

13 May 2025

Department of Justice  
Office of the Secretary  
Hobart Tasmania 7000  
attn: Deputy Secretary, Corrective Services

via email: [rod.wise@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:rod.wise@justice.tas.gov.au)

To Rod Wise,  
**Re: *Corrections Amendment Regulations 2025***

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Community Legal Centres Tasmania (CLC Tas) and the Justice Reform Initiative welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the consultation on the *Corrections Amendment Regulations 2025*.<sup>1</sup> We are not opposed to the Tasmanian Government's decision to establish a Compulsory Savings Program (CSP) for prisoners and remandees but believe that successful re-integration is more likely to be achieved by implementing the recommendations of the recently released *Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention* report.

### **Compulsory Savings Program**

The Government's CSP program is being proposed against a background in which the Department of Justice is raising prisoner allowances by an additional 10 per cent, after raising the allowance by 10 per cent in December 2024. Expressed in another way, the State Government is paying for the CSP through the increase in the prisoner allowance.

However, a person imprisoned for 3 months or less and in receipt of the minimum allowance of \$15.00 per week will receive \$19.50 in CSP on their release which will only pay for the cost of public transport into the Hobart Central Business District and a cheap meal. We strongly believe that no-one should be imprisoned for three months or less as the loss of employment, accommodation and family ties is only exacerbated by the lack of rehabilitation programs made available to persons serving these short sentences. And the saving of \$19.50 through the CSP is unlikely to "provide a platform for successful reintegration of prisoners by providing access to funds for immediate reintegration costs".<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, for persons imprisoned for six months (CSP = \$124.80) and 12 months (CSP = \$249.60) the amount of money saved is unlikely to provide any meaningful platform for successful reintegration.

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<sup>1</sup> CLC Tas would like to acknowledge those persons and organisations who gave freely of their time in assisting with our submission.

<sup>2</sup> Tasmanian Prison Service, *Fact Sheet - Corrections Regulations Amendment (Compulsory Savings Program) 2025*.

- ***CSP and Crisis Payment***

The CSP will have an impact on post-release eligibility to a Centrelink 'Crisis Payment'. Currently, the Centrelink Crisis Payment is paid to persons exiting prison who have cash of less than 2 weeks of the maximum rate of income support. The maximum rate of Jobseeker payment is \$781.10 per fortnight.<sup>3</sup> The maximum rate of Disability Support Pension is \$1051.30 per fortnight.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the CSP will result in some persons imprisoned for four years and otherwise entitled to JobSeeker effectively receiving nothing, as payment of the CSP will cancel out the Crisis Payment. Similarly, persons imprisoned for 5 years but otherwise entitled to a Disability Support Pension will also effectively receive no benefit. However, it is also acknowledged that the proportion of persons exiting prison after exactly 4-5 years will be small and the CSP will provide valuable lessons for participants in savings and budgeting.

- ***CSP and interest accrued***

The CSP will be particularly useful for persons serving longer terms of imprisonment. However, inflation is likely to erode the savings. We therefore recommend that the savings are placed in an interest-bearing account and that interest accrued is paid out when persons exit prison.

- ***CSP and 'opt out' for remandees and those serving less than three months imprisonment***

As noted above, remandees and those imprisoned for 3 months or less and in receipt of the minimum allowance of \$15.00 per week will receive \$19.50 in CSP. Given the small amount of savings, we believe that this cohort should have the option of 'opting out'. In short, remandees and those serving short sentences should be encouraged but not forced to commit to the CSP.

## **Reintegration**

In 2010 the then Minister for Corrections and Consumer Protection Nick McKim MP asked Mick Palmer AO APM to conduct an independent inquiry into the Risdon Prison Complex. The Inquiry report was released in 2011 with the findings including:<sup>5</sup>

- *The lack of employment, programs and education available to prisoners was the number one concern and complaint of nearly all custodial officers, supervisors and managers who spoke to the Inquiry.*
- *Most prisoners in maximum and medium security units are bored by inactivity and are simply being warehoused, rather than being purposefully case managed through re-offending programs and other constructive activities.*
- *There are insufficient staff resources for prisoner education.*

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<sup>3</sup> Australian Government, 'How much JobSeeker you can get'. As found at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-much-jobseeker-payment-you-can-get?context=51411> (accessed 12 May 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government, 'How much Disability Support Pension you can get'. As found at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/payment-rates-for-disability-support-pension?context=22276> (Accessed 12 May 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Mick Palmer, *Risdon Prison Complex Inquiry* (March 2011) at 26.

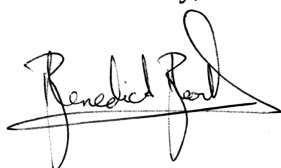
In 2025, a Legislative Council parliamentary inquiry reviewed adult imprisonment and youth detention in Tasmania finding:<sup>6</sup>

- *Tasmania remains severely under-resourced and underdeveloped in terms of mental health services within the prison system.*
- *There is inadequate throughcare and post prison services for exiting prisoners due to insufficient resourcing and accessibility of services.*
- *Exiting prisoners are commonly released with limited supply of prescribed medication. However, difficulty accessing General Practitioners can lead to interrupted treatment.*
- *There is insufficient Tasmanian Government funding for post release support programs.*
- *Access to public housing for those exiting prison, rather than homelessness services or receiving private rental assistance, reduces recidivism. The Beyond the Wire program is successful in reducing recidivism amongst participants, however it is only funded to support a fraction of those assessed as eligible.*
- *There is a lack of culturally appropriate support services for Tasmanian Aboriginal people in prison.*
- *There is a lack of prison employment opportunities for prisoners.*
- *Other jurisdictions provide vocational qualifications to prisoners undertaking prison industry jobs commensurate with the trades undertaken.*

We have no objections to the introduction of the CSP but strongly recommend the implementation of a number of reforms (interest and 'opt out'). We also note that the best way to ensure a successful reintegration of persons exiting prison is to commit to the recommendations made in the *Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention – Final Report*.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,



Benedict Bartl  
Policy Officer  
**Community Legal Centres Tasmania**



Pat Burton  
Advocacy and Campaign Coordinator  
**Justice Reform Initiative**

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<sup>6</sup> Parliament of Tasmania, *Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention – Final Report* (March 2025) at 4-8.