

-----Original Message-----

From: Kate Cullinan

Sent: Monday, July 30, 2001 11:39 PM

To: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Subject: re mandatory sentencing bill

ATTENTION: Committee Members (My apologies to Members of the Committee, I am just learning the technology and as you can see am having difficulties! I hope, however that my poor formatting in no way detracts from what is a very serious and harmful situation)I wish to write a submission supporting the banning of mandatory sentencing for all property crime (for both adults and children) as it applies currently in WA and the NT.

My submission is based upon the following:**That mandatory sentencing does not reduce crime and it harmful to the community.*** Western Australia and the Northern Territory have the highest rates of home burglary and attempted home burglary in Australia.* Northern Territory Correctional Services report that the rate of re-offending has not gone down since mandatory sentencing was introduced.* The majority of offenders who are caught are Aboriginal and committed their offences in a remote Aboriginal community. North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service criminal lawyers report that most had not heard of mandatory sentencing and did not understand it.All available evidence clearly shows that imprisoning people at an early stage of their development is damaging.* Mandatory sentencing sends young adults to detention for minor offences. It results in increased contact between people who commit minor offences and more serious criminal elements.* Mandatory sentencing is increasing the incarceration of Aboriginal people, women and juveniles.* The Territory imprisons almost four times as many of its citizens as any other State or Territory of Australia.* Aboriginal people make up 73% of the Northern Territory's prison population.* Between June 1996 and March 1999 adult imprisonment increased by 40%.* The number of women in prison has increased by 485%.t. A person cannot be deterred by something they do not know about.

Kate Cullinan