

SENATOR LIDIA THORPE

MEDIA RELEASE



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MORE PEOPLE IN PRISON DESPITE LESS CRIME, PRODUCTIVITY
COMMISSION REPORT FINDS

29 October 2021

Today, the Productivity Commission released their research paper: *Australia's Prison Dilemma*. The paper reports that imprisonment rates have increased by more than 35% despite crime rates dropping.

“Our legal system fails too many people. It fails First Nations people regularly, and the consequences can be a matter of life or death.” Said the Greens spokesperson for Justice, Senator Lidia Thorpe.

“Our country needs a smarter, more ambitious approach to fixing our criminal legal system. First Nations people in particular are being disproportionately targeted by the system, often with devastating effects on people and their communities.

“The Australia's Prison Dilemma report shows us that 42% of imprisoned people are serving for non-violent offences, 15% are considered low risk. It's astonishing that a third of all imprisoned people are on remand.

“The report echoes what First Nations people have been saying for decades, that we need to prioritise our self-determination and properly resource our community-run services like Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, health and social support services. Our people are the most effective at prevention and building strong and healthy communities.”

“Ultimately, the best way to reduce crime is to prevent it. We must reform the criminal legal system by preventing people getting caught up in it in the first place. Prioritising strong communities over prisons and other punitive measures is also known as justice reinvestment.”

“If we want justice in our communities, we need to look at alternatives to prison. The report recommends culturally safe, community-based programs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sentencing courts, diversion and trauma-informed wrap-around services.