



Transforming Corrections to Transform Lives is an innovative collaboration, working to transform the lives of mothers in custody and their children.

Many agencies and individuals are already working to provide vital support to mothers in prison and their children in the community. But the rising number of women in prison puts growing pressure on correctional and community service providers to meet the needs of this often highly disadvantaged and victimised group. We know that the needs of many mothers and their children run across the correctional, community, health and education sectors. Navigating all these systems is complex, and falling through the cracks is easy. This means women and children miss out because the right kind of support is either not available when needed, or it cannot meet multiple needs, is too short-term, is too hard to find, or is too stigmatising to access. A transformation of systems is required to better understand and meet the needs of mothers and their children affected by imprisonment.

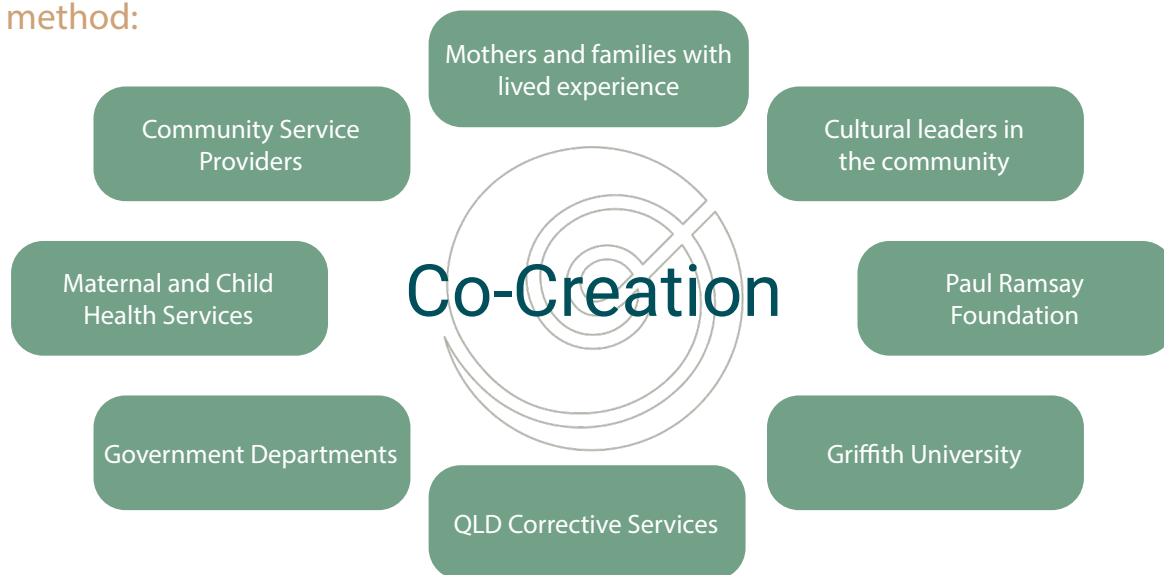
We can and need to do better to work with mothers and their children to create pathways for families to thrive.

Our pioneering project has the principles of co-creation at its core. In this project we will:

- Bring together mothers and families with lived experience of imprisonment, community cultural leaders, and key stakeholders to develop new ways of understanding needs, identifying system gaps, and providing services to create a new model of service provision.
- Build on the work of a team of researchers at Griffith University who are dedicated to transforming systems and lives for the better.
- Work in partnership with Queensland Corrective Services, drawing on their commitment to deliver a trauma-informed, gender-responsive system for women in prison through their establishment of the Women's Estate, and the Paul Ramsay Foundation, who are investing in this project and committed to breaking cycles of disadvantage in Australia.
- Create a transformative system of practice that addresses system gaps, improves pathways and programs, and provides proportionate end-to-end care for imprisoned mothers and their children, during custody, through their return to the community, and as they work to establish successful lives.



Our method:



Our focus: Mothers and children

A transformation of approaches in Australia is required to meet the diverse needs of mothers in prison and to support them and their children during their sentence and on their return to the community. Mothers who enter prison often have histories of trauma and have experienced serious disadvantage and adversity that gets worse when they leave. Their children also experience much of this adversity, as well as additional strains like grief and trauma from separation, housing and school instability, stigma, and entrenched social exclusion. With a co-created holistic system of support, we can reduce the likelihood of mothers returning to prison and improve the future wellbeing and social inclusion for both mothers and children.

Our vision: Transforming lives

Our vision is to co-create a new method of service provision for imprisoned mothers and their children that:

1. Creates conditions for families to thrive through a holistic system of practice that supports wellbeing and social inclusion
2. Demonstrates more effective, sustainable service provision that can be scaled up by governments

Our aims: Transforming systems together

This project will, through a process of co-creation, develop a new model for working with incarcerated mothers and their children to break cycles of disadvantage, improve outcomes, and support wellbeing and social inclusion. Together we will:

- Address system issues – identify structural issues, redesign systems and allocate responsibility and accountability for change, and improve access to, and availability of, programs and services
- Pursue wraparound support – develop a continuity of care model for women and children focused on holistic support, system navigation, service engagement and skill building
- Ensure programs and supports are fit for purpose – co-design new programs and refine existing programs based on evidence and needs identified by recipients of the programs. Create opportunities for mothers and children to exit out of services that are no longer needed and transition into other services that are proportionate to needs and facilitate ongoing pathways for success.
- Develop evaluation methods – identify and develop meaningful, new ways to track progress and success in relation to program objectives and policy reform, measuring outcomes that matter most to women and children, as identified through the co-creation process.



Our program: growuna

Our program, growuna, will focus on improving wellbeing and social inclusion through an innovative method of service provision for imprisoned mothers and their children.

growuna comes from the latin words for grow + together (grow + una). It represents our approach to transformation, through the development of strong partnerships and a holistic approach to bring together mothers and families with lived experience of imprisonment, experts and cultural leaders in the community, the not-for-profit sector, key government departments, and researchers.

We intend to learn and move forward together

growuna also represents the way we intend to work with, and support, mothers and their children. The experiences of imprisonment and re-entry to the community can involve both physical and emotional isolation and a lack of vital assistance. Our program will help build ongoing networks of support for mothers and their children, helping to create the conditions necessary to thrive.

Together we can build strong, supportive networks

By developing a multimodal, continuity of care program we aim to:

- foster mothers' strong non-offending identities by integrating existing rehabilitation programs for imprisoned women with new approaches to build and repair connections to children, families, communities, and culture, and develop positive parental identities and behaviours;
- include families or key support people in re-entry planning and providing extended support to released women and their families through continuity of care; and
- provide proportionate, integrated, and holistic wrap-around services for women and their children that address existing trauma, disadvantages, maternal health and development needs, and other risks during sentences and post-release.

Phase 1 focuses on the co-creation of the growuna program. This phase is due to be completed in December 2021.



Our project leaders:



Susan Dennison is a Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and the Griffith Criminology Institute at Griffith University. She is an international leader in the field of parental incarceration research. During her career she

has focused on investigating how childhood adversity, particularly maltreatment and parental incarceration, affects young people's development and long-term outcomes. Susan is working to transform policies and systems to reduce the intergenerational transmission of offending and disadvantage. She is committed to improving correctional design, policy and practice with respect to prisoner-family relationships, contact and community re-entry.



Tara McGee is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and a Member of the Griffith Criminology Institute at Griffith University. She commenced her career as a youth worker with young

people who were growing up in uniquely disadvantaged circumstances. Since joining academia Tara has focused on building our understanding of the development of antisocial behaviour and offending over the life-course. Her more recent work has sought to translate research in practice, specifically in the field of Prevention Science. She works with the not-for-profit sector and government departments investigating the effectiveness of developmental crime prevention programs.



Janet Ransley is a Professor and Director of the Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) at Griffith University. Prior to entering academia she held senior Queensland Government policy positions. Janet's research aims to understand and improve

criminal justice system policy, coordination and practices, especially via the principles of harm reduction, crime prevention rather than enforcement, and improved responses for First Nations people. She has developed extensive collaborative partnerships to co-generate evidence for better practice outcomes.



Jenny Gamble is a Professor of Midwifery at Griffith University and Director of Transforming Maternity Care Collaborative. Her career has focussed on the structural and system barriers to the provision of quality maternal and newborn care. She is an

international research leader in relational models of maternity care, implementation of service innovations and provision of holistic care. She is passionate about equity and access issues and works with the health services and the community sector to develop and implement innovative, evidence based models of maternity care.

Contact us:

Co-design is the guiding approach of this project and the growuna program. We welcome conversations and collaborations.

For more information please visit: www.transformingcorrections.com.au

Or contact us: tctl@griffith.edu.au

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