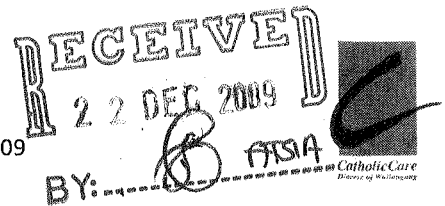


**CatholicCare - Juvenile Justice Chaplaincy**

House of Representatives Inquiry:

*Indigenous Juveniles and Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System – Nov 24 – 2009*

A RESPONSE FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE CHAPLAINCY

**PREAMBLE**

Chaplaincy Services at both the *Reiby* Juvenile Justice Centre {JJC}/ at Airds - NSW and previously at the former *Keelong* JJ C {up until February 2009}/ at Unanderra/ NSW - are auspiced by CatholicCare Wollongong .

Chaplaincy ministries that have sought to encompass the Indigenous detainee population at both these Centres. The Chaplain is concerned with the care of all people within the institution and those affected by the institutions (residents, relatives and staff), regardless of religious denomination affiliation, or lack of affiliation.

As of March 2009/ when the Juvenile Justice Chaplaincy Coordinator's role was formally established by the Department of Juvenile Justice {DJJ} & the Civil Chaplains Advisory Committee {CCAC} - the Coordinator has embarked on a number of initiatives that seek to broaden and deepen the liaison between Juvenile Justice Chaplaincy throughout the whole DJJ in NSW and in particular within each JJC.

A *Memorandum of Understanding {MoU}* between the CCAC and the DJJ clearly outlines the expectations/ roles of a Chaplain within the DJJ. Specifically in ministering to Indigenous juvenile detainees in detention within the DJJ - it is assumed that a Chaplain will facilitate the cultural/ moral/ religious and spiritual development of these Young People {YP} - achieved/ in part/ by connecting the Indigenous YP to his/her wider Koori community as well as the provision of relevant programmes - as will be outlined below

A Chaplain is not a social welfare or caseworker/ project or liaison officer/ etc - such roles are fulfilled by others in the DJJ.

**House of Representatives Standing Committee Inquiry**

*"{What are some} best practice examples of programmes that support diversion of Indigenous people from juvenile detention Centres and crime and provide support for those returning from such Centres?"*

In 2006 an *Evaluation Report* was commissioned by the DJJ.<sup>1</sup> This was followed up with a *Response* from the DJJ - containing various recommendations - some of which have been implemented in the intervening years.<sup>2</sup>

The incarceration of Indigenous Juveniles and young adults is an Australia wide issue - as the recent comprehensive *Report* from the Federal Government's *Australia Institute of Health and Welfare* outlines in its broad study of Juvenile Justice Systems throughout the nation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf\\_hm/publications/research/AORSP\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_hm/publications/research/AORSP_Final_Report.pdf) An *Evaluation* - commissioned by the DJJ entitled: *An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Over Representation Strategy – 1-06-2006*

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf\\_hm/publications/research/AboriginalReport2006Response.pdf](http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_hm/publications/research/AboriginalReport2006Response.pdf) The *Response* of the DJJ to the *Evaluation* in footnote # 1 by the DJJ. Issued on 3—06-2006. As a result a number of initiatives were implemented within the DJJ – including the establishment of a specifically designated *Aboriginal Strategic Consultative Unit* within the DJJ with which the Chaplaincy liaises

<sup>3</sup> *Juvenile Justice in Australia 2007 – 2008/* published November 2009. Available at: [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

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### NSW DJJ CHAPLAINCY COORDINATOR

One key aspect of the role of the newly created position of JJ Chaplaincy Coordinator is to animate individual Chaplains and Chaplaincy Services in general throughout DJJ Centres in NSW.

- **Aboriginal focus for Annual Chaplains' Conference -**

Chaplains convene annually for their conference - this year - held at the Wagga Wagga JJC - known as *Riverina* - at the end of July. It was attended by the NSW Minister for Juvenile Justice/ Graham West MP and the Chief Executive of the DJJ/ Peter Muir. Both addressed the Conference.

The theme for this event was squarely focused on the Aboriginal over-representation of juveniles within the DJJ.: *Ministering more effectively to our Koori Kids*.

Koori presenters were also invited and addressed the Chaplains about their concerns. The Manager of the DJJ's *Aboriginal Strategic Consultative Unit (ASCU)* Ms Edwina Crawford/ attended & addressed the meeting.

- **Liaison with two Aboriginal working bodies in DJJ:**

1. As a result - a clear liaison has been established between Chaplaincy ministry & the *ASCU*. This connection will/ it is hoped/ assist the Chaplains in implementing a programme for which they are responsible in each Centre: known as the *Aboriginal Focus Scheme (AFS)*- mention in more detail will be made of this in this paper.
2. Another outcome from the Wagga Conference has been the invitation from the *ASCU* to the Chaplaincy Coordinator to participate in a DJJ body/ set-up as a result of the 2006 *Report* cited earlier/ the *Aboriginal Staff Advisory Committee (ASAC)*.

### PROJECTS FOR 2010

- I. The plan for 2010 is to ensure regular communication with both bodies - the *ASCU* and *ASAC* - feeding back relevant information for DJJ Chaplains.
- II. Another aim for 2010 is to assist those Chaplains/ Centres that do not as yet have a functional *AFS* programme - to establish one. To achieve this - assistance will be invited from the *ASCU* as well.

In a DJJ Centre - at *Reiby* JJC: The Aboriginal Focus Scheme

Each Chaplain has the responsibility of implementing a programme known as the *AFS* in each Centre.<sup>4</sup> The *AFS* is a programme that admits Aboriginal people into a Centre to meet/ interact with Aboriginal YP in detention. Mostly - these folk are known as "aunties and uncles"

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<sup>4</sup> Background as how and why the *AFS* is a part of the Chaplaincy Services is too lengthy to outline here – in brief: the *AFS* originated out of a specific Chaplaincy position – to which a Koori Chaplain was appointed to minister to Koori juveniles in detention. This role was abrogated and the *AFS* took its place, The moneys attached to the former Koori Chaplaincy – were redistributed throughout all DJJ Centres in NSW

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and bring their Aboriginality/ culture/ experience to Koori YP Often aunts and uncles will conduct a programme - which is meant to have a "pastoral" focus.

At *Reiby* JJC - the *AFS* has been conducted for nearly 8 years - twice monthly. Over that period it has engaged an uncle & three aunties. It is still being conducted.<sup>5</sup>

A new uncle is to join the team and will specifically offer a pastoral slant.

As a result of meetings between *Reiby* Management and the *Aboriginal Staff Advisory Committee* at *Reiby* - two uncles have been attending the Centre in recent times as well.

There is no doubt that the *AFS* assists in "normalising" the YP's relationships/ community and family connections. It also brings the YP connections with his Aboriginality - his culture & spirituality.

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<sup>5</sup> The *AFS* was also conducted once monthly at the former *Keelong* JJ Centre. The three aunts who ran the *AFS* also came to *Keelong* for about four years until it closed earlier in 2009

