

*The Beginnings  
of  
Prison Fellowship in Australia*

**PRISON FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA**

*Thirty Years 2011*



[www.prisonfellowship.org](http://www.prisonfellowship.org)



## WHAT IS PFA?

Floral Emblem of Australia: Golden Wattle

**P**rison Fellowship Australia (PFA) was incorporated 15 July 1981. The first national board meeting was held 6th November 1981 and the following officers elected: - President – Leonard Buck, Senior Vice President- James Fisher; Secretary - Alan Moore; Treasurer- Bruce Ogden; National Executive Director -John Craik; State Representatives – NSW - John Watts, Brian Hunt; Victoria - Alan Moore, Peter Costello; Queensland - Cecil Lockhart. This was the result of prayer and action by many people across Australian States inspired by Charles Colson who visited Australia several times between 1978 and 1980 when the film 'Born Again' was launched.

Colson was formerly an Advisor and "hatchet man" to President Nixon and having committed his life to Christ pled guilty to charges at the time of the Watergate scandal in the early seventies. He served 16 months in prison where he became aware of the plight of prisoners and their families. He promised to come back and visit them.

From a small beginning, Australia became one of the founding nations to form Prison Fellowship International (PFI) which has expanded to 124 nations.

The impact in each PFA State has varied according to the opportunities presented and the volunteers available. These avenues

include; personal visitation, personal mentoring, in-prison life skill programs and spiritual ministry through Chapel, Courses and Bible Studies. PFA believes that changing lives on the inside will reduce crime and victimisation.

Every State has the Angel Tree which provides Christmas gifts for the children of those in prison. Several States operate the Sycamore Tree Program which is an in-prison course involving victims of crime helping offenders understand the trauma of victimisation.

As a Public Benevolent Institution the work of PFA includes support for families and children of prisoners. Most States hold children's camps which are designed to keep them away from crime by promoting positive values.

PFA is a national volunteer movement with over 1100 volunteers serving over 20,000 prisoners in 80 prisons across Australia. The vision of PFA is to be Australia's most effective national prison ministry, caring for prisoners and their families.

<b>Chairman</b>	
1981-1982	Len Buck
1982-1983	John Prince
1983-1989	Rev Tom Scarlett
1989-1992	Cec Lockhart
1992-1995	Michael Cockram
1995-1998	Reg Worthy
1998-2002	Ken Fisher
2002-	Steven Nicholson

## BEING THERE



*"Being there is what matters. That's why our motivation in ministry is as important as our actions. We go into prisons not to claim spiritual prizes or to chalk up our success records, but because we are called by the Risen Christ and instructed by His Holy Word that in coming to those in prison we are coming to Him.*

*We carry not a magic wand, but the Cross. We must understand what the Cross signifies – suffering, persecutions and seeming failures. Not the success of the world, but the ultimate and far greater reward of God's approval. His "well done, good and faithful servant" depends not on our successes, but on our obedient faithfulness."*

**- Chuck Colson**

### VISION

*Prison Fellowship Australia's vision is to be part of a worldwide Christian movement of reconciliation and restoration for all those involved in and affected by crime, thereby proclaiming and demonstrating the redemptive power and transforming love of Jesus Christ for all people.*

### MISSION

*Prison Fellowship Australia's mission is to mobilise and empower State and Territory Prison Fellowship ministries toward the fulfilment of their ministry.*



## QUEENSLAND

QLD Floral Emblem: Cooktown Orchid

In 1978 Bruce Ogden of CRO Furniture in Sydney, had written to Chuck Colson requesting that he come to Australia. Chuck replied that he would come if they would co-operate in the launching of the film presenting his book, "Born Again".

In 1980 Jim Fisher attended the President's breakfast in Washington DC and met Chuck Colson who agreed to visit Brisbane. On his return he and Tom Scarlett arranged a public meeting at the Park Royal Hotel where over 100 people attended and Colson gave a powerful address.

Twenty people responded and in a short period of time the inaugural meeting of Prison Fellowship was held and Jim was elected as Chairman, Tom Scarlett as Vice Chairman and Cecil Lockhart as Secretary. Preliminary approaches were then made to the Prisons Department. This made it possible to arrange an "In Prison Seminar" at the Boggo Road gaol, which was conducted by George Saltau of Prison Fellowship USA and this introduced the concept which was used to great advantage.

In-prison seminars became an essential way in which prison programs were welcomed by the authorities. With official blessing there were variations of themes and as part of one entitled "Marriage Counselling", the wives of inmates attended for three days.

The competence with which the seminars were conducted was the major reason for the confidence which motivated the authorities to ask us to become a chaplaincy when "The Corrective Services Commission" was introduced. This was combined with the faithfulness with which our members carried out the services which were basic to our ethos. PFQs work had of course been pursued methodically, efficiently and enthusiastically for years before the Corrective Services Commission came into being.



L-R: Jim Fisher MBE, Ron Nikkel, Rev Tom Scarlett



Cec Lockhart

The second and longest serving State Director was Lester Schulze. He had a great love of people and was always going the extra mile for an inmate or a family member.

Lester has continued the very strong relationship that he has developed with inmates over the years and now serves as Queensland prayer coordinator.

Many activities have commenced since those early 'In prison Seminars': The first National Art Exhibition was held in 2003. The room was decorated with barbed wire, chains and cubes covered with hessian, with a superb display of art works.

The art exhibition was a great success with a resident artist demonstrating drawing during the week of the show. Sam Betros, one of Australia's longest serving inmates drove from Rockhampton to be present to sign his autobiography.

Mike Briscoe started the camping program in Queensland for the children of inmates. When Lester retired from the position of State Director in 2005, Mike took over the role of Acting State Director and each week worked on new initiatives with Jan Davis the long serving Office Manager.

Jan was the glue who held together the relationships to keep PF at the forefront of caring for those who would otherwise be rejected by society. The current State Executive Director, David Way has gained credibility as a good networker and has provided stability.

Lots of faithful volunteers have been involved over the years and many have continued to visit the families of inmates, deliver Christmas presents to the children of inmates (the Angel Tree program) and minister to inmates. Ted and Marj Butler have made an enormous contribution to the in prison and after-care of those who have been held in custody.

Many inmates have come to trust in the Lord and many families have been impacted by the faithful presentation of the truth of the gospel that Jesus can set us free regardless of bars or wire that actually or metaphorically surround us.

<i>Chairman</i>	
1980-1986	Jim Fisher MBE
1986-1993	Cec Lockhart
1993-1999	Ken Fisher
1999-2004	Chris Hampton
2004-2007	Norton Russell
2007-2008	Chris Hampton
2008-2011	Daryl Myatt
2011-	David Cormack
<i>Executive Director</i>	
1981-1984	Laurie Johnson
1985-1987	Martin Griffiths
1988-2005	Lester Schulze
2005-2008	Mike Briscoe (Acting SED)
2008-	David Way



# NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Floral Emblem: Waratah

In 1979 an informal committee of Prison Fellowship in New South Wales was formed and visits to prisons commenced. The first committee Chairman was John Craik and an office was established in the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney.

The first 3-day seminar was held in Goulburn Gaol in July 1981 at which 19 inmates participated led by George Soltau from PF USA with local leaders being trained in the process. By September the seminar series was repeated at Bathurst Gaol under the leadership of Fred McMinn.

The NSW Committee was reconstituted as the New South Wales Council in August 1981 and became formally connected with the new Prison Fellowship of Australia Board. In 1982 John Watts took over as Chairman, and John Craik became active in PFA, attending the first PF International directors' conference. John Craik was the Honorary NSW Director and in 1983 some part-time secretarial assistance was made available through Lauris Maher.

Big changes evolved in 1984 with the move of the office to Pitt Street Wesley Centre and the establishment of 3 post-release housing facilities (2 in Sydney and 1 in Goulburn) to provide initial accom-

modation for men being released who had participated in PF seminars and groups during their incarceration. That same year Ron Nikkel from PFI visited Sydney and Geoff Glanville was appointed the PF NSW administrator. Letter writing ministry began in 1984 and the number of volunteers in prison related ministries rose to 75.

As the 1980's proceeded, Local Care Groups were established across Sydney and regional NSW as a support for volunteers and ministry in prison.

Alongside the in-prison work, a Court Support ministry began and expanded rapidly. The first groups were at Inverell, Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Wollongong and Bathurst in 1989, but in the following year extended to Maclean, Port Macquarie, Sutherland and Campbelltown.

Other highlights of the last half of the 80's were a visit by Chuck Colson in 1986, the establishment of family support teams in several centres, the appointment of a state prayer co-ordinator and state seminar director, and the advent of literacy tutoring at Parklea. By the end of the decade volunteers numbered 180. The first decade of ministry ended with a celebration held at Marsfield.



Steven Nicholson

The Olympic year 2000 in Sydney was a time of excitement for NSW and for the nation. Not only was there great creative activity around the city, but it was a time of great ideas for PF.

As a joint venture with Scripture Union, the first Camp Breakaway was held for primary kids who had parents in custody. Also, birthday cards from PF were sent to all women in custody. The first annual cricket match between local churches and Berrima inmates was initiated.

The annual Art Exhibition was held in St Stephen's Uniting Church in Sydney. In 2001, three volunteers were honoured by Corrective Services for outstanding contribution to the service and recognised at a ceremony at Parliament House.

The office was on the move in 2002 to Toogabbie, and Steven Nicholson took over from John Mottram as Chairman. Camp Breakaway was expanded in 2004.

By 2007 Angel Tree had grown to 1,600 gifts delivered with 100 partner churches and groups. In 2008 Camp WerX (formerly Camp Breakaway) was expanded to an extra Southern camp.

This decade came to an end with one final initiative – the making available of 3 cottages across Sydney for a renewed thrust in Day Release Sponsorship as part of a focus on post-release ministries. Angel Tree gift deliveries swelled to 2500 gifts.

Despite occasional times of human distress and worry, the evidence is clear – our God has been faithful in nurturing and inspiring His people to minister, and has equipped them with every good gift.

### Chairman

1980-1982	John Craik
1982-1986	John Watts
1986-1990	Lindsay Urquhart
1990-1995	John Fry
1996-1997	Ian Morse
1997-2002	John Mottram
2002-	Steven Nicholson

### Executive Director

1982-1985	John Craik
1985-1994	Ross Coleman
1994-1996	Steve Bignold
1997-2000	Grahame Smith
2000-2011	Ian Minnis
2011-	Richard Feeney



# VICTORIA

VIC Floral Emblem: Pink Heath

**A**t a special meeting at Camberwell Uniting Church 31st July 1980, a motion was passed stating: "That a Victorian Branch of Prison Fellowship be formed and should be formally titled 'Prison Fellowship of Australia, Victorian Committee'."

The election of office bearers resulted in: President – Hon Sir John Nimmo Vice President – Mr Leonard Buck Hon Secretary – Canon Guy Harmer Hon Treasurer – Mr Neville Kellam. The first patron of the Victorian branch was Sir Eric Pearce.

By the end of 1980 in-prison seminars were being held in Pentridge Prison, and Charles Colson had made a 2-day visit to the new branch in September. In 1981 Peter Costello (later Treasurer in Federal Parliament) took over as Secretary and remained very active on Council until 1986.

In April 1982 the appointment of Reg Worthy as Executive Director took place. Little did the Council realise the enormous role Reg Worthy would play in the establishment and extension of PF in Victoria and on a national level over the next 15 years.

Field Worker, Keith McLauchlan, was appointed to take some of the load from the Director. Two significant appointments to Council in 1984 were Kevin Maddock and Arthur Bolkas who have since played vital roles on the staff of Prison Fellowship. The Biscuit and Angle Tree ministries

developed to the point where 12,000 biscuits were distributed and toys going to 70 families in 1991-2.

Len Buck, Chairman since 1983 retired in 1993 and in June Reg Worthy became Chairman. Executive Director Bill Sutcliffe was appointed. That same year a bus service to take prisoners from Ballarat station to Langi Kal Kal was commenced with PF volunteers as drivers.

In April 1996 Richard Whaley was appointed Executive Director which brought in a period of leadership stability as Richard continued in the role for 13 years. He immediately developed, with Council, a 2-year and 5-year plan for PF. By the end of 1997 Richard was also National Executive Director.

In January 1998 Jenny Krigsman was appointed bookkeeper and remained in this capacity for 13 years. At the end of 1998 Reg and Muriel Worthy resigned from Council and Graham Thornton became Chairman.



L-R Len Buck, Charles Colson, Governor Buckley Ararat Prison, Reg Worthy



Richard Whaley

The Lives in Transition intensive 12-14 week in-prison course at Barwon Prison for a group of 10-15 longer-term prisoners was negotiated. Careful planning of curriculum began, suitable volunteers were recruited to run and facilitate the course which

took off under the leadership of Robert and Sue Duff. An extension of this ministry was the recruitment of Christian mentors to assist course members to integrate into the community after release. The Lives in Transition program moved to Port Phillip Correctional Centre under the leadership of Diane Spicer but it was closed in 2010 due to lack of funding.

In 2002 Graham Blood became Chairman and remained until 2008 when Lindsay White took over.

With the appointment of Glen Fairweather in 2006 to concentrate on developing contacts with younger people, the concept of children's camps was developed. The first camp in 2005, was led by Sharon Rutherford.

A closer relationship with Sport Lights a Message (SLAM) directed by Oscar Correa, took place in 2000. This group of enthusiastic sports people takes teams into prisons

to play soccer, basketball and netball. After the game there is time for team members to share their stories with inmates.

In 2009 the office was moved to Reservoir with an Op Shop at the front to raise funds.

At the end of 2008 Richard Whaley resigned as State Director to take a wider role with PF in the pacific region and was replaced by David Molyneux. In 2010 Jenny Krigsman finished as PA to the State Director and Office Manager. In 2010 Glen Fairweather was appointed to the role of Executive Director.

PF Victoria now has a mailing list of 3000 with 250 volunteers, six staff, and a range of services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families, both inside the 14 prisons and in the community.

<i>Chairman</i>	
1980-1981	Sir John Nimmo
1983-1993	Len Buck
1993-1998	Reg Worthy
1998-2002	Graham Thornton
2002-2008	Graham Blood
2008-	Lindsay White
<i>Executive Director</i>	
1982-1993	Reg Worthy
1993-1994	Bill Sutcliffe
1994-1996	Barrie Sutton
1996-2008	Richard Whaley
2009-2010	David Molyneux
2010-	Glen Fairweather



# WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA Floral Emblem: Kangaroo Paw

The old Victorian convict built chapel at Fremantle prison was the venue for the first meeting of Prison Fellowship in WA. This was February 1982. Michael Cockram got involved in Prison Fellowship as a result of visiting a friend in Fremantle Prison.

At the same time, Michael's wife Ronnie met Len Buck, National President Prison Fellowship, who was trying to set up Prison Fellowship in Western Australia.

Len Buck met with Michael's support group and from that 'chance encounter' a Prison Fellowship Council was formed with John Prince as the first Chairperson and Michael Cockram as Regional Director.

In January 1983, a Metropolitan Care Group was established to process the requests from prisoners and their families. This was co-ordinated by Dot Holmes in Michael Cockram's office and became a centre for organizing a range of services like transport to prisons for family, providing emergency food parcels, pastoral care, helping to find work and the purchase of cheap furniture.

By the end of 1983, the Metropolitan Care Group and the PF in-prison meetings were serving 100 prisoners with 150 Volunteers involved supported by 30 prayer groups.

In 1991 the Angel Tree Project was introduced to help prison families over the Christmas period. This involved churches taking Christmas presents bought by their parents (mainly fathers) in prison to keep the relationship of parent-child intact. This project was soon reaching 1000 children.

In September 1985 a camp was established for children of prisoners. This was done in partnership with Scripture Union who traditionally had been involved with youth camps over the years. Ian and Margaret Standing became long term S.U. workers who made the task easier.

The first camp was at Parkerville. Now known as Camp Breakaway, the program was organized by a part paid PF Staff worker, Candice Onderwater, who developed the camp further by increasing the caring of the mothers as much as the children.

PF has sent in sport teams. This has been a valuable way of meeting prisoners and a way of releasing some of the stress of living in prison.



Michael Cockram receiving Award at Government House for 20 years service

In 1999 Ron Nikkel the President Prison Fellowship International met with Peter Voss WA Attorney General. Ron also addressed the Governor's Prayer Breakfast (Major-General Michael Jeffrey) with 550 people present. This meeting gave PF a high level of respect for prison ministry both locally and globally.

Sycamore Tree Project was a PF initiative in USA which was repackaged in WA. The project is about Restorative Justice where prisoners are given some structure in their lives to initiate inner change by involving them in a group experience with people who have been victims of crime.

In December 1999, Michael Cockram met with the Director of Prison Policy and Projects for the Ministry of Justice to discuss it. In September 2005 he and John Smith went into Acacia Prison with four survivors of significant crime. They met with six prisoners in the Protected Unit – none of them was connected to any of the victims. During this Project each person told their story based around a program of accountability, confession, owning the truth, repentance, forgiveness, restoration and reconciliation.

The impact of these sessions gave Michael and John a new vision of Restorative Justice where prisoners can be given life skills to use in inner change.

This course was introduced into other prisons and by July 2010, 317 prisoners had completed the Project.

An unexpected spin-off has been the impact on the visiting victims. As at July 2010 these numbered 73. Many have gone into the project in great fear and trepidation about raising the past and then have found the course inspirational in that they find a place where their stories help.

Art competitions are held each year. The art is then judged and then their piece then goes on display at a prominent venue. Winners are chosen and receive a monetary prize. In 2011 the entry from WA won first prize at the Prison Fellowship International Convocation in Toronto Canada.

<b>Chairman</b>
John Prince
Michael Cockram
Laurie Cruize
Stephen Vose
Jan Peletier
Jeremy Robertson
John Phillips
David Shaw
<b>Executive Director</b>
Michael Cockram
Bill Bennett
Rudolph Van Noppen
Geoff Pollard
Patrick Chong
Kevin Bourne-McRae
Rod Williams



## TASMANIA

TAS Floral Emblem: Tasmanian Blue Gum

In 1979 Les Batchelor visited Launceston to hear Charles Colson speak about prison ministry and was so impressed he arranged a public meeting for him to visit Hobart to speak at the Westside Motor Inn on 6th September 1980. Others who sponsored this meeting were George Charlton, Hank Petrusma and Brian Reeves. At the time Les was the President of Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society of Tasmania.

The inaugural meeting of Prison Fellowship of Australia –Tasmania Council was held at the Hobart City Mission in November 1981 when Les Batchelor was elected Chairman. The birth of Prison Fellowship benefited from the prior work of other local ministries to prison inmates going back many years.

For the first 25 years or more the ministry in Tasmania relied on the selfless sacrifice of a few individuals like Ted Holmes, Les Batchelor, Calvin Campbell and David and Heather Steven.

More recently, the availability of Ray Metcalfe as the first paid (part time) employee for Prison Fellowship Tasmania has allowed the development of organised programs and training for volunteers, which have been embraced by prison management.

The sorts of activities that have been introduced over recent years include art classes, music lessons, and Zumba classes. These complement the usual Prison Fellowship activities such as letter writing,

chaplaincy, worship services, inmate visiting, post release support, mentoring, Angel Tree and day release supervision. Prison Fellowship Tasmania is also looking into an expanded ministry to offenders serving non-custodial sentences, noting that these represent 2/3 of all offenders.

Prison Fellowship Tasmania has fostered linkages with other Christian ministries working with prison inmates and their families, and works closely with the Prison Chaplain.



Heather and David Steven

<i>Chairman</i>	
1981-1984	Les Batchelor
1984-1985	Brian Reeves
1985-1986	Rob Kirkwood
1986-1994	Les Batchelor
1994-1997	Ted Holmes
1997-2000	David Steven
2000-2001	Tim Petrusma
2001-	Michael Wood
<i>Executive Director</i>	
2000-2009	David Steven
2009-	Ray Metcalfe

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SA Floral Emblem: Sturt's Desert Pea



Charles Colson visited South Australia in the early days – 1979 and 1980. These meetings were well attended and created a lot of interest, however it was some years before anything positive occurred.

A visit from Len Buck and Reg Worthy of Victoria in 1987 saw the formation of a State Council under the Chair of Rev Doug Lawrence. A Public meeting was held and some volunteers were trained, but nothing much else happened.

By the '90s supporters fell away. Through this period one volunteer, Gavin Browning faithfully visited prisoners on remand. In 1991 Chairman Doug Lawrence wrote to the National Board "I tender my resignation as Chairman with the prayer that someone suitable can quickly be found or the ministry will gradually deteriorate. I feel we need someone with far greater time and with a singular ministry focus to promote and develop the work."



Geoff Glanville

Geoff was appointed as the State Executive Director. This was a volunteer position which focussed on prison visitation and volunteer recruitment.

In 1996-2005 Helen Glanville worked as a volunteer organising Angel Tree, sporting teams, concerts, haircuts for women in prison, musicians at Cadell family fun days, art competitions, mother's day flowers, short courses at Adelaide Womens Prison, friends of Prison Fellowship functions and Para Vista Lutheran netball team.

In 2006 Helen was appointed State Executive Director. A partnership with Scripture Union was formed in 2007 providing Camps for Kids and Teen Camps; also with Christian Motorcyclists Association for delivery of Happy Birthday presents. In 2008 the first Children and Families Worker was employed to oversee the growing database of children of prisoners.

The Second Chances Op Shop was opened in 2007 and a Furniture Warehouse opened in 2011 with over 30 volunteers on a roster basis.

A partnership with ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) was formed in 2010 to employ the Manager Prison Ministry to oversee the recruitment, training and development of in-prison volunteers.

<i>Chairman</i>	
1995-1998	Ross Goode
1998-2000	Gavin Browning
2000-2008	Rod James
2008-	Luca Mercorella
<i>Executive Director</i>	
1995-2006	Geoff Glanville
2006-	Helen Glanville



## NORTHERN TERRITORY

NT Floral Emblem: Sturt's Desert Rose

In 1994 Len Buck from Victoria visited Alice Springs with a vision to find the right people to begin PF. As a result of his faithfulness in 1995 the first Prison Fellowship Northern Territory Council was established with the support of Reg Worthy who was at that time the National Director. Those on the first Council were Lloyd and Clara Ollerenshaw, Chris Marshall, Llewellyn Matthews and Howard Davies.

It was envisaged the ministry would be primarily to Aboriginal people and Lloyd had a deep understanding of Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal languages, the importance of family and the need to build trust.

He was able to draw the churches together and organised weekly services. This was at the Old Gaol in the town. When the Gaol was moved 25km out of town Lloyd set up a bus service with volunteers who helped at the Visitor's Centre. Sometimes the guards had difficulty understanding the visitor needed help gaining access to the prison. The work of Lloyd and Clara was appreciated by everybody.

Pam and Erwin Matthews provided valuable resources and experience to the Alice Springs Team providing refreshments at the visitors centre and covering expenses for the bus.

On 2nd February 1999 a new Council was elected with Tony Lohmeyer as Chair. He and his wife Jill provided a stable team for some years. The women prisoners were

visited on Thursday nights, in December Angel Tree commenced that year and released prisoners were being given support. Enid Harland and Peter Snell worked tirelessly through the year organising the bus service.

The Visitors Centre is unique as PF does the administration for the visitor as the visitor may be illiterate and intimidated by the process. Many arrive hours early without an appointment or want to change it. There are often 15 appointments each hour.

Welfare support is also managed from the Visitors Centre. There is a roster of 11 volunteer bus drivers and 3 volunteers for the Visitors' Centre.



Bus driven by PF volunteers each weekend from Alice Springs to the prison 25 km from town

<b>Chairman</b>
Lloyd Ollerenshaw
Tony Lohmeyer
Fr Brian Healy
Michael Schell
Freg Twohig

## State Office Contact Details

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*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

*Francesco di Bernardone*

*1181-1226*



**Prison Fellowship**  
Australia