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CHURCHES PROTEST CHRISTMAS DAY PRISON VISITS

“Over 2,700 children and family members have visited prisoners on Christmas Day for the past 16 years, until Corrective Services stopped the visits last year. After an initial change of heart, Christmas Day visits have been cancelled again” JA coordinator Brett Collins revealed today.

“The Catholic Church, the Uniting Church through its division Uniting Care, the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes and others have called for Corrective Services to reinstate Christmas Day visits” he said.

“Christmas Day is traditionally a day for families to come together in a spirit of love and forgiveness. It celebrates a day when the most important family in the Christian world first came together. This day is about children, wives, parents and husbands of prisoners who need contact with their jailed loved ones” said JA coordinator Michael Poynder.

“The recidivism rate in NSW is a shocking 43.7% - the highest in the country, but State Plan efforts hope to reduce it by 10%. Corrective Services acknowledge the significance of the family to help prisoners readjust upon release. Support for Christmas Day, which promotes the family ethos including the missing family member, is essential to reduce this figure” said Mr Collins.

“Justice Action calls on Commissioner Woodham to return Christmas Day visits and to make Christmas a feature goodwill event in the Corrective Services calendar – a day where hope and rebirth are expressed as it has in the past” said Mr Poynder.

For comments:

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