

## Prison Overcrowding Fact Sheet

- Prison overcrowding occurs when the demand for space in prisons, exceeds the capacity for prisoners in the place, in other words when the rate at which people are sent to prison, exceeds the rate at which prisoners are released or die
- Prison overcrowding is one of the key contributing factors to poor prison conditions around the world
- Consequences of prison overcrowding can be life threatening and often prevents prisons from fulfilling their proper function and purpose
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics, show that in 2014, there were more than 33,000 people in jail, which is the highest number ever in Australia
- A large number of prison officers have been injured, due to increased violence in prisons
- In Australian, jails in every state and territory, besides Tasmania are overflowing
- Australia's prison system is crowded to bursting point, with new attitudes towards crime and punishment sending record numbers of people to jail
- There has been an increased escalation of violence in prisons, whether its prisoner on prisoner, or prisoner on officer
- The State Government has ignored warnings from its jails boss that new prisons need to be built
- Former judge says money being spent on overcrowded jails would be better spent on crime prevention. What do you think?
- Due to the overflowing of prisons, prisoners are required to sleep on mattresses and fold out beds, mainly in Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria
- New South Wales has the highest number of prisoners, reaching 11,000
- It is estimated that a couple more thousand prisoners will come around in 2016
- Women, and in particular indigenous women are the fastest growing group of prisoners across Australia
- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of indigenous women in jail, has nearly doubled over a decade
- One of the causes of prison overcrowding are the laws that now have harsher penalties or criminal activities
- Overcrowding of prisons can lead to issues, such as mental health problems, increased rates of violence, self harm, and suicide
- 24 national prisons hold more than double their capacity
- In most prison systems, prisoners do not have the minimum space requirements
- Overcrowding of prisons results in cramped accommodation and sharing cells which were originally built for one person, longer waiting times for medical attention, and limited access to education

