



Prison Fellowship Australia
WE GET THROUGH.

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



ART
inside



CHANGE
ON THE INSIDE



JOURNEY
a program of prison ministry international

Sycamore Tree
Project



CAMP
KIDS





Prison Fellowship Australia
WE GET THROUGH.

VISION

To share the gospel of Jesus Christ with prisoners and their families.

MISSION

To build relationships with those who do not know Jesus Christ, so that we can share His gospel with them, and to disciple those who know Him.

VALUES

Unity, integrity
& service.





CONTENTS

4	CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
5	GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT
6	WHY PRISON?
7	LOCAL CONTEXT
8-9	PROGRAMS OVERVIEW
10-11	IN FOCUS - SYCAMORE TREE PROJECT
12-13	IN FOCUS - CAMP FOR KIDS
14-15	FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



The most exciting news for me this year has been the relaunch of Prison Fellowship Australia's ministry in South Australia. The occasion was celebrated at an exciting and joyful event in the Adelaide Hills in August 2017. The Chairman of Prison Fellowship International, Ian Elliott, joined local volunteers and donors, the National Board, and State Managers from throughout the country to commission the new State Manager for South Australia and the Northern Territory, Ian Townsend. All present were encouraged by the spirit of cooperation and goodwill that was evident throughout the evening.

The event to relaunch our ministry in South Australia was the highlight of a weekend of sharing, planning and training that involved the National Board, the leadership team from the national office and the State Managers. These men and women are committed, creative, thorough and compassionate. They form a dynamic and supportive team who work together around the country

and continue to develop their effectiveness in supporting our amazing volunteers.

We give thanks to God for the continued growth in opportunities to present our world-class programs to inmates, former inmates, and their families. The statistics on pages 8 and 9 are a testament to this growth in opportunities, to the passion of our staff, volunteers and donors, and to God's provision. The statistics include the results of a three month survey of volunteers' activity, conducted during September to November 2017, that has given us the first ever detailed look at our ministry. This information will inform our planning and our communications with stakeholders for many years to come.

Many Christian ministries reported difficult financial conditions in 2017, and Prison Fellowship Australia was no exception. Our efforts to reduce expenditure during the year enabled us to limit the impact of our reduced income,

without any long term detriment to our capacity to fulfil our mission. I am very pleased, and very grateful to God, to be able to report that our income has bounced back in 2018 and that this will be reflected in our report for 2018-19.

We are blessed with a loyal and generous family of donors who share our vision and our passion for the mission that God has set before us. Thank you, thank you, thank you - many thousands of times over!!

I extend this "thank you" to all who are involved with me in this exciting and fulfilling ministry. Be encouraged! Be inspired! Be at peace!! God bless you all.

Michael Wood
Chairman

Daryl Myatt

Steven Nicholson

David Maxwell

Vera Ou-Young

Michael Wood

John Peberdy

David Cormack

Peter Hall

Absent:
Shane Ellery



**PRISON FELLOWSHIP
AUSTRALIA BOARD MEMBERS**



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

One morning in late January I received an email from our new SA/NT State Manager, Ian. The subject line read, "10 Prisoners made a commitment to Jesus on Saturday in Darwin!" This 'headline' was the culmination of 12-18 months of work to send a Prison Fellowship team into one of the last remaining prisons in Australia without a Prison Fellowship presence. What a joy to bring together visionary donors from across Australia, committed volunteers, a passionate prison chaplain and a Government Department that valued our input. This fledgling ministry in Darwin exemplifies the value of a national organisation, working together, where God's kingdom is of ultimate importance.

National unity was also evident in the re-launch of our South Australian ministry last August. As Michael our Chairman alludes to in his report, a spirit of cooperation flowed through the event and many people have been drawn to the ministry in the weeks and months that have followed.

Our 1000+ strong volunteer army continue to be the backbone of this ministry. Walking into a prison never becomes comfortable. Familiar, perhaps, but not comfortable. Prison is a dynamic environment and our volunteers do an incredible job week in, and week out, serving prisoners, and working alongside prison staff and other organisations in all correctional systems across Australia. They are wonderful ambassadors for Prison Fellowship Australia, but more importantly they are the hands and feet of Jesus, who has called each of them to serve 'on the inside'.

One of our strategic goals over the past 12 months was to increase our reliance on God for all things through prayer. To this end we invited many of our volunteers and supporters to pray for Prison Fellowship's ministry and now 3,000+ prayer partners receive prayer bulletins each week.

Of course we are continually blessed by the individual

donors and supporters who resource this work. Those who give financially enable thousands of meaningful interactions between our volunteers and those we serve every month. We also gratefully acknowledge a number of Government Departments, Trusts and Foundations who assist to make all our programs a reality. Thank you for your partnership!

Finally, I would like to extend a special 'thank-you' to our wonderful staff across the country, in particular our State Managers for their passionate dedication to this cause:

Sue Oliver – WA

Ian Townsend – SA/NT

Graham Hembrow – QLD

Richard Feeney – VIC

Peter Abood – NSW/ACT

God Bless,

Glen Fairweather
General Manager

WHY PRISON?

Loving Jesus Through Prisoners is Demanding But Deeply Rewarding

Not so long ago a man at a church function asked me an earnest – and very direct – question, not the slightly loaded one about why I visit a men’s prison. It was refreshing, especially because he didn’t accompany it with the slightly irritating “that’s amazing” response. He did me a favour, this man, because he set me on a path of reflection that I still stroll along, trying to answer this and similar questions (a personal challenge) without recourse to cliché.

So I’m going to answer this man boldly and honestly, but first an essential consideration is this: I am blessed to be old – or oldish, anyway – and this brings certain liberties. You can’t call everyone you meet “darling” when you’re 25, if you know what I mean. So, I go into a men’s prison because I have a desire to hang out with those whom society deems the lowest of the low (Matt. 25:36).

Most of all, I identify with the people I meet in prison. I stand in the same place as each of them apart from Christ, namely, before a holy and righteous and gloriously perfect Creator and Judge, condemned. One hundred per cent not good enough. A failure, though perhaps slightly less conspicuously than they are.

I feel especially privileged to be permitted entry into a place where few outsiders can go.

There is an always-present “wow”

feel in this, for me. To think that people who are, by order of the state, utterly separated from the rest of us, some never to walk among us again, completely curtailed in their capacity to operate with agency or liberty – to think that we prison volunteers may walk among them! And that in doing so, in a handshake or a smile or a brief chat or a deeper conversation, we may breathe out our love and our care and our concern and our hope and our longing, for them.

We spread the net as wide as we can, and if there is one or even two who respond we are overjoyed. My first lesson was this: each prisoner is uniquely different. I must not think “they”. The collective noun prisoners – if I am not vigilant – will sell both of us short, if it renders them merely a homogenous, unsavoury or dangerous mob, as can so easily happen. Even if both are true the men are still individuals with a unique background and life experience, and they must be regarded, and loved, as such.

If I had to nominate the most oft-repeated comment in my prison conversations it would sound something like this: “God is way more merciful than we are. You may never be forgiven by ... but you can know that you are forgiven by the One who matters most.” And I remind myself that just having someone listen to our

ugly baggage can be a milestone in our healing or recovery, or maybe just a leg-up in our slow struggle toward a better life. It is hardly necessary to raise the subject of God or faith or purpose. It is the glaring reality of those men who want to talk, who open up about themselves and their problems. And in prison we enjoy a particular freedom, an absence of the normal impediments for connecting with strangers. No need for niceties, just “Hello miss, what do you do/ what are you here for?”

Despite what I said about being unshockable, I do have to hear and see things that I would much rather avoid. There may be a gruesomely sordid tale behind a man’s incarceration, but this is a cost we must face, to be told the details of some such tales.

It’s also true that a maximum security prison is not a pleasant physical environment. There are unpleasant smells. There is no beauty, there is little colour, there is only harshness and hardness in the physical realm, hard surfaces and heavy doors and metal gates and barbed-wire fences and multiple locks. I guess all that makes it a place where people who love God must be!

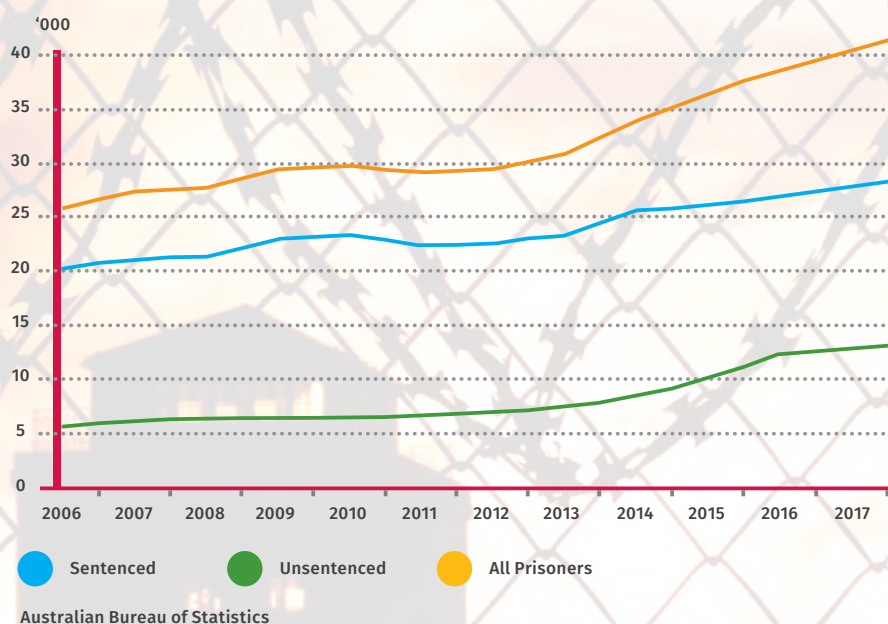
Morag Zwartz

First published in the *Australian Presbyterian*

PRISONS IN AUSTRALIA

RISE IN PRISON POPULATION

PRISONERS - 30 June 2006 to 30 June 2017



**TOTAL NUMBER
OF INMATES IN
AUSTRALIA:**

41,202

**NUMBER OF
PRISONS:**

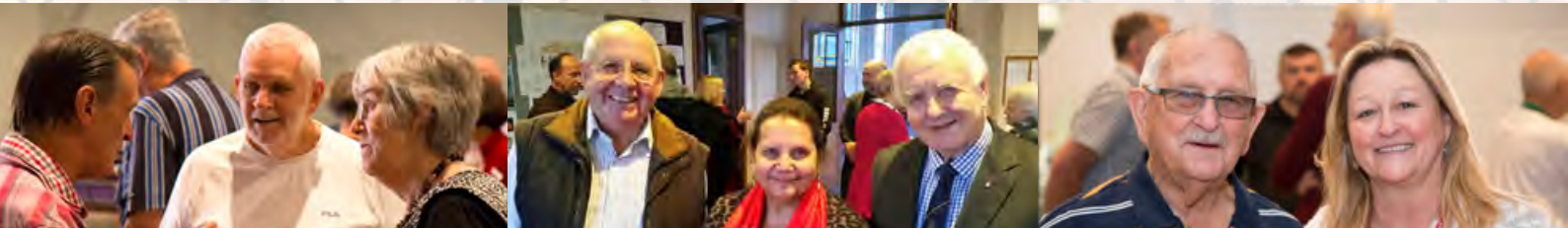
98

**“ I like the help and ability
to openly ask questions
relating to religion
without judgement. ”**

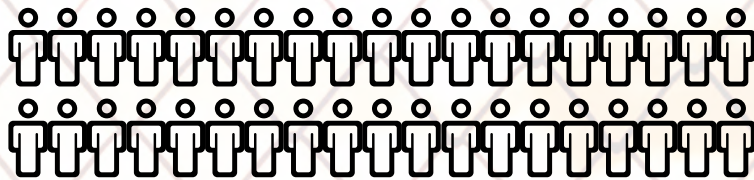
The Prisoner's Journey course graduate

“The Prisoner’s Journey DVD gave me some perspective about my own experiences too... The whole course changed my life completely.”

The Prisoner’s Journey course graduate

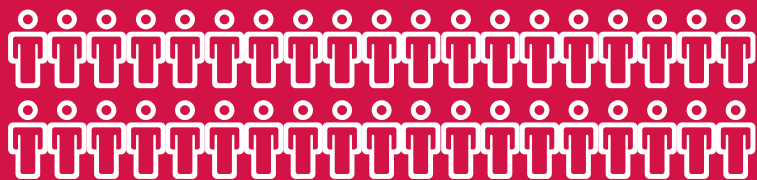


OUR MINISTRY IN 2017/18



1675
COMMITTED
DONORS

1059
ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

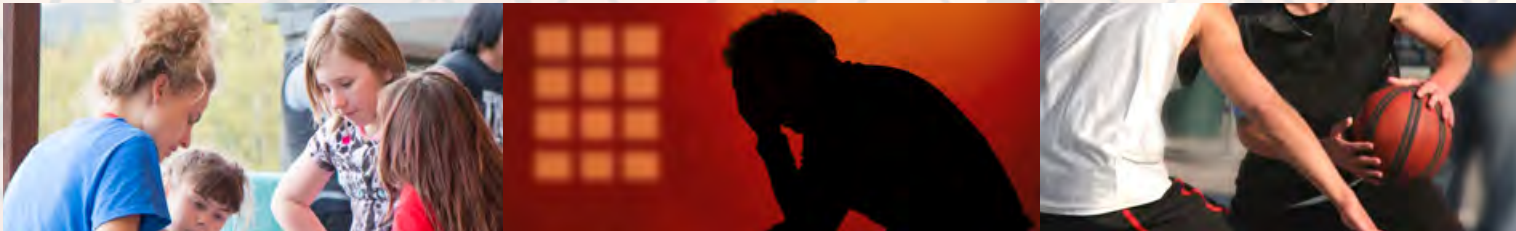


523
SUPPORTING
CHURCHES

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

86,736

MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS WITH INMATES



318



500



300



109



TOTAL GIFTS
6959



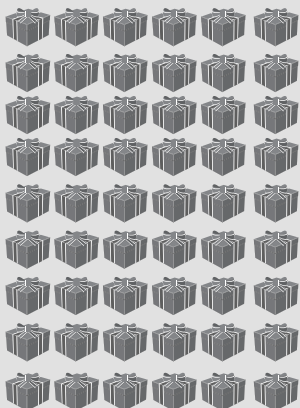
118



209



173



3285
PRAYER
SUPPORTERS



FACE-TO-FACE WITH COMPASSION



The Sycamore Tree Project is a powerful restorative justice program where victims and non-related perpetrators come face to face.

Some prisoners, for their own protection, are separated from the general prison population and we recently commenced a Sycamore Tree program with this group.

They are often the most despised and judged people in the prison system. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book "The Cost of Discipleship" contrasted judgement with love:

"Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating.

By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are."

Before we commenced a program with prisoners in the protected unit we were approached by a young lady, Mia*, who wanted to be a part of the Sycamore Tree program.

Now, as we near the completion

of the program, she has written the following letter sharing her experience:

I am fortunate enough to be a part of the Sycamore Tree Project with the wonderful team at Prison Fellowship Australia - WA.

I had reservations about contacting Prison Fellowship regarding their restorative justice program, the Sycamore Tree Project.

My trauma counsellor strongly encouraged me though, believing it beneficial to meet prisoners currently serving time for crimes similar to what had been committed against me.

As a victim of ongoing childhood sexual and psychological abuse I have, despite my best efforts, struggled with severe mental health challenges all my life.

I was so desperate to be free of the crippling PTSD that had been with me all my life that I was willing to try anything - even if it meant entering a prison to meet with convicted paedophiles.

Sycamore Tree Project®



Each week I am amazed by the kindness, compassion and understanding the Sycamore Tree Project team demonstrate towards the prisoners in our group who, like me, are quite often struggling with complex childhood trauma.

The challenge with childhood trauma is that it affects every part of your life. Some days I struggle to eat, sleep and maintain the personal and professional relationships that are so important to me.

I have always been pro-active with my condition and have built quite the support team with my doctor, psychologist and trauma counsellor. I would not have made it this far without them.

I have been in therapy for three years and while my clinical psychologist is an extremely talented woman, nothing will ever beat my involvement with the Sycamore Tree Project.

Being part of the Sycamore Tree Project has taken my experience of life to a whole new level. I have been given the opportunity to confront my deepest fears and the darkest parts of my past with the loving support of the project facilitators and even the prisoners.

As someone who does not identify as Christian, I have been accepted whole heartedly for who I am and I cannot tell you how much I appreciate this fact.

I see each week the positive impact Prison Fellowship has on the prisoners who so desperately want - and deserve - another chance at life.

For me, the Sycamore Tree Project makes that second chance possible and I don't think I could ever express how grateful I am for the opportunity to be part of the experience.

Mia*

*Name has been changed.



“ I HAVE BEEN IN THERAPY FOR THREE YEARS AND WHILE MY CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST IS AN EXTREMELY TALENTED WOMAN, NOTHING WILL EVER BEAT MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SYCAMORE TREE PROJECT. ”

A LASTING IMPACT

Saskia's story shows how much your support helps families, especially the children. Thank you!

"I think I first heard about Camp for Kids when I saw a flyer in prison. I took the boys (now aged 15, 13 and 9) to visit their dad in jail, and I saw a flyer in the waiting room. I ended up ringing up and went on camp that same year."

In 2010, Prison Fellowship in Victoria ran a 'Camp for Mums' at a nearby campsite in the same week as 'Camp for Kids'. Saskia wanted to check out whether Prison Fellowship's camp was suitable for her kids, so she attended 'Camp for Mums' with her youngest son, Ryan, who was only one year old at the time.

"I saw how decent the workers were and it was a safe way for me to have a couple of days away to replenish myself as a single mum and know my kids were safe. It was a good way to get to know other people in my situation that I wouldn't otherwise get to. The Prison Fellowship staff and volunteers genuinely did care and I knew they would look after my kids and centre them in the things of faith and I wanted my kids to have that influence in their life."

That same year, Saskia's oldest sons, Hamish and Rory, went on Camp for Kids together for the first time.

Fast forward eight years, and eldest son Hamish, now 15, has been on every single camp since 2010. When he graduated primary school, he was offered the chance to be trained as a junior leader. Alongside his camp attendance, Hamish has been mentored through his primary and now high school years.

"Hamish even went to his mentor's wedding two weeks ago! I think they will always stay in touch because they have such a great bond. It has been a blessing, to have someone young and hip who has good values in his life. My friends don't always have that kind of influence, so it has been a blessing."

Saskia says Camp for Kids has had a lasting impact in her boys' lives.

"They are always sad when it's over. They've actually all cried when they've left! Camp gave them the chance to meet other kids who are dealing with the same things. None of their school friends know who their dad is, so having a common thing with other kids on camp allows the boys to have that issue exposed with their peers where they won't be judged. They can't do that in normal life without being tarnished with the same brush as their father, so Camp helps them to cope.

"I'd recommend Camp for Kids to other parents because it gives the kids something to look forward to and people to bond with. It helps them to have faith. **Prison Fellowship have been unimposing, so Christianity is a welcoming thing. My kids come home talking openly and positively about the Bible.**

"Camp for Kids is something I wouldn't be able to manage on my budget. I'm a single mum, and I don't normally get a chance to have a good rest. **To be given that opportunity, for the kids and also for myself to have a break, is sometimes all you need to keep going and not lose hope.** Not just for the kids, but for me as well."





CAMP
for
KIDS

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JANUARY 2018

Revenue:

	2018	2017
Donations	985,750	994,675
Grants	394,787	319,782
Bequests	9,069	52,823
Sales	76,945	81,914
Interest	8,635	9,867
Other	38,439	31,203
TOTAL	1,513,625	1,490,264

Expenses:

	2018	2017
Program Expenses	438,121	409,405
Staff & Program Support	911,223	704,886
Administration & Accountability	398,953	405,695
TOTAL	1,748,297	1,519,986
Surplus/(Deficit)	(234,672)	(29,722)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31ST JANUARY 2018

Assets

	2018	2017
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	551,037	697,646
Trade & other receivables	52,978	22,603
Inventories	-	300
Other	5,908	14,518
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	609,923	735,067
Non-Current Assets		
Property, plant & equipment	73,351	52,063
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	73,351	52,063
TOTAL ASSETS	683,274	787,130

Liabilities

Current Liabilities		
Trade & other payables	112,671	61,761
Grants/Income received in advance	90,127	61,485
Provisions	57,542	43,798
Other	51,935	14,715
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	312,275	181,759
Non-Current Liabilities		
Other	73,948	73,648
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	73,948	73,648
TOTAL LIABILITIES	386,223	255,407
NET ASSETS	297,051	531,723
TOTAL EQUITY	297,051	531,723



Prison Fellowship Australia

Unit 2/9-11 Highview Drive, Doncaster, VIC 3108

PO Box 280, Doncaster Heights, VIC 3109

Phone: 03 9848 1224

Email: aus.office@prisonfellowship.org.au

Web: www.prisonfellowship.org.au

ABN 85 005 883 161