

**Submission
No 1**

**INQUIRY INTO HIGH LEVEL OF FIRST NATIONS
PEOPLE IN CUSTODY AND OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW OF
DEATHS IN CUSTODY**

Name: Mr Grant Mistler

Date Received: 2 July 2020

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Dear Select Committee on First Nations People in Custody in New South Wales

RE: Inquiry into the First Nations People in Custody in New South Wales

Thank you very much for bringing this matter to the forefront of our minds. As a State without a clear human rights protocol, we appear to have ongoing human services problems with negotiating safety in aged care, in disability and in young people. These issues of perceived safety must be addressed, as these are the same societal underpinnings also facing First Nations communities across NSW. Clearly goals do not work, as recidivism rates remain static over time.

For this inquiry, I wish to lodge my submission that I lodged for the previous inquiry "Support for Children of Imprisoned Parents in New South Wales", as the research and recommendations contained within may provide some discussion insights for this current inquiry.

I also wish to lodge my "Phoenix Program Evaluation" of a prison-based therapeutic community I conducted and authored for NSW Corrective Services in 2007. This may facilitate discussions on "what do we want our society to feel like", as we are caught in the revolving door of recidivism.

Lastly, I wish to include the 1996 groundbreaking research report "Indigenous Deaths in Custody" by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (the barrister Mick Dodd) for the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. That formidable research, now located on the Australian Human Rights Commission website, included a comprehensive collaboration of Indigenous organisations, professors, academics, researchers and subject matter experts from across Australia. That landmark research analysed seven years of coronial data from 1989 to 1996, and found "Indigenous people [in custody] were more likely to die from natural causes while non-Indigenous people were more likely to die from gunshot and drug overdoses".¹

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read my submission towards this germane inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Grant Mistler

¹ <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/indigenous-deaths>