they're proud of me being in jail. The oldest is not doing too good at school."
50. "My children are 4 and 5yrs old - girl and boy. They live with their mother and a bloke. She refuses to let me see the kids, basically because she can. She was visiting me with all the kids, step-kids and my kids. Then she met this bloke. Since then my solicitor has written to her to no avail. The chaplain, my mother - No response. The rights of my babies are ignored and so are mine. Their mother receives welfare and lives in a Housing Commission and gets my money and money from the father of the other kids - but neither of us see our kids. They take our tax cheque for her to gamble, and the kids are baby-sat by their older sister who plays the part of parent to my young babies. I have no idea if they are alive."
51. "The kids are in good health, residing with their mother."
52. "My daughter lives with her grandparents. As we never got on, they have taken court action to stopping her visiting me. They've told her I've gone away and won't be back for a long time. My daughter was 6 when I came in and will be 10 when I get out, which is a long time. And I'm afraid she won't want to see me when I get out. My son lives with my sister as my ex turned to working at 'the Cross' when I came in; and as she is a heroin addict, I didn't trust her with my son. So my sister agreed to get temporary custody of him till I get out and get back on my feet. But as he was only 8 months when I came in, I'm afraid he won't know who I am. I don't see him very much as my sister has other kids. The main thing is he's happy and safe."
53. "My 2 children are living with my mother. One goes to high school. They are going all right."
54. "My Daughter, is living in WA with my De Facto. I don't get visits from them. It's too far to come and stay for them. I feel sad that I don't get to see her grow. I talk to her as much as I can. I intend to make up for lost time with her."
55. "He has no idea what I'm doing here and when I get out. His mother is trying the best she can to raise him by herself."
56. "It's very frustrating because you don't know how they are and if everything is all right with them."
57. "My son was taken away from his mother when I was in jail because they said that his mother wasn't looking after him. But that's a lie as far as I know."
58. "I know nothing about my sons. My daughter and I are just re-gaining regular contact after years in country gaols with practically no contact. I am hoping to have an influence in her life. She is 9 years old and one of the strongest people I know."
59. "Well, I know where my children are at all times because they're with their mother. But I cannot be there for them because of the wrong that I've done."
60. "I feel wronged by the Family Court. I feel discriminated against as a father. I have burned for my family, but I am ash now. I cannot burn any longer. 50% of jail inmates have family problems. I have been given 10 years for merely threatening my wife in order to gain access. By court order, I should have access to my 14 yr old daughter every 2 weeks. But my ex-wife refuses to bring the child to visit, and has threatened any of my family or friends who would do so instead. The court has failed to uphold the order, it has not forced my ex- wife to bring my child to visit, and it has not punished her for anything. I now have no money for a solicitor to appeal my case, and Legal Aid is not available for this kind of case. So I am helpless."
61. "My children are with their father who has AIDS. He is usually not well enough to travel from the central coast to visit with the kids. I have only had full contact with my younger kids for the last 6 months and I am very distressed at the thought of not being able to see them."

62. "My child is currently living with my de facto's mum. His mum is elderly and can't travel as my daughter is only 3 yrs old."
63. "My 18yr old son is looking after my 3 children. He is applying for custody of the middle 2, as their father is going to try and take them."
64. "I only see my 2 yr son VERY rarely, maybe every 3 weeks due to laziness. My other 3 children, not at all. The father couldn't be bothered bringing them in due to being lazy."
65. "She is living with her alcoholic father."
66. "My son is living with his great grandmother who also raised me from the age of 3 yrs. Not that we didn't have contact with my mother as both my son and myself spent all the time we wanted with my mother. But, as a young mum, I chose to live with my grandmother and raise my only son. My son has always lived with my great grandmother whilst I've been in custody. This was his choice, but it was not that he didn't care for my mum as we were all very, very close. But now all he has is me and his great grandmother as I lost my mum to a house fire 1 yr ago, which broke all our hearts and souls - especially mine, my son's and our grandmother's."
67. "They're being well looked after by my parents. I have no reason to be worried about their welfare."
68. "They're living with their maternal grandmother. The 6 yr old girl goes to school. The 2 yr old girl goes 3 times a week to pre school while the 15 month old goes twice a week."
69. "I have one child who lives with the mother, and contact is good. I also have two children with a second mother, but we have no contact at all."
70. "Daughter is in welfare guardianship. They are oppressive and ignore the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Legal Aid do not fund child welfare concerns. Prisoners with family problems have little or no help with oppressive government depts., especially if their children are in another State."
71. "She's staying with her mother and her husband in a flat. I know she will be starting high school next year. She is a happy child but I know that her feelings toward me have changed a little."
72. "I broke off my relationship with my child's mother. I told her that I was applying for full custody and had a case to put before the courts. Two days later she went to police and complained that I had raped her four times: three in 97 one in 99. Also the first alleged rape was one month before she even moved into my home and around 3 months before the child was conceived. We planned the child also. I was charged and put in gaol. Because of my gaol history I'm getting refused bail. I don't know where my child is and even if I did I have no legal rights or way of finding her."
73. "I don't see my kids, but I see my daughter on the outside. I have access to her for about 8 weeks of the year; 2 weeks at a time. But I haven't had the money in the last two years since I have been married. I wish her mother would put in an effort to send stuff from my daughter to me, because I send letters."
74. "My wife is dead and I pleaded guilty to manslaughter. The crown accepted my plea in 1993 but then cheated. It has taken all this time in court action to restore that plea and it is still continuing. The family court gave custody to my wife's sister and will not decide access to anyone from my family until the criminal court decides my future. I am in the middle of an appeal against the family court's hesitation for 7 years. The children should be the only priority and my son has a right to know his father. Remand should not be a guilty verdict. The Family Court is wrong, if you can help me it would help. I have no solicitor and I fight only for my son's sake."
75. "My daughter is with my de facto wife (mother). She attends pre-school and is happy to attend. My family consists only of myself, my de facto and my daughter. We are a very close and tight family unit. My prison time is done much easier knowing that my daughter is with her mother in a safe, secure family / home environment."

76. "Problems with the kids' mother, she made my access NEAR IMPOSSIBLE."
77. "My son is being very well taken care of by their mother (my wife that is) and my mother."
78. "Jail has taken away my visiting with them as I usually see them on weekends when I am out."
79. "My grandkids live with their mother and father and my son and 2 daughters."
80. "They live with their mum and see me as often as possible."
81. "My son is living with his mother and her new boyfriend, which she has a little girl by too. He is always well looked after and cared for by both my family and hers. The only thing I hate is that her new man is my ex-best mate (they got together last time I was in gaol). But other than that he looks after my son well and my son likes him, so I guess that is all that counts hey?"
82. "The 10 yr old's mum took off with her while I was serving 4 yrs. Her sister put it on me when I got out, and stupid me could not refuse her offer. To cut this story short, my daughter's mum found my wallet and some clothes in her sister's bedroom. My 2 yr old, is now in SA with her mum. I was arrested one week after I sent them to Adelaide. My wife is from PNG and does not know anybody here. After I did not turn up at the airport, I have not seen her since. I don't know if she thinks I'm in jail or I left her."
83. "My children are looked after extremely well. They are fed, clothed and have a good home. They always go to school and compete in sports. They do their home-work and so on. I cannot complain as my kids are definitely looked after perfectly well and always have been. Thank you."
84. "One is with my fiancée's mum and the other with his sister."
85. "My children are with their grandmother wondering when I am coming home. Grandmother gave up her two jobs to look after my children."
86. "My 3 yr old daughter lives with her grandparents. My 10 yr old son had been with my mother, then went to his father's to live. But his father and wife decided they no longer wanted him to live there as he was being violent. I feel pain for my son as he is now staying with my cousin's until he can be placed in foster care. It scares me to think what kind of emotional affect this is having on him. My life as a child was also the same. So, to me, it is like the cycle is happening again and I don't have input to change this."
87. "Well, I lost my children 2½ yrs ago from domestic violence and have suffered ever since. So have they. I've been in and out of jail ever since. I feel very bad for the things I've done since being separated. My children still love and want to be with me very much. I'm lost and would sincerely be willing and hopefully able to get them back. But as far as their living goes, they always come to me well presented. I love them and miss them very much and am not complete without them."
88. "My baby is with my mother."
89. "I am not happy because I would like to see my kids more often than I am allowed to."
90. "My daughter is living with my mum and dad. My sister and her son go to pre-school 3 days a week. I have a box visit on weekends and all day visits on Mondays. These all day visits have been happening for the past 4 years. I believe that long-term mothers should have an overnight program within the maximum security jail system so that the children understand that their mums are still their mums. My daughter was snuck into my cell on an all-day visit. You couldn't pay with a toy for the look on her face to see I had photos of her everywhere. All she wanted to do was lay in her mum's bed. She had not understood where I lived until that day. I beg you to at least think about this for long-term mothers."
91. "Prefer not to know, and only keep a positive outlook."
92. "I don't know anything about my son. My daughter attends pre-school 3 days a week. There are 3 other children in the family."
93. "Going to school and being good. Need help for their mother."

94. "Since I came to gaol, my ex-wife moved and took my daughter with her. My daughter was 6 months old when I got locked up. She is 4 in February and I haven't had a photo, phone call - all up nothing - coming in."
95. "Living with wife in good environment. Don't have any problem with wife and child."
96. "Living with their mother and happy - no problems."
97. "He lives with my parent in America and I call and talk to him every week."
98. "All are doing well"
99. "They are doing all right together with their mother. But my kids told me they miss their dad (me)!"
100. "Kids are at home with mother/s. Going well at the moment."
101. "Two of my kids are with my grandmother because I have custody and their mother is not allowed to have contact with them. My youngest son is with his mother (my de facto) and he visits regularly."
102. "My son is living with his mother and she is living with her mother. Her family is very supportive of her. We are still together and she visits whenever she can."
103. "Lives with her mother, my ex-girlfriend. She had an AVO on me for five years. My daughter comes with my mum to visit."
104. "My children are scared and worried for me in jail. They miss me a lot. One of my children is uncomfortable with the jail and doesn't want to visit. They constantly ask how much longer. They want to see me more but they have school."
105. "My children are well looked after. I have no worries, but wish I could be with them. Also my mother needs me to help her with my children. My mother has a child of her own. But while I'm in here my mother will bring my children to visit me. Always I have no problem with my kids. Their father is helping while not working."
106. "My wife has left me for another man. I don't know whether he lives with them. I am very, very concerned about their welfare. I love my children so much and when I get released from jail I will be there to see them and be with them again."
107. "My wife was raped by my f-wit brother and sister's husband and she is too scared to say anything to the police. They have been taking pictures of her and selling them to picture magazines and people mags and 'Rosie' mags. She needs to know that I know what happened several years ago and I'm sorry for this. The law will take care of it if she just speaks out. I'm frightened for their safety and she doesn't have to do it any more because I know the truth and I will always love her just like the day I laid my eyes on her. My heart is breaking in here. Please help her God. GET THEM TO A SAFE PLACE. PLEASE HELP HER GET AWAY FROM THEM. PLEASE. THEY ARE ANIMALS. SAVE MY FAMILY PLEASE."

PRISON VISITING ARRANGEMENTS

1. "I should be in a prison which is closer to where they live, for the children's sake. They miss their father. It is very expensive to call."
2. "We need a proper playing area, suitable things to play with, longer hours, and a room where we can play with them."
3. "What is needed is for me to get a job on the outside and spend more time at home with my son and wife."
4. "Children over the age of 14 years can be responsible. If they could make their own arrangements to visit mothers or fathers on any given day and not just on set visiting days this may help them."
5. "To be able to have kids come from interstate as much as possible."
6. "More visits e.g. weekend and special days."
7. "To have more contact where possible, not just on weekends. For people who live a great distance away, financial support to help children visit."
8. "Arrangements are OK."
9. "I think that when you have legal access the person who has custody shouldn't be able to stop you from seeing the children"
10. "To be with children as often as wanted."
11. "I would like to see the children on visiting day a lot more."
12. "They should be allowed to visit every day, all day if the child doesn't go to school."
13. "Would like more visits during week, but we don't have enough money for transport even if it were allowed."
14. "I feel that in my case, Prisoners Aid has been very helpful in helping me access the kids. The problem is the distance traveled to pick them up and drop them home. The jail makes every effort to accommodate these visits."
15. "With regard to the signing out of toys or anything else which you have made for your visitors, instead of making them pick it up when they leave, you should be able to hand it to them in person."
16. "Nothing."
17. "DOCS bring my 18 month old daughter out once a month. My 12 yr old is brought out when possible by my mother or sister once or twice a month."
18. "Mid-week visits during school holidays with our children only. More play equipment such as footballs, basketballs & hoops. Video's playing non-stop during visit."
19. "The father's right to have his children live with him (as with the Mothers and Child Unit) should be upheld (e.g. fathers could live with partners to care for child). This would: (a) give mothers more support and help, i.e., to drop kids off for the weekend; (b) give fathers incentive to take responsibility for children and decrease recidivism."
20. "More time on visits, more toys for the kids. The screws [prison officers] to relax a bit."
21. "There should be more visits during the week where fathers get together with their sons."
22. "I think that there should be somebody who could visit my ex-fiancée and talk to her about bringing my daughter out to see me or even a social worker bringing her out. I've sent her letters and cards but as of yet have had no reply."
23. "Visiting space should be more open to cater for large families."
24. "Bigger visiting play-grounds."
25. "There should be a bigger visiting area for the kids and the inmate's families. And also, if you're a minor offender, you should not be sent to a place full of disease-ridden junkies. I myself am not one of those, and my children and I should not be put at risk of these diseases."

26. "I just want access to my kids and I believe they want to see me."
27. "Officers to be a little bit more polite to visitors."
28. "More contact visits. More games."
29. "Bigger kid's areas."
30. "My kids can't come on weekends. They should be able to visit during the week. Should be easier access for kids to come to visit, some community assistance (e.g. church groups). Child should be able to visit without carer (just dropped off and picked up). Visits should be more private - on your own. More toys (inmates could make them). There is nothing for kids to do (e.g. chalk board but no chalk). Better play area."
31. "Family days should be held monthly. It should be easier to get day leave."
32. "At Cessnock they had a room for some of the 'older kids' to watch a video whilst the 'grown ups' spoke."
33. "The visiting hours could be extended and a larger variety of snacks and food should be available. The playground could be a lot bigger and also a baby change room for infants could and would be better for mothers."
34. "A room for each set of visitors."
35. "First off, the visiting area is terrible. There is a sand pit which, when it rains, makes it muddy as well as the kids throwing sand at each other. In summer, there is not enough shade over the playing area. They only have junk food for the kids. People should be able to bring fruit and juice in for your kids as half the time the Coke machines don't work"
36. "I feel there should be more room for the kids and families."
37. "Children visiting areas should be separate from prisoners that don't receive visits from children. Play areas should be larger."
38. "Toys for them to play with."
39. "No 'box' visits because some of us don't always get the chance to see our kids."
40. "More parent days that should go for a full day and not half days. More gala days that may go until 5-5.30pm."
41. "Nothing, except maybe longer visiting sections and longer visits than 1 hr in maximum security."
42. "Children under 18 (but of course old enough to do so) should be able to come alone. I think there should be more frequent Gala / Children-parent days."
43. "Have not had any visitors yet."
44. "There is nothing more I would like than to get my first day with my child."
45. "The visiting area - get rid of the bloody sand."
46. "Visiting hours should be all day."
47. "I should stop coming to gaol."
48. "All my visits are alright. The only problem with the visiting arrangements is the long process when they come in and how crowded it is."
49. "More varied times for visiting, and some leniency and understanding about people who travel distances and arrive a little late."
50. "I get visits with my children once a month, but I would like help to see them more often."
51. "More activities for kids."
52. "More time should be allocated apart from normal visiting for father-son bonding alone."
53. "No ideas."
54. "There should be at least one other visit during the week (e.g. Wednesday)."
55. "Provide outdoor facilities. Kids should be allowed to bring their own toys and food. We shouldn't have to wear jail overalls. 2-3hr visits and interstate children should be allowed to stay over night in a child safe environment with parents for 2 days to make the child more comfortable."
56. "I would just like to take my son and new born girl outside some so my son can kick a football and I can play with my little girl."

57. "In the visiting section there is nothing for the kids to do out there and you can't run around with them when they want to play."
58. "More visiting time. Toys and playing area for kids. Have visiting outside."
59. "I would rather my son didn't visit so he doesn't see jail, see me in jail, or get into trouble."
60. "A more informal visit with the children would be great, as quality time with children is when you are playing together. We don't get to spend enough time together even when they get the chance to visit."
61. "We should be able to have outdoor visits and walk around. They should be able to bring their toys and food in and the visits should be longer if they come from interstate. Maybe they could have a facility where your kids and you could spend the weekend together. We fathers miss and stress out because of our kids as much as the women in Mulawa do."
62. "More toys in visiting areas. Phone calls after 3.30 in the afternoon, as parents work and don't come home until 3.30-4pm. I speak for the prison population."
63. "I should be transferred to Long Bay on compassionate grounds. The Correctional Centre has all the paperwork from professors and doctors for my wife and son. The Dept. says I can't go to the Bay because my sentence is too long. But I know blokes who have been down there for over 8 yrs. As long as you get a work hold down there you are right."
64. "Food should be allowed to be brought in. We don't get much in here and it's hard enough at the moment."
65. "Should give us extra hours or week days for visits as well, not on weekend only."
66. "She, my child, should be allowed to bring toys in with her when she visits. There should be night visits where we could have dinner together."
67. "My problem is that the only way I can see the kids is with the consent of their guardians. The guardians don't like me, so they stop the kids seeing me to punish me, but it also punishes the kids. There should be some way that I can force the guardians to let me see the kids. This should not apply to sex offenders or child molesters though - even if it goes through court to OK it."
68. "Father-child days should be held more often. More games, more visits. Let them bring their school work so we can help them."
69. "A service to realistically help the person in custody to get access - without access there is no hope. The mother must be made to adhere to the children's right to see their other parent. And the father's right to have contact with his children should be observed also. Mediation should be available: if one party refuses, then an order for access should be granted. The fact that a parent can refuse to cooperate should not impede the other parent's or the kids' rights. This should apply to phone, mail and visitation."
70. "No problem with the visiting arrangements."
71. "The ITC [Long Bay Industrial Training Complex] isn't that bad."
72. "Not enough for the kids as they lose interest with what's on offer here in ITC."
73. "No 'box' visits. Should be allowed to bring their own food. Should have day leave with the kids once a month at least."
74. "Inmates should be housed as close to home as possible. It was the long distance that hindered the transport and deteriorated my relationship with my son's mother. Fathering courses should be implemented at every institution and facilities should be made with the encouragement and the awareness of parental responsibility."
75. "Bring their own food. Toys for kids."
76. "If possible, kids should be allowed to bring their own food, especially if they are sick. Visits should be held in an open area such as the oval and prisoners should be allowed to have barbecues with their families as is the situation in Windsor prison. Perhaps toys should be supplied and absolutely no box visits with your kids."

77. "I don't want them to visit."
78. "I have no visits."
79. "More family days. More entertainment for the children. The food should be healthy instead of chocolates laden with glucose syrup. Put screws on visits that know PR. Father-children days. Child psychologists to work with all concerned. Paedophiles (rock spiders) to have separate visits. Supply a room for private time between father and child. Train screws [prison officers] in child behaviour, e.g. patience."
80. "Stay out of jail."
81. "There should be a grass area for kids to play. More swings, toys, room to play."
82. "More freedom to roam with children, larger play areas, BBQ access."
83. "They should make visits through the week too so I can see my kids more often. This would also make it easier on the mother because there is more public transport and they've got more money."
84. "Better conditions for visitors: more safety, better playing facilities, don't mix families with singles."
85. "Well, some prisoners are claustrophobic, and some children are ADD. It would be nice to have outdoor and in-door seating. Children need more space to run, which makes it easier to complete visits. And teenage children need something too, not just the toddlers. We should be allowed to prepare snacks for our family - not everyone can afford machine food."
86. "I would like to see it made easier to have access to Children of Prisoners Support Group. I am waiting for transport to be available so I can have a visit with my kids."
87. "The whole visiting system."
88. "Shitful."
89. "There is nothing for these children to do on visits. Especially all day visits on Mondays. No toys, not much of a play area at all."
90. "Long way to travel. Longer visits."
91. "Shouldn't have to book for my child to see me. Longer visits."
92. "They should be able to play with equipment."
93. "The children should be allowed to play outside on visits but people visiting prisoners have wrecked it by bringing drugs into visits."
94. "I couldn't really answer this question as I've never had a visit with my son - not during this sentence or any past jail sentence."
95. "I feel that the visiting 'time-slots' can be very inconvenient. We can apply for extended visits, but circumstances can change and time not used up by one family could be extra for the next. I would prefer my visitors to be able to come at any time that suits them."
96. "There should be more all day visits and a variety of toys, especially outdoor activities (e.g., swing set, climbing equipment and toys as well)."
97. "There's not any toys for the kids to play with. Mine say that there's only baby toys. Also, we're not allowed to play with the kids. My kids sit on my lap with me and we cuddle and muck around, but I've heard girls say that the officers have told the kids to get away from them, which is so wrong."
98. "I think things with the visits are good the way they are. But: 1. Silverwater visits are not good. 2. New visits centre required."
99. "Transport."
100. "Kids should not be subjected to contact with junkies, kids with scabies and the likes; and therefore should not be herded into the one room full of noise."
101. "Telephone calls before and after school hours."
102. "A visit from my child would be nice. My wife would help if she had the money and would bring her in."
103. "Anyone in gaol or remand over a family dispute should be able to spend a week in a special purpose gaol: a child orientated mini-gaol with gardens and minimum security visible. An honour system would be the glue"

- to make it work. I've never had a gaol visit from my son, so I don't know a lot about this. I do know that family dispute situations are not the worst prisoners in the gaol system and they love their kids."
104. "Visiting area: should be much larger area for children's sake. I think of the kids - they come first, then the adults."
105. "Prisons should have more room for visitors and their children. Some jails only allow one bottle per child and so many number of nappies to be allowed in. There should be more SAFE playing equipment for the children and possibly a child-minding facility or babysitter employed to keep the kids occupied and safe. It's sometimes hard to hold a conversation with my wife and also watch my daughter."
106. "Wouldn't want family to visit me in gaol."
107. "Full day visits, bigger play areas for kids, more shade area, more chairs and tables, assortment of general-type toys for kids. Cold water fountain for kids' use."
108. "The 1 hr break between sessions is stupid. It takes up to $\frac{1}{2}$ hr to get back in, so you lose that time. They say the sessions are 3 hrs, but they call 'time up' after $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs."
109. "There should be all day visits, no breaks in between. We don't see them all week and I think on weekends we should have all day with our families."
110. "Good, but the food is rubbish for inmates."
111. "Visit area needs to be larger and there should be more things for them to do."
112. "More visits. More activities to keep adults and children occupied."
113. "More open environment where you could play with your kids e.g. cricket, football. Better food on visits, not junk food."
114. "I think the kids should be able to come through the prison, so they can have a better understanding of where their parent is; so in their mind they know the parent is OK. E.g. they should be able to go to the wing and spend time with the parent there rather than being cooped up in the day centre."
115. "I would like to be visited by my child, to be able to spend time with me alone, and perhaps be able to stay over the weekend."
116. "I wish to raise my new born baby and the only way this can happen is to be allowed to take my baby to Emu Plains. If I can't do this my baby has to go into care as I have no help on the outside. I will not bond with my child and I don't think I will cope with this. It will make my jail time harder and I'm hoping not to get depressed about my baby going into care. I hope you'll reconsider to let us girls have our babies out at Emu Plains as a lot of girls will suffer from this."
117. "Not enough TIME to visit when traveling as far as they do, and you can't play with them or have lunch with them."
118. "More regular visits. More things to play with or to do on visits."
119. "There should be an outside area to play and we should also have family Gala days where we can have picnics with our children and family."
120. "Family gala days."
121. "Gala days."
122. "Well, I would not mind seeing my lovely children once a fortnight."
123. "Children should be able to access parents every day, not just on particular days suitable to Dept. of Corrections. Officers should treat children of prisoners with dignity and perseverance. Prison officers should be sympathetic towards prisoners' children as they suffer traumatically when parents are imprisoned!!
124. "Mum brings her down when she gets the chance."
125. "The visits are not long enough to get to know your kids."
126. "I believe there should be some sort of program for long term mothers. I may be doing 13 years, but this makes it so hard to

- keep up the bond. She was taken away one day and has only seen me in white overalls and doesn't understand why or where her mummy is!!!!
127. "DOCS should try to make visits more frequent. More toys. Ability to go outside."
128. "I have my visits with my daughter in the governor's conference room. I think it is better there as there is less disturbance."
129. "Don't get visits."
130. "At the MSPC here at the Long bay CC I seriously think that there should be suitable activities for kids to play with during visits. At the moment there is simply some Lego trays and a few Lego blocks which is just enough for roughly 5 kids to play with. But there is usually three times this number of kids at any given weekend visiting times. This also causes parents to not get any personal time between themselves."
131. "Courts should make orders so the child has to be brought out to see their mother or father who is in prison."
132. "More flexible times for kids. Want contact visits with children no matter what I do in jail. Visits with kids should not be used as a punishment, but should be a right."
133. "More toys. Grass area. Sand pit."
134. "They are mostly OK, only if you get a bad officer is it difficult."
135. "More things for the kids."
136. "Bigger play area (with grass). More toys for amusement."
137. "All is fine. But only one thing: my kids sometimes ask for hot chips, but there's no hot chips in the store !!!
138. "Being allowed to bring in own food, toys and other items to keep them happy."
139. "Need a bigger playground and they need a grass area."
140. "Longer visiting hours. More freedom when getting visits with the kids."
141. "The visiting complex should be changed to an outdoor area. We should be allowed to walk around and play with the kids. Currently, we have to sit at our designated table and are not allowed to move. The visits should be longer and more flexible times. People coming by public transport find it hard to get here by the visiting times 8.15-11am."
142. "More facilities for kids, e.g., allowing them to play and run around."
143. "More family days. More access for children to be brought from places other than Sydney (e.g. Newcastle, Gosford)."
144. "Any other family member in prison should be able to have group visits, e.g., sister. Cordial or juice should be provided."
145. "The food is shit: lollies and crap. Should be healthy food. Books and toys for younger children."
146. "I'd love to see her and my children. It's been one month and it hurts like hell not seeing them. Please help me."

OTHER TYPES OF CONTACT WANTED WITH THEIR CHILDREN

1. "Letters, phone calls."
2. "Long phone calls."
3. "All of the above."
4. "Phone calls, letters, visits."
5. "If there could be contact at any time through phone calls being made into the jail by these children themselves they may be able to handle things a little better. Sometimes just hearing mum and dad's voice can be beneficial."
6. "To be able to make reverse charge calls to my kids at least once a week as they live in Queensland and money is very hard to come by in here."
7. "For people on a limited phone budget needing STD calls, the ability to place a free call at least once a month."
8. "Difficult as my son lives a long distance away (400km). But when on day/weekend leave, I definitely will be with my son."
9. "Day leave for child's birthdays and Christmas's. Longer leave when a child is hospitalized, as parents are needed."
10. "I would like day leave or weekend leave."
11. "I think mothers should be put on a home detention program."
12. "Phone calls."
13. "I write, phone my 12 yr old often."
14. "Day leave, father & children only in a group. E.g. local area parks - McDonalds."
15. "More activities for children; inmates could start programs with assistance/support from community groups, prison admin. (e.g. carnivals)."
16. "Day leave."
17. "Day leave or weekend leave."
18. "Weekend leave."
19. "More phone calls, cheaper calls. Day leave if possible."
20. "I need somewhere to live when I get out late next year; so please help me get this. I've been in jail most of my life."
21. "Phone calls."
22. "Parent days, not Father's Days as with Father's Days the mother has to wait around to pick them up, when both parents should be present. This would be very confusing for the child, especially toddlers."
23. "My kids are long distance, and I feel some sort of phone arrangement should be made as right now I feel I'm being discriminated against in Sydney and I have no outside support."
24. "I would dearly appreciate any contact at this point in time."
25. "Weekend leave for school functions."
26. "I am unable to have family visits, i.e., inter-gaol visits with my kids and my wife (their mother), as I am not doing long enough (4 months 10 days). But she has 12 months and we're just next door to each other. At the moment, I'm classified to move to Cessnock, and have found it impossible to change to Silverwater which would have been more convenient for the kids. They could have visited both of us on the one day which means less travel and less money spent. When I go to Cessnock, I don't think I'll have many visits if any!
27. "I would like to phone them once a week if I could, but I will be getting day leave and weekend leave in the next few weeks."
28. "Weekend leave to allow for them 'not' to be in this environment."
29. "Letters, phone calls, and visits."
30. "No ideas."
31. "Extra money should be available for the phone cards in order to contact children."

32. "Phone calls, day leave weekend leave, etc."
33. "Phone calls sometimes."
34. "When he is older (3 or 4), I'd like to phone so he can know who his father is."
35. "Letters, phone calls, weekend leave, day leave. If your kids are interstate they should transfer you there to be close to them."
36. "The phone calls cost \$3 for 6 minutes and something should be done about that. I can't afford these phone calls, as my daughter lives on the Central Coast and my older son lives at Wollongong. There are too many phone calls to be made and I can't make them all at \$3 a call"
37. "I would like to be able to spend a weekend every 3 months, 4 times a year with my wife and kids."
38. "Should help with transport fares and also give me weekend leave, because they come from another state. They have to travel all those hours and distance, but they can only see me for 2 hrs. It's not fair because they cry when they know, after being told, that they have to leave to catch the bus or train back as their mother works during the week."
39. "I'm coming up for day leave and I won't be able to see my kids because of their guardians. I wish I could ring them or write to them."
40. "Special visits at home with kids."
41. "Some body of government or legislation should be passed making parents cooperate for the good of the kids. No one parent should be able to decide such important issues. The things that prevent me from seeing my kids are budget cuts, funding, staffing levels dropping and the fact that the children's mother doesn't care to answer to anyone. She is totally supported by social welfare payments, Dept. of Housing, charities and her de facto."
42. "I'm always in contact with my daughter. I talk and write as much as I can. I don't get visits from them."
43. "Letters, Phone calls."
44. "I ring often, but of late, my son has turned off the telephones. He is rebelling as a sign of craving for me to be outside with him. His mother stated that to me only a couple of days ago. I've been writing letters to my son, but I haven't had any response yet."
45. "Day leave should be more flexible and easier to get. Weekend leave once a fortnight and 1 day leave a week. Once extra visit during the week e.g. Wednesday - should be allowed if you have kids, as to spend more time with them."
46. "Children to be allowed to ring fathers. More funding for groups like COPSG."
47. "Visits."
48. "In Long Bay the cost of calls is OK; but outside of metropolitan areas, calls and visits are too expensive for families, inmates and government."
49. "Depending on the day's outing, the dept. should organize day trips out for inmates and their families once a month - either to a movie, picnic and other places of activities."
50. "Letter and phone calls are fairly adequate."
51. "Setting up more mothers and children's placements while in prison. Also getting the two parents together with their child if both are in custody."
52. "Day leave, weekend leave."
53. "Nothing."
54. "My daughter writes often."
55. "All day visits."
56. "I ring my son and grandmother everyday and night of the week and write to both of them 3 times a week. And I receive answers from my grandmother who writes back to me at least twice a month for both her and my son."
57. "I have to travel to Dubbo for court, but when I'm there, because I came from gaol, I'm not permitted visits. I would like to see this changed so children can have some sort

- of contact in case we get sentenced. At least then we, as the mothers, could talk and explain things to help ease the hurt and loss they feel."
58. "I hardly ever write to them because there's nothing to say. I phone them sometimes, but it upsets me so I hardly ever call."
59. "Inmates who come from regional centers should have assistance for travel and accommodation for visiting, say, once every two months or so."
60. "Easier access to information and services."
61. "Corrective services should pay for postage for prisoners to write to their children every day if required, and also prisoners should be able to earn adequate money to telephone their children daily if so desired."
62. "I'd like to be able to ring after 3.30 pm. I would like to spend a few days with my daughter to keep my promises that I made to her about taking her to the Jenolan Caves and to Wonderland."
63. "I must wait until they shut down the family court. No court is as bad as it is. I wrote a paper on an alternative (or another option at least). I sent it to parliament, but Australia seems to be happy with this horrible system and no one listens to me."
64. "Special visits for fathers who have no means of transport and are poor, and have never seen their boy for years and would love the chance to."
65. "I regularly receive letters and always phone home, but the 10 min. limit on phone calls is very restrictive."
66. "Extensions on the standard limit of phone time and length of calls."
67. "Day leave would be good or even a weekend."
68. "Some help to find my wife and child in SA; and some use of a phone that I can talk on.
- No one talks or gives information to prison officers. If I cannot find my wife and my 2 yr old girl, 95% I'll probably come back to jail."
69. "I would also like to be able for my children to visit both her mother and father at the same time. I would also like to have weekend leave."
70. "I tried to ring every day but it costs too much. But that's hard for them because I am so far away. There needs to be other arrangements made for kids that have to travel so far. It's not fair on them."
71. "Day leave and weekend leave should be made available to parents that don't have E classification. If classification within the system doesn't like an inmate, it's hard to get to a low security prison. Any person with children should be given an opportunity to get to low security jails."
72. "Telephone."
73. "I phone my 2 sons up whenever I have money in the phone."
74. "I write every week and ring every second night."
75. "I don't have any other contact with my children."
76. "As much letters, phone calls, day/weekend leave as possible so the parent doesn't lose contact with the child at any time."
77. "Letters. Phone calls."
78. "The phones getting shut down for days on end regularly."
79. "Weekend leave."
80. "Phone calls, letters."
81. "Letters / phone calls / visits."
82. "Day leave on Xmas or birthdays."
83. "That will happen later on towards the end or finish of my sentence."

HELP OR SUPPORT NEEDED IN JAIL TO HELP THEM WITH THEIR KIDS

1. "More contact. Being able to stay in prisons which are closer to my children would help them and support them."
2. "Financial help, and methods to take things off his mind that Daddy's in jail."
3. "More to help them understand why their mum can't be with them."
4. "Need help to contact DOCS to arrange visits"
5. "More support from DOCS."
6. "To have someone go to see if they are OK. And some support as my family doesn't give me any."
7. "Children of Prisoners & welfare."
8. "More financial support (bills, etc)."
9. "Only more physical visits."
10. "I'll be right."
11. "Travel assistance. Support for mother as this would then support me and I wouldn't worry so much about my kids."
12. "Parenting courses."
13. "There should be a service like DOCS where kids are transported to the jail on a regular basis."
14. "Help to find my daughter."
15. "A visit or a phone call."
16. "Should be more parenting skills courses. Every parent-prisoner should do course."
17. "I'd just like an after school carer for my eldest boy as this has to happen every day and it costs his mum heaps every week."
18. "We need more support with my kid's visits on weekdays as well."
19. "Somewhere to live."
20. "I would like to find out just where my children are and be allowed to see and visit them myself. Get them to write to me and write to them and send them photos and get photos of them."
21. "Any help whatsoever please."
22. "Everything is fine with my visits etc.. They only live up the road."
23. "Be able to stay at a gaol as close as possible to them and my wife."
24. "Would like Prisoner's Aid to send my children some Christmas presents."
25. "Child support, financially to support kids, get a job on a farm."
26. "More phone calls, but money is a problem."
27. "I would like to be able to earn a fair wage so that I could send home money instead of it being the other way around."
28. "Only contact is mostly phone. Should help us with phone money as we earn peanuts here - only enough for smokes and a can of drink."
29. "More information on what are my rights concerning my kids."
30. "Tutors for school. Special visits (transport)."
31. "Men's group. Fathering courses. Education courses (Political, social legal etc). Legal process (a legal process that would assist me in obtaining access and the enforcing of the access)."
32. "More financial support from Government."
33. "Dept. of housing."
34. "I don't like to ask for help. There is not enough information about support when you first come to jail or similar institutions."
35. "I feel my hands are tied, helpless and powerless. At this stage I am fortunate to have the assistance of the COPSG. However, due to the government cut-backs, their funds have been slashed to ridiculous proportions; and they are exhausted in their funding the programs."

36. "No help needed. I have only got 5 weeks to go."
37. "I would like to speak to someone from Mirabel Foundation."
38. "On visiting days, when husbands or foster parents can't bring the children, it would be nice to have an agency to be there for women. Otherwise children can't be brought in."
39. "To have someone be able just to help you out to talk when needed."
40. "Phone calls regularly."
41. "Advice, counselling, support on how I go about getting supervised access back or eventually full custody."
42. "To have contact with their father. As the oldest girl is fretting for him. At least every 3 weeks, a visit with the girls."
43. "Just travel assistance."
44. "Free phone calls."
45. "Any help or support would be appreciated, but unfortunately there is none."
46. "I would like to know where my daughter is. I supported her and her mother until I broke it off with the mother. Now I'm left in gaol to front trumped-up charges and I have no idea if I'll ever see her again."
47. "Eventually I might need someone to bring my son to the gaol and return him again. This can only happen after the family court makes an order. Thank you COPSG for your support in the past."
48. "I pray for my son only."
49. "I would like some assistance from the housing dept. in getting a house/town house for my family as money is a big issue whilst I'm incarcerated."
50. "More father / child events. Perhaps overnight visits."
51. "I would like assistance to help my daughter's travel and accommodation costs. They are currently living in QLD and my family can't afford to bring my daughter to Sydney to visit me."
52. "Yes, I would."
53. "Yes. I would like to raise my own child and to bond with my own child."
54. "I would just like them to be able to visit more regularly, but it's too hard with the distance."
55. "More contact."
56. "More contact with COPSG other than special days organized."
57. "No, I've had enough. All full of shit."
58. "I have a welfare officer to help with my children whilst in jail."
59. "Anything is better than what I have received over the last 3 years: nothing."
60. "Just something for them for Xmas as in a present of some kind as we have no way of getting the kids a present."
61. "Children of Prisoners."
62. "Maybe later."
63. "No. Support of the governor to think about changing visits."
64. "What can I do? It's killing me what's happening to me, not seeing them."
65. "Maybe day care for my youngest as it costs heaps as well."
66. "The bus from Blacktown station could drop visitors off at the prison door so they don't have to walk the 20-30 mins from the road to the door."
67. "I shouldn't be here."
68. "Lobby parliament for Father's rights and children's rights."
69. "Picnic area in the gaol for visiting area."
70. "I think more help should be given to people with children from out of state, e.g. fares and accommodation."

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|--|---|
| <p>71. "What else can be done if a magistrate stops access."</p> | <p>missed out 2 years in a row because there is inadequate time to find somebody to have your name placed on their list; and it is my opinion that the church hides as they make no effort to locate prisoners with kids to enable a present to be sent."</p> |
| <p>72. "Longer phone calls. In country jails or most other jails for that matter, calls are 10 mins, but here they're 6 mins."</p> | |
| <p>73. "The church applauds itself for providing for prisoners' kids; however my daughter has</p> | |

HELP OR SUPPORT FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND KIDS OUTSIDE

1. "I don't know, but they could do with some help financially especially over Xmas."
2. "Don't know."
3. "Day or month passes."
4. "Nothing."
5. "As I said, to be able to bring them down from QLD."
6. "Rebates available, especially for long distance."
7. "Maybe some type of subsidy towards costs of travelling."
8. "I would love to see the children every weekend but at the moment I can only see them once a month."
9. "The government should give the money for caring for the child; it is a full time job."
10. "Community groups could give money to help (churches, etc)."
11. "I don't know but I'm interested to know."
12. "Apart from government grants which gives access to funds, travel vouchers which enable them to ride public / private transport if travelling by PT, perhaps a food/drink voucher to purchase a drink etc whilst travelling."
13. "Give more money to pensioners who are caring for kids of prisoners."
14. "DOCS OUT OF OUR LIVES."
15. "Average cost for family to visit is \$100. Therefore, better bus or taxi service, money or voucher that would pay for public transport to John Moroney, petrol voucher also."
16. "Give them more money and give us remissions."
17. "Travel vouchers to assist with petrol costs. Travel vouchers only available 2 per yr, and you need to beg to get it - almost impossible."
18. "Money for travel or better transport service."
19. "Have a bus service to pick them up at home and drop them off."
20. "Transport from jail to home and vice versa."
21. "Some financial assistance for travel."
22. "Accommodation problems."
23. "They are currently moving here in November and there are financial difficulties to move to a house out of a caravan when they get here."
24. "More money for transport."
25. "Community groups, services, churches. Bus to bring children to visit."
26. "Courtesy buses or car pooling."
27. "There could be transport to and from jails especially jails in the country (Muswellbrook) to make transport easier from and to home for my family and others as well."
28. "Free travel."
29. "Well the bills are out of control. Some times the phone gets cut off because my de facto can't pay it and that means I can't ring the boy."
30. "Free transport."
31. "We need homes to go to when we get out."
32. "Pay fare or even a shuttle bus to pick them up and drop them off."
33. "I can't pay child support while here (but still get bills!!!) So maybe something should be done there."

34. "They should receive higher income because other parent is in full time jail, and can't provide necessary care and support, money, etc."
35. "She gets a disability pension (Koori), but whether it is enough to support my son I don't know. I'd like to find out about his situation."
36. "They should receive extra income because other parents that work full-time can provide their kids with everything they need and if we were out we would be giving them more than what they get now."
37. "Pay for return fare here and transport also with accommodation."
38. "Nothing. They are taken care of."
39. "Any help would be appreciated."
40. "Direct assistance to children - cash payments to schools - clothes etc. The mother should be made to spend welfare payments on the kids. Direct debit - rent - electricity - phone - school."
41. "Possibly food vouchers."
42. "Reduce the price of the food in the canteen, and reduce the price of drinks and chips in the machines, if possible, give it for free. And not make money out of our visitors."
43. "Special bus and train service to mainly the jails that are a long distance, cheaper accommodation for someone to help."
44. "Money for wives of prisoners."
45. "Visits through the week."
46. "Government agency for children of prisoners transport service."
47. "Some sort of fund raising in prison etc. to help with these situations."
48. "Quicker trips from Wollongong (minibus)."
49. "Money from the government."
50. "I would like to see a bus or something to that effect to accommodate families from different areas (central west) to cater for women in Mulawa and our visiting days."
51. "Help with transporting girls to visit mum and me."
52. "Nothing, everything is fine the way it is."
53. "Nothing can be done - that is impossible for prisoners under the Carr NSW schemes."
54. "Information as to options."
55. "Real assistance."
56. "Me sending the money I save for him."
57. "Government issued passes for mothers and children to cover expenses of rail and bus transport."
58. "Transport passes."
59. "Perhaps more government subsidies."
60. "Some kind of fare relief."
61. "They are fine."
62. "If they had more money and visiting rules weren't so hard, I could see them more."
63. "Special benefit for children whose parents are incarcerated."
64. "Broaden COPS to help with money subsidies as well as PAC."
65. "My mum brings my daughter to visit 2 times a week. The main help she would need is money for petrol."
66. "Can't contact them, only by mail."
67. "A pay increase would be nice to my de facto's benefits."
68. "Plenty if they ask for help."
69. "To get a house?"
70. "More money help would be ideal, especially for his schooling."
71. "Don't know who to contact."

OTHER THINGS WHICH WOULD HELP THEIR FAMILIES AND KIDS COPE BETTER

1. "Me getting out."
2. "Extra visits, longer, and better transport ideals for that age."
3. "Just to be able to see me."
4. "Being able to ring me by phone when they need to speak to me or are upset."
5. "Counselling."
6. "Transport to and from the jail."
7. "If I lived with them."
8. "More contact visits."
9. "Letting me out."
10. "More money and toys."
11. "Being able to see me."
12. "DOCS being more understanding of father's needs to have children visit regularly."
13. "Support and friendship as they're the ones doing the time."
14. "Stable home."
15. "Day-care for kids."
16. "Weekend leave."
17. "Showing daughter that I'm alright every week as in phone-calls, visits. Stop her worrying about my safety."
18. "Letting me out."
19. "Letting me go home. HA!"
20. "Outside support group."
21. "More contact."
22. "Longer visits, more room."
23. "Money. It would support them if you go there just to tell them we still care."
24. "Coming home on weekends."
25. "All day and longer visits."
26. "Mail not to take so long in and out of jail. More phones for inmates to reduce the ratio of inmates to one phone."
27. "Being home."
28. "Being able to have family visits with my wife and myself."
29. "I would like to sit down and talk to my 2 kids about me being in jail, and also any other problem that I can help with."
30. "Weekend leave."
31. "Photo's, longer talk time on phone (20 mins), paintings."
32. "Just to see them more often."
33. "By being able to run around with their daddy - you know what I mean."
34. "Longer phone calls (talk time), paintings."
35. "More phone calls from me."
36. "Nothing really as we miss the important part of them growing up. But home detention for those with kids is the best help."
37. "Sleep over one night a week."
38. "Contact with me."
39. "More visits."
40. "Knowing I was alive so I can be a part of their support network. They will decide one day, but now they are 4 and 5 yrs."
41. "Financial help."
42. "Mid-week visits."
43. "Longer phone calls so that when we do talk we can explain and express ourselves without the rush or tension or stress."
44. "Extra visits."
45. "A lot of contact, communication."

46. "More support."
47. "He has plenty of support and family love around him."
48. "Just to know that there's a way to have contact with our children when no one else can bring them."
49. "If they could see that I'm not in any danger."
50. "Just seeing their parents together once in a while if both are in custody."
51. "More visiting."
52. "Knowing what help is available."
53. "Visit my wing."
54. "Me being out."
55. "Seeing me more often."
56. "Too personal of a question."
57. "Seeing their father as much as they can as well."
58. "Give support and be positive when talking to them on the phone and be positive with my letters."
59. "More access."
60. "Support. Jail wages do not permit frequent phone calls or postage and families can't afford to send money to facilitate regular contact."
61. "Me being out of jail."
62. "Contact - education about me."
63. "Visit."
64. "More frequent visits."
65. "Help my wife get a transfer from the Miller area."
66. "Letting me out."
67. "Contact."
68. "Being with me, not in care."
69. "Being able to speak to me more. But the cost is too much because they are so far away."
70. "Special children's day get together."
71. "More contact with parents in the system and on leave etc."
72. "To have more contact with me more often."
73. "To understand how I live, to see where I sleep, to see the wing etc., mainly for my mum and my baby."
74. "Visit."
75. "Family days at times like Christmas, Easter and so on; and also being able to arrange to have a present and cake on an inmate's child's birthday to be paid for by the inmate from his personal account."
76. "Don't know how they are coping as I've had no contact."
77. "Would be good if there were no 'box' visits, only contact ones."
78. "Me not being in jail."
79. "Me getting out."
80. "I don't know - they are very young."
81. "Freedom."
82. "More \$\$\$."
83. "Financial assistance, support, work."
84. "Constant communication with welfare about their loved ones inside."
85. "More, more contact."
86. "I've put in application for inter-gaol visits only to be refused!"
87. "With visits child and parents should only have to see welfare, not correctional officers."
88. "If the media hadn't made known my name my kids wouldn't have copped so much."
89. "The mother should be held accountable for not letting kids see their dad, unless a court

order is in force stopping the kids and dad seeing each other."

90. "Getting family visits as a family. Don't break the law."

91. "This study was needed."

92. "Stop punishing the children."

93. "Quickly."

94. "All day family visits at Xmas. The men have them but we don't."

PROBLEMS TO DO WITH THEIR KIDS THAT MIGHT ARISE WHEN THEY ARE RELEASED

WHAT MIGHT HELP TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS

1. "Housing, schooling, separating brothers and sister from each other. When I am released the mother, me and 2 youngest will be living apart from the 2 eldest children."

na

2. "Bringing him up differently to what his mother has been doing. I'm soft hearted so his mother probably won't like it; I'll spoil him."

"Nothing. I'll do it anyway."

3. "My kids found it hard going to live with their dad and now that they're settled it's time for me to come home and unsettle them."

"Someone to talk to all of us together and find out what my kids feel best with. I only want them to be happy."

4. "Getting custody back."

na

5. "Bonding with my children again and looking after them full time after being gone so long and they're used to going to someone else."

"Only time with them again will help to heal all of us."

6. "None. I should have access as normal."

na

7. "Just getting them back into a routine and them used to my rules."

"Being able to have them on a regular basis, sometimes overnight just to get them used to being with me again."

8. "Adjusting to the way she has been brought up."

"Patience and working with the child."

9. "No problems."

na

10. "Readjusting might be a bit hard but I'll manage."

"I will find out."

11. "Nil."

na

12. "Don't know."

na

13. "Nothing."

na

14. "Getting to QLD to see them."

na

15. "DOCS."

"SHUT THEM DOWN."

16. "Seeing my eldest and youngest sons as I don't know where they are and mother has AVO on me."	"Being granted access visits so all three boys can see each other with me. AVO lifted or altered."
17. "Never spent a full day with child (more than 8 hrs). So living with him will create new problems or issues, e.g. false or unrealistic expectations of each other."	"Spending more time to give more support, develop relationship, understand him more; courses on how to get to know one's child out of jail."
18. "Seeing them and talking to them for the first time since going to gaol."	na
19. "Living apart for so long the adjustment will be difficult."	na
20. "No problems."	na
21. "Nil."	na
22. "The main problem I think would be getting to know her. I haven't seen her for six years and she has grown up heaps."	"I think the only thing to help me overcome them, is to take the first step and go and see her, or get some kind of access I think things should [sort] themselves out from there."
23. "Finding them."	"Nothing."
24. "Getting them (or him) back."	na
25. "Not being able to see them."	na
26. "Their mother not letting me see them."	na
27. "No problems."	na
28. "Adjusting to being a father again."	"Patience."
29. "Fighting for custody (again), setting up a place good enough for them. Support. Find children."	"Support from family, groups to get set up, housing (rent, whatever)."
30. "Adapting to full time parenting."	"Parenting skills course."
31. na	"My wife and I are taking them and moving up the coast away from the city and its bad influences."
32. "None."	na
33. "Getting them back off DOCS."	"Having a judge that will listen to common sense."
34. "If me and my de facto are not together when I get out I will be going to QLD to live and would only see the boys on school holidays."	"If me and my de facto stay together."

35. "Schooling."	na
36. "Adjusting back into their life style and their changes."	na
37. "a) Nowhere to live with them, b) No money, c) You spend \$32,000 locking us up, tell us to get out without a cent, then we re-offend. d) Help us get more inter-jail visits with the mum as well."	"Home to live in. I need it."
38. "None."	na
39. "Not being able to see them."	"Everything."
40. "My child is only young and may forget who I am after the 6 months."	"More regular visits."
41. "Travelling to see them with my parole restrictions."	"I don't know."
42. "Getting information on her location so I can have contact."	"Staying off drugs and getting work full-time."
43. "Nothing much really. The only problem will be the mother. She's a drug addict."	"Can't do nothing much, thank you."
44. "Being by myself to look after them whilst my wife is still in prison. But I love them so I'll have to learn to cope."	"I really don't know at this time."
45. "To have access visits on time and try to talk to the mother about visits and also any problems with the children."	na
46. "None."	na
47. "None. We are going to be honest and open with people and I hope that my son doesn't get persecuted a lot for my problems."	"Our love for each other and ourselves and I hope we can communicate well."
48. "Money, accommodation, bringing up children."	"Public housing - sponsor 2nd wife from Vietnam to help bring up children."
49. "Possible discipline problems."	"Stress management course whilst jail to prepare inmate to deal with children on release."
50. "None."	na
51. "None."	na
52. "I am not too sure about that."	"I don't know."
53. "None."	na

54. "She wouldn't want me to see them."	"Take to court to gain custody, but I don't want that. I'd rather sit and talk about it."
55. "Because my son thinks every thing I do is good he may think gaol is a cool place to be."	"More time to sit down and talk to him."
56. "Explaining right from wrong."	na
57. "No problems. Just up to me to stay clean and everything will work out."	na
58. "I probably won't see them much. They may not even still live at home. They will however visit at times if this is the situation. I won't have any other problems. My kids know that I should be with them and all the details of what happened."	na
59. "None. My child is a sweet angel."	na
60. "Re-adjusting to being a role model."	"Not sure."
61. "With my violent background and nothing to do with family, the kids' guardians might try and get a court hearing to stop me seeing them."	"More information on what are my rights."
62. "Out of control. Getting used to their behaviour."	"Don't know."
63. "Their mother - her partner. Finance re: family Law Support. The kids not knowing me."	"Cooperation from their mother!"
64. "Getting to know them again as a parent."	"Not sure."
65. "Dept. of housing."	na
66. "Them rebelling."	na
67. "Becoming a role model for them."	"Giving my time, support and love."
68. "Not seeing them."	na
69. "DOCS, Sister in law."	"Some sort of access for me as a father."
70. "My 'ex' is truly impossible. Everything is a problem."	"Give her a brain."
71. "None."	"Stay with them."
72. "None that I can foresee."	na
73. "A lot of time spent with them for lost time inside."	na
74. "I'm not sure."	na
75. "Kids might not respect me. My discipline of the	na

children might be prevented by law (e.g. smacking). I would find it difficult to accept this, mainly because I don't trust the government, and their previous intervention into my family has messed up my life."	
76. na	"Seeing my children on a regular basis."
77. "None."	na
78. "None."	na
79. "None at all."	na
80. "Living arrangements, custodial arrangements."	"Finding somewhere to live."
81. "Nothing."	na
82. "Do not wish to answer! Sorry."	na
83. "Not sure, as I will have been away from my child for 10-14 years."	"Not sure."
84. "Assimilation to not being a gaoled parent: - probably given some secure form of understanding, guidance, love, support."	"Accept it, put it behind you. - move on."
85. "My drug problem."	"Not sure."
86. "I will have problems with a biased child welfare."	"The services of a lawyer who would be adequately funded."
87. "Emotional problems."	"Spending time with her."
88. "I will be on bail if I get out and will have a condition that I don't contact the mother. I know she will not come to me with the child and I want to keep an eye at least on her upbringing. I am worried for her safety and concerned that she is not allowed to see her father."	"Some decent laws that understand how men are vulnerable to false allegations from women where children / custody is concerned."
89. "Logically - explaining the truth after his life being told lies. Emotionally - he might believe the lies and hate me. In my mind - I won't have any problems. He must know who was hurting him."	"Contact very soon and continuous."
90. "I hope he still loves me."	"Pray."

91. "At present I am on a methadone program and am reducing my dose to come off. I am reducing as fast as the Doctor will allow, so that upon my release I will have finished the program. I will still be 'edgy' or irritable from withdrawal."	"Well, total abstinence will be better in the long run. I am taking time with a counsellor or 'psych' to help me overcome my addictions. With support from my wife and daughter, we'll be OK."
92. "Financial backing."	"Employment."
93. "No problems, happy family environment."	na
94. "None."	"None."
95. "None."	na
96. "Children may be resentful for being away from home for so long."	"Child/parent support groups."
97. "Being back in their lives, wondering how long for on their behalf."	na
98. "Getting used to being a mother again because the child won't let you out of their sight because they're scared you might go away again."	"Nothing bar the love I have for my child."
99. "Adjusting to spending time together."	na
100. "Not sure."	na
101. "Not having a house so I can have access."	"More support."
102. "Firstly getting accommodation for us. I can't see any other problems as I feel it will be great to be together as a family."	na
103. "None."	"None."
104. "Just getting the maternal bonding back and daily routine."	"To be given a chance instead of a sentence."
105. "Getting them back."	"Don't want to."
106. "My child has a behaviour problem which, no doubt, will continue. But hopefully once I'm out of jail, this will be able to come under control."	"Access to COPS6 and other agencies that aren't affiliated to DOCS."
107. "Where we will live."	"Somewhere to live."
108. "I don't know."	"I don't know."

109.	"The main problem is I will have been away for so long, but I will never ever walk out of these gates and not be with my daughter. I am her mum and the day I am released I will be her full-time carer again."	"I have been away now for 4 years. I was jailed just after her 1st birthday, My daughter and I need to be together for weekends at least so when I am released I will not be a stranger to my own daughter. There needs to be a program for long term mothers, not mums doing 3 months, 6 months. I can't get to Emu Plains for at least 2 more years. My daughter will be 7, and I will have been away for 6 years! Don't you agree that it's a little too late? I don't want my daughter to hate me for leaving her. If I could give my arm I would, just to be able to spend the weekends with my daughter. Sometimes she wants to be next to me like a 1 yr old, sometimes she makes sounds like a baby, she wants to be near her mum."
110.	"Getting him back."	"Get out of jail."
111.	"Trying to regain custody of them through court."	na
112.	"None."	na
113.	"I have to get to know my child as I lost contact with her when she was 6 months old, so I don't even know if she knows who her real father is."	"Getting out of jail."
114.	na	"Stop selling cocaine."
115.	"Because I don't get to hold her I feel a distance between us that was not there before I came to jail."	"More contact visits."
116.	"None."	na
117.	"I can't really say at this stage. I have a really good relationship with my son."	na
118.	"He may be upset at me because all these years I have not been there or I'm not with him!"	na
119.	"None."	"Me doing the right thing."
120.	"Housing arrangement. Custody (disputes with mother). Family problems."	"Counselling and financial assistance."
121.	"None I don't think."	na

122. "Getting used to being outside again. Finding work to be financially ahead. Hoping I will be with my de facto still by then."	na
123. "Money. Adjustment to change of opinion from children's teacher and parents of school friends."	na
124. "I don't know whether my ex will play games or whether she will let me see them all the time and let me take them overnight and on holidays. If she doesn't we will be going to court. I love them and have never done anything to hurt them."	"Nothing."

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS SURVEY CONSENT FORM

If you are currently a prisoner in NSW, and you have children under 16 years old, who you were in contact with before your imprisonment, please read the following."

You are invited to take part in a survey which is being done by the Children of Prisoners Support Group. Before we begin, we need to make sure that you fully understand and agree to what you will be doing. If you do not want to continue you may say so at any time, without giving a reason. You will not be penalized or disadvantaged in any way if you do not want to participate.

The reason why we are doing this survey is that we want to know what happens to kids when one of their parents get put in jail. This will help us to give the right kind of support to the child and to their imprisoned parent. We also want to help schools and the wider community understand the issues that children of prisoners and their families have to face.

To do this, we need to find out some facts and to see what you think about various things, and that is why we have set a questionnaire for you to fill out. The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. If you don't want to answer one or two questions, that doesn't matter. Don't let that stop you from filling in the rest. If you don't understand some questions, the person who has given you the form will help you.

You may find that the questions make you feel uncomfortable or stressed. If you feel that would like some help, please tell the person who is giving you the questionnaire. They will try to help you themselves or refer you to someone else. Remember, you can stop answering the questionnaire at any time, without giving a reason.

We have included an envelope which we will put your answers in and which we will put in a secure place. After we have collected information that we need from the forms, they will be destroyed. No-one else will be able to use them.

Your name will not be written on the form and no one will be able to work out who you are by reading your answers. The form will be completely private. No individual information will be given to any government department.

Thank you for taking the time to do this. If you want to know more, or tell us more, please contact the Children of Prisoners' Support Group by phone (9648 5866) or letter:

Children of Prisoners Support Group,
The Cottage, Holker St., Silverwater,
P.O. Box 67, ERMINGTON, 2115

SIGNED CONSENT OF THE IMPRISONED PARENT

I, _____, understand the purpose of the study entitled "Children of Prisoners Survey", as explained above.

I consent to participate in the study.

My consent is voluntary.

I understand that all information will be handled in the strictest confidence and that no one will be able to identify me in any reports.

I further understand that there will be no penalty or disadvantage to me for not participating in the study and that I can withdraw at any time.

(Signature) - Participant (Name) Date

(Signature) - Witness (Name) Date

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS SURVEY

If you are administering this questionnaire, please read the following.

- This questionnaire is **ONLY** for prisoners who have children under 16 years of age, and who had contact with their children **before** their imprisonment.
- You **MUST** read the entire consent form - slowly and clearly - to the imprisoned parent and obtain their signature on the consent form **BEFORE** the questionnaire is filled in. If at any time the parent wishes to end their participation, please do so immediately and without question.
- The contents of each completed questionnaire are to be held in the **STRICTEST CONFIDENCE**. In particular, do not allow anyone to have access to the completed questionnaire or its content. Do not write the parent's name on the questionnaire or attach the signed consent form to the completed questionnaire. Place the completed questionnaires in one envelope and the signed consent forms in another envelope, and forward both to the address below.
- Whilst we very much hope that this survey will have beneficial consequences for the child and their parent, please do **NOT** make any promises or 'concrete guarantees'.
- Please read the questions to the parent slowly and clearly, and try not to influence them to answer one way or another. If they do not want to answer a question, do not in any way make them do so. Just move on to the next question.
- Where the question requires a written response, listen to the parent's answer, then write it down word for word if you can. **ALWAYS** read what you have written back to the parent to get their approval (i.e. ask "Is this OK?" and "Would you like to make any changes?") **before** moving on.
- Please explain to the parent that the questionnaire is in four parts:
 - Part 1:** Facts about the parent
 - Part 2:** Facts about the parent's children
 - Part 3:** What's happening to the parent's children now
 - Part 4:** Changes the parent thinks should be made
- **We need all the forms back at the latest by 19th November; but if you can send it sooner, that would help us.**
- Thank you for helping us. If you have any questions, please contact the Children of Prisoners' Support Group by phone (9648 5866) or letter.

Children of Prisoners Support Group,
The Cottage, Holker St., Silverwater,
P.O. Box 67, ERMINGTON, 2115

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS SURVEY

This questionnaire is in four parts:

Part 1: Facts about you

Part 2: Facts about your children

Part 3: What's happening to your children now

Part 4: Changes you think should be made.

For your survey to be really helpful to us, you will have to answer at least some questions in every part. However, you will not have to answer all the questions. Sometimes you will be asked to skip some questions and turn to another page. So please read it carefully.

Remember:

We only want to know about your children who are *under 16 years of age*, and who you had contact with *before* your imprisonment.

For those answers with a box, please mark with a cross: e.g. ☐ X

PART 1	YOU	<u>Everyone to answer</u>	For Office Use Only
	Your age	 years	☐ ☐
	Your sex	Male ☐ Female ☐	☐
	Your country of birth	.....	☐
	Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent?	Aboriginal ☐ Torres Strait Islander ☐ Neither ☐	☐
	Where did you live before you were imprisoned? (i.e. town or suburb)	 (Do NOT give your street address)	☐ ☐ ☐
	What is your marital status now?	Single ☐ Married ☐ De Facto ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced/Separated ☐	☐
	Is this the same marital situation as when you began this sentence?	Yes ☐ No ☐	☐
	If no, please describe the change.	..... ..... .....	☐

PART 2 (A) YOUR CHILDREN <u>Everyone to answer</u>		For Office Use Only
All of the questions in this form are just about those kids you did have contact with in the past. REMEMBER: count only those under 16.		
How many children under the age of 16 do you have?	.....	☐ ☐
What are their ages?	..... .....	☐ ☐
Do your children know that you are in jail?	Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
If they don't, why don't they?	..... ..... .....	☐ ☐
Are all your children under 16 living together?	They all live together ☐ They live in different places ☐ Don't know ☐	☐
Were you living with your children before you were jailed? (Please mark only one answer)	Yes, all of them ☐ Yes, some of them ☐ No, none of them ☐	☐

		For Office Use Only
Were you a single parent before your imprisonment?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
Do you see your children regularly now? (Please mark only one answer)	Yes, all of them ☐	☐
	Yes, some of them ☐	
	No, none of them ☐	
If you don't see all of them, has this only happened since you've been in jail?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	

If you don't see any of your children, please fill in the questions on pages 6 and 7. Then turn to page 14 and go on from there.

If you do see all your children, skip pages 6 and 7 and turn to page 8. Fill in all the questions from then on.

If you see some of your children but not all, please answer all the questions you can from here on.

PART 2 (B) QUESTIONS ABOUT THOSE CHILDREN YOU DO NOT SEE NOW		For Office Use Only
How many of your children don't you see? (Answer with a number, e.g. "2 kids")	.....	☐ ☐
How many months or years had you served when you lost contact? (If you lost contact with different children at different times, answer for the first child you lost contact with)	.....	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Was it your decision not to see them?	Yes ☐ No ☐	☐
Why did you lose contact?	..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....	☐ ☐
Have you tried to set to see them?	Yes ☐ No ☐	☐
What have you tried?	..... ..... ..... .....	☐ ☐

		For Office Use Only
Do you write to these children?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
Do you get letters from them?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
How often do you speak to them on the phone?	Once a day ☐	☐
	Once a week ☐	
	Once a month ☐	
	Never ☐	
	Other..... ☐	
Do you know who is looking after them?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
Will you try to contact them when you get out?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
	Don't know ☐	

If you don't see any of your children, please turn to page 14 and answer any questions you can from then on.

If you do see some of your children, please turn to the next page and answer then questions from then on.

PART 2 (C) QUESTIONS ABOUT THOSE CHILDREN YOU <u>DO</u> SEE NOW		For Office Use Only
<u>Visiting inside the jail</u>		
On average, how often do your children come to visit?	Weekly	☐
	Every 2 weeks	☐
	Monthly	☐
	Every 2 months	☐
	School holidays only	☐
	Less often	☐
	Is this enough, in your opinion?	Yes	☐
	No	☐
How far do your children travel to see you? (If they come from different places, what is the longest distance any of them has to travel)	 kms	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
How do your children travel to visit you?	Private car	☐
	Public Transport	☐
	Taxi	☐
	Public Transport <u>and</u> car or taxi	☐
	Don't know	☐

		For Office Use Only
What things make it hard for you to see your children? (Mark as many of the answers as you want)	Prison visiting restrictions ☐ Transport problems ☐ Money problems ☐ No one to bring them ☐ Person looking after them doesn't want to bring them more often ☐ Difficult because of their ages ☐ I don't want them to come into this environment too much ☐ Visiting hours are inconvenient ☐ Court order says they can't come more often ☐ Anything else? 	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Have your children ever come to visit and been turned away at the gate? If yes, what was the reason given?	Yes ☐ No ☐ 	☐ ☐ ☐

		For Office Use Only
Are all your visits now with your children contact visits?	Yes ☐ No ☐	☐
If they are not all contact visits, how many-contact visits have you had since June and how many non-contact ones?	Contact Non-Contact	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
How long is each visit allowed to be?	.....	/
How long do they usually last?	.....	/
When your children visit: - Do you have a choice of whether you sit inside or outside? - Is the visiting area usually too crowded? - Is there room for your kids to run about? - Are there any swings climbing frames or toys available?	Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

			For Office Use Only
Can your children buy drinks or snacks while visiting you?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Sometimes	☐	
Can they bring their own food or drink in?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Sometimes	☐	
Can they bring their own toys in?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Sometimes	☐	
Are you allowed to hand them presents?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Sometimes	☐	
Have your children ever been rudely treated or called to order by the custodial staff?	Never	☐	☐
	Sometimes	☐	
	Often	☐	
	Only when they deserved it	☐	

<u>Leave Situation</u>			For Office Use Only
Are you eligible for day leave?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Don't know	☐	
If no - do you intend to apply?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Don't know	☐	
- have you ever applied and been knocked back?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
If yes - do you get it?	Yes	☐	
	No	☐	
- how many times did you apply before you got it?	.....		☐
- how often do you get day leave?	.....		☐
- do you see your children while on day leave?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
- how much of the day are you in their company?	.....		☐ ☐
Have you ever applied for compassionate leave for reasons to do with your kids ?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
If yes , did you get it?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	

		For Office Use Only
Have you ever asked to make special contact in an emergency to do with your kids? If yes , were you allowed to?	Yes	☐
	No	☐
	Yes	☐
	No	☐
Do you ever go to sport or work activities outside the jail where you see your kids? If yes , how often does this happen?	Yes	☐
	No	☐
		☐

Please turn to the next page and answer the questions from there on.

PART 3 (A) WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR CHILDREN NOW	<u>Everyone to answer</u>	For Office Use Only
If you know absolutely nothing about you children's living situation now, please mark an "X" in this box, and write anything you want to say about how this happened and how you feel about it. ☐		☐
Please turn to page 22 and finish this form		

If you do know something about your children's living situation, please answer as many of these questions as you can		For Office Use Only
Who looks after your children? (If your kids are living in different places, write the number of kids living in each place, e.g. if two of your kids are living with their grand parents and one is in a home write it this way: Relative 2 Residential Children's Home 1	Other parent ☐ Relative ☐ Friend ☐ Foster Home ☐ Adopted ☐ Residential Children's Home ☐ Correctional Institution ☐ Other (please describe) Don't know ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Has there been any change in who's looking after your children since you've been in prison? (Don't include times when they've been looked after by someone different just for a short time, e.g. a week or two) If yes, how many different main carers have they had?	Yes ☐ No ☐ 	☐ ☐
If your children visit you, who usually brings them?	.....	☐
Do you get on OK with the person looking after your children?	Yes ☐ No ☐	☐

		For Office Use Only
If your child lives with a family, whether your own or someone else's, does that family mainly live on a government pension or benefit? (Don't answer this question or the next three if your children are living in a government or non-government institution)	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐	☐
Have you made an informal arrangement with friends or relatives (not their other parent) to look after your kids (that is, you've just organised it yourself)? If yes, - What are they living on? - Do they receive extra income from a government department to help towards caring for your child? (Don't count child endowment)	Yes ☐ No ☐ Wages ☐ Unemployment or Disability Pension ☐ Other Pension ☐ Child support ☐ Foster care allowance ☐ Don't know ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ Not possible ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Since you've been in prison have your kids had to move to a new house (even if the same person is looking after them)? If yes, how many times?	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ 	☐ ☐

		For Office Use Only
What sort of house or flat are they living in now?	Privately rented ☐	☐
	Owned or being paid off ☐	
	Rented from Dept. of Housing ☐	
	Group Home or Institution ☐	
	Don't know ☐	☐
Have you or the person looking after your children ever tried to get help or advice on family matters from any service or centre? If yes, which of these?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
	Don't know ☐	
	Prisoners aid group ☐	☐
	Jail welfare officer or psychologist ☐	☐
	Community Health ☐	☐
	Marriage Counselling ☐	☐
	Church groups ☐	☐
	Social workers ☐	☐
	Dept of Community Services (DOCs) ☐	☐
	Child abuse service ☐	☐
	St. Vincent de Paul, Smith Family or Salvation Army ☐	☐
	Other ☐	☐
	 ☐	
	Which was the <u>least</u> helpful?	
Which was the <u>most</u> helpful?	.....	☐

Any comments about these services you would like to make?	..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....	For Office Use Only
		☐ ☐
On your release, will you be living with your children?	Yes ☐ No ☐ Some of them ☐ I intend to ☐ Don't know ☐	☐
Do you think you'll need any special help or support when you get out to help you adjust to being with your children again?	Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm unsure ☐	☐

If any of your children have been put into a "home", fostered, or made a ward: please answer the set of questions on the next 2 pages, if this has not happened, please turn now to page 22 and finish this survey.

PART 3 (B) QUESTIONS ABOUT THOSE CHILDREN WHO'VE BEEN FOSTERED, MADE A WARD, PUT INTO A HOME		For Office Use Only
Were your child put into the home, fostered or made a ward before or after your imprisonment?	Before ☐ After ☐	☐
How many of your children altogether have been put in a substitute care situation either before or since your imprisonment? (Answer with a number, e.g. "2 kids").	..... .....	☐
Note: For this next set of questions, answer with a number if you have to - e.g., if 2 of your children are in substitute care, but only one of them went to court, your answer to the next question would read "Yes ☐ 1"; if they both went before a court, it would read simply "Yes ☒ X".		
Did these children go before a court? If yes: - Did you know you had the right to be present at the court hearing? - Were you present at the hearing? - Did you have a lawyer for yourself?	Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(continued)			For Office Use Only
- What is their status now? (Mark only one answer for each child)	Ward of the Minister of Dept. of Community Services	☐	☐
	Committed to the care of a church or charitable agency	☐	☐
	Committed to the care of a person	☐	☐
	Don't know	☐	☐
It's the responsibility of the Department of Community Services to explain to you what is happening to your children and what you will have to do to get them back.			
Has an official from this Department ever explained all this to you? Do you feel you understand it all properly?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
On the whole, do you think you had enough say in decisions made about your children?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
Does the person or institution looking after your kids keep in regular contact with you about how your children are?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
Are you satisfied with how your children are being cared for?	Yes	☐	☐
	No	☐	
	Don't know enough to say	☐	

		For Office Use Only
Do you want to live with your children when you get out?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	☐
	Don't know enough to say ☐	☐
If yes , are you worried that you might not get the kids returned to your care?	Yes ☐	☐
	No ☐	
Why?	.....	
		
		☐ ☐
		
		

Please turn the page and finish the survey

PART 4 CHANGES? <u>Everyone to Answer</u> This part is to get your ideas about what should be changed to make things easier for you and your kids. Write as much as you want, or as little, about what you think should be changed in these different areas:	For Office Use Only
IN JAIL ITSELF: Prison Visiting Arrangements: Other sorts of contact with you kids? (e.g. letters, phone calls, day leave, weekend leave, etc.) 	

Any help or support you'd like while you're in jail to help you with your kids? Anything else? 	For Office Use Only
FOR YOUR FAMILY AND KIDS OUTSIDE What could be done to help them with money or transport problems? What else do you think would help them cope better with you being in jail? Anything else? 	

	For Office Use Only
WHEN YOU GET OUT What problems do you think you might have to do with your kids? What might help you overcome them? 	

Thank you very much for filling all this in. We hope it will prove useful in the long run in helping all kids of prisoners. Copies of the final report will be sent to the prison libraries in March 2000 where you can read it. If you want your own copy please send your name to us.

YOUR STORY

It would be very helpful to us if we knew more detail about your own experience of being a parent in prison.

For example, we'd like to hear your perspective on events that took place, how you were feeling at the time, what your kids were going through, and so on.

If you'd like to help us with this, you could:

1. write down your story and send it to us in a letter;
2. explain it to one of our staff so they can write it down for you;
3. tape record your story and send us the cassette.

Your story will help us to raise awareness in the community about the kind of experiences you and your children have been through.

PLEASE NOTE: We will make sure that, when we use your story, it will be edited so that your identity and the identity of your children are completely disguised.

Thank you.