



Christians for an Ethical Society Canberra

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The ACT Prison – Can it be human, even rehabilitate?

MEDIA RELEASE

“The A.C.T., like other regions of Australia, would have less need to invest heavily in a prison if the disadvantage that afflicts those who will fill it had been effectively tackled,” said Professor Tony Vinson, one time head of the NSW prison system and a leading social scientist and outspoken public intellectual.

“My research has shown that the rate of prison admissions from the 3 per cent of locations in the ACT that are most disadvantaged is seven times greater than in the remainder of the territory.”

Professor Vinson is speaking at a forum at 7.30pm this Tuesday, 26th February, at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Kings Ave, Barton.

“We know what we should be doing. The characteristics differentiating markedly disadvantaged areas from others throughout Australia are very similar to those of 30 years ago”, Professor Vinson continued. “In the same time prison population has risen alarmingly.”

“The first priority should be to remedy relevant social inequities and the social roots of offending,” he said.

“Prison should be a last resort because experience shows it mostly inflicts further damage. There should therefore be an appropriate menu of other punishments that keep people out of prison.”

Professor Vinson is pleased to see that the ACT Government has committed itself to the prison providing a range of helpful support services for inmates.

He said that the likelihood of these services proving beneficial depends on the careful co-ordination of what is offered with support services in the community.”

This Forum is the first of three that Christians for an Ethical Society or CES – Canberra is organising on prisons. The Attorney-General, Simon Corbell, will speak at the second to be held on the evening of Wednesday, 19 March.

The CES chose to focus on the prison because it so closely engages Christian ethics in at least three ways: concern for the outcast, ensuring justice to the disadvantaged and bringing about healing for the victim and the community.

Time of forum: 7:30pm Tuesday 26th February 2008.

Venue: Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Kings Ave, Barton

Contacts: Tony Vinson 0412 035 077 or Heather McLaren: 02 6291 4537.