

## Stakeholder submission - Call for input current issues and good practice in prison management

Emailed to [sharon.critoph@un.org](mailto:sharon.critoph@un.org) and CC'd [hrc-sr-torture@un.org](mailto:hrc-sr-torture@un.org) on November 21, 2023

My name is Jessica Williams. I am an Australian permanent resident; having lived here since relocating from the United States of America in 2010.

I was incarcerated in America at the age of 16 yrs. and 17 yrs. old. As an adult, I have devoted years to advocating for women and our rights, including and often focusing on incarcerated women. I have founded two organisations that advocate for the rights of incarcerated women and girls – Single Sex Prisons Australia<sup>1</sup>, the peak Australian body for the sex-based rights of incarcerated women, and the International Network for Incarcerated Girls and Women<sup>2</sup>.

I have worked diligently to research, analyse and assess human rights violations and other issues regarding the safety and dignity of incarcerated women and girls. I have identified and determined key problems as well as solutions to those problems.

I work with numerous other advocates for women and numerous organisations that advocate for the rights of women, including incarcerated women (and girls). I represent the views and experiences of women directly impacted by incarceration.

This stakeholder submission includes links to existing documents and other material which address concerns noted by the Special Rapporteur;

*“... growing pressure on national prison systems, many of which are severely overcrowded, under-resourced and poorly managed. Authorities report struggling to manage facilities safely, humanely and in accordance with international human rights standards.”*

This submission also highlights:

- Good practices and best practice examples;
- Major challenges and their causes;
- Recommendations on how to improve existing prison management;
- Designing daily life in prisons to be focused on meaningful and productive activities, rehabilitation and reintegration, and achieving good physical and psychological health;
- Laws, policies, special measures and management innovations adopted for groups with specific needs, such as women and girls, children and youth, indigenous peoples, members of national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, and people living with past trauma;
- Maintaining human rights standards in prisons outsourced to private companies;

and other issues of pressing concern that are not specifically listed.

The points of concern, solutions and other information contained within the documents that form this submission pertain to issues that exist on global and local levels.

I welcome opportunities to give further information, or clarification (if needed), on the matter of the human rights of incarcerated women and girls.

Jessica Williams, Women's Advocate and Founder of SSPA & INIGW



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<sup>1</sup> [Single Sex Prisons Australia \(SSPA\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [International Network for Incarcerated Girls and Women](#)

## **University of New South Wales CEDAW Hearing Witness statement (and annexure)**

I participated in a (mock) hearing, led by the Honourable Dr Jocelyne Scutt - Barrister & Human Rights Lawyer, in preparation for Australia's upcoming ninth periodic report at CEDAW's 86th session, and reference may be made to it in a report of the hearings, and it may be used in an NGO submission to the CEDAW Committee.

<https://jkwilliamsoriginalwork.wordpress.com/2023/06/02/university-of-nsw-cedaw-hearing-witness-statement/>

## **Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework - Submission 154 from Single Sex Prisons Australia**

SSPA's stakeholder submission to the Inquiry into Human Rights Framework; accepted by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

<https://jkwilliamsoriginalwork.wordpress.com/2023/11/20/sspa-submission-154-ahrc-inquiry/>

## **Universal Declaration on the Rights of Incarcerated Girls and Women (UDRIGW)**

The UDRIGW was established to provide universal uniform definitions and standards regarding all matters pertaining to the incarceration of girls and women in any form of penal system or facility, including youth facilities, detention centres, post-release centres, probation & parole programs, community-residential facilities and transitional housing, particularly regarding the sex-based rights and treatment of incarcerated girls and women, and it should be used in addition to United Nations and State official rules and policies which meet the standards set forth therein.

The UDRIGW serves as a universal uniform set of standards of which, in order to achieve, states need to make necessary and crucial changes to better protect, support and value incarcerated girls & women. The UDRIGW can be used to form and strengthen other standards for legislation regarding incarcerated women, and regarding facilities that provide services for other vulnerable women (i.e.: domestic violence refuges, rape crisis centres, mental health facilities, women's health clinics and services etc.).

The Universal Declaration on the Rights of Incarcerated Girls and Women is open for all governments and official bodies to endorse, ratify and implement.

Download the UDRIGW here (either of the two links):

<https://theinigw.wixsite.com/inigw/declaration>

<https://jkwilliamsoriginalwork.wordpress.com/2023/02/08/universal-declaration-on-the-rights-of-incarcerated-girls-and-women/>

Please take the time to review the University of New South Wales CEDAW Hearing Witness statement (and annexure), Submission 154 from Single Sex Prisons Australia to the Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights framework, and the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Incarcerated Girls and Women.

This concludes my stakeholder submission. Thank you.