

**From:** Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres in Victoria [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 April 2017 12:14 PM  
**To:** Youth Justice System in Victoria Inquiry  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres in Victoria

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres in Victoria

Ms. Cath Lyons

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## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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I write to implore the government to take on new approaches to Youth detention and other youth services. The punitive approaches to institutions for young people are now out-dated, and resulting in very poor outcomes. It is time that government, youth service providers and community groups come together and develop a more holistic approach to youth recovery and rehabilitation.

The World Health Organisation clearly outlines the needs of adolescents [http://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/topics/adolescence/graphics/en/](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/graphics/en/). This institution defines adolescence as up to the age of 19 years. Data, levels of re-offense, and youth suicide in Australia is telling us clearly that punitive, and isolation approaches to intervention and post-vention in adolescent behavioural problems is not working. Actually, the data is telling us that we as a society are failing miserably and without serious changes in approaches, nothing is going to change.

Research into the benefits of various health-based approaches to adolescent care is demonstrating success. Institutions that adopt approaches that include educational interventions, ARTS and Sports opportunities, sustainable living education, food gardening education, mentoring approaches, and practical life skill developments are succeeding.

One easy to read article is here: <http://www.news-herald.com/article/HR/20090830/NEWS/308309987> .

Research into the benefits of gardening, and then food gardening clearly demonstrate that land converted to this task, produces ample nourishment to encourage positive brain function and assists in all areas of rehabilitation. Many of the young people in these institutions have experienced tremendous hardship as children and young people, including being denied access to fresh, healthy food. By providing food gardening education, governments would eventually reduce their own food bill, and provide life long skills to the juveniles, provide nourishment towards their mental health outcomes, and mitigate ongoing food insecurity for the individuals as they would have learnt to grow their own.

Millions of people immigrated to Melbourne from Mediterranean cultures in the mid twentieth century. As Melbournians, we have access to a plethora of food gardening experts and Mediterranean examples to

follow. Should this rich culture be invested into juveniles in Victorian government institutions, we stand to improve their outcomes in mental health, physical nourishment and life long food security skills.

I recommend rehabilitation approaches to all government juvenile institutions and first and foremost, apply food gardening interventions in all juvenile psychiatric, detention, residential/foster care and rehabilitation institutions.

Long term, governments stand to save millions should juveniles be rehabilitated.

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File1:

File2:

File3: