



views

LIFE INSIDE ASHLEY YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE

GOOD TEACHERS OPPORTUNITIES PEOPLE FAMILY FREEDOM RESPECT CHALLENGE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
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RESPECT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES PEOPLE FAMILY FREEDOM CONTROL
CHALLENGE GOOD TEACHERS OPPORTUNITIES RESPECT EDUCATION
FAMILY FREEDOM CONTROL CHALLENGE GOOD
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RESPECT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES PEOPLE



**Q: WHAT'S THE
BEST THING FOR
YOU AT ASHLEY?**

*I got my grade
10 certificate here
and I wouldn't have
done that outside*

letter

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

“...the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child...”

LAST YEAR 2009 WAS THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CROC), “CHILD” BEING ANYONE UNDER 18. ARTICLE 12 OF CROC SAYS:

“States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child.”

Article 40 of CROC says children have the right for youth justice systems to promote reintegration and for them to assume a constructive role in society.

This is the first of many books you will see from the young people inside Ashley. It proves two things:

1. Ashley residents are people – pretty ordinary teenagers caught in an extraordinary situation;
2. It is not hard for Tasmania to honour them as people by listening to what they have to say.

Most of the residents in Ashley and their families have been clients of Child Protection during their young lives. Most of them are waiting for a Court case to decide whether they have broken the law or what should happen to them if they have. Today as I am writing 70% are not serving a sentence but are there on remand.

There are too many Aboriginal residents in Ashley for the general population. Today 30% are Aboriginal when Aborigines are only 3% of the total Tasmanian population. That is a 1,000% over-representation!

The 2009 Australian Institute of Criminology report found no significant difference between the reoffending of juveniles locked up and those not locked up. Other studies in the last 10 years report that custodial sentences actually increase reoffending.

Only children and young people can change anything inside themselves. If the idea of locking them up is to help them, then we start by finding out what

it is like to be in Ashley, not as we imagine it, but as they tell us.

Then we can start to work out what tools they need to make change and break the chains that bind them to Ashley. The voice this book gives them may be one of those tools.

The frank expression of feelings in it would not have happened without the presence inside of the Ashley Residents' Advocate a position created in 2008 independent of the Government which manages Ashley. It also could not have happened without the active help of Ashley's own management team and the Ashley School, a State public school on the grounds. They genuinely want what we all want.

And it could not have happened without the residents telling it like it really is for them. Please read every word.

Paul Mason
Commissioner
August 2010

I miss

I miss my Mum
I miss my life
I miss my bro
And I miss my sis
I miss there laugh
I miss there smile
If i could just see
it once
In a while
I miss being free
I miss climbing trees
I miss falling down
And almost breaking
My knees
I miss it all
I'm barely aloud to call
I miss getting grass
I miss being outside
Were its open wide
I miss playing the
drums
I miss enjoying the sun
I miss going for my run
I miss my ferret
I miss my chook
I've decided I'd
be better
Off hanging on a hook.

**Q: WHAT'S THE
BEST THING FOR
YOU AT ASHLEY?**

*Opportunities
you get through
the school*



OFF
FRE



Life

Runnin away going my own way, out theifing trying to kick it by not really learning much in life smoking cones started sticking needles in my arm that was my every day Life. Always getting into fights nothing was ever right I got into a lot of strife came down to Ashleys for the night got out came back remanded in custody for breaking the law!.. Always having a lot of problems, running the streets late at night.. Then I thourt I had friends who cared but in the end I was wrong they only done me wrong!! It's time to wake up face true facts you don't have friends you have associates!! Life's pretty crap locked behind closed gates as a detainee, if you mouth off your locked in your room for the rest of the afternoon. Treat people right and you will get alot in life. Give some respect and you will get it in return. Things happen that you couldn't imagine some people have hard ruff lifes and make wrong choices at times in life but we all hope to learn and not repeat the same pattern again. Lifes what you make it don't take everything for granted and you mite have something and if you have a dream make it come true xxxx

Q: WHAT'S THE BEST THING AND THE WORST THING FOR YOU AT ASHLEY?

Best

Good teachers Opportunities you get through
the school School and school teachers
Education — I got my grade 10 certificate here
and I wouldn't have done that outside
The programs and all the activities we get to do
The people we meet here

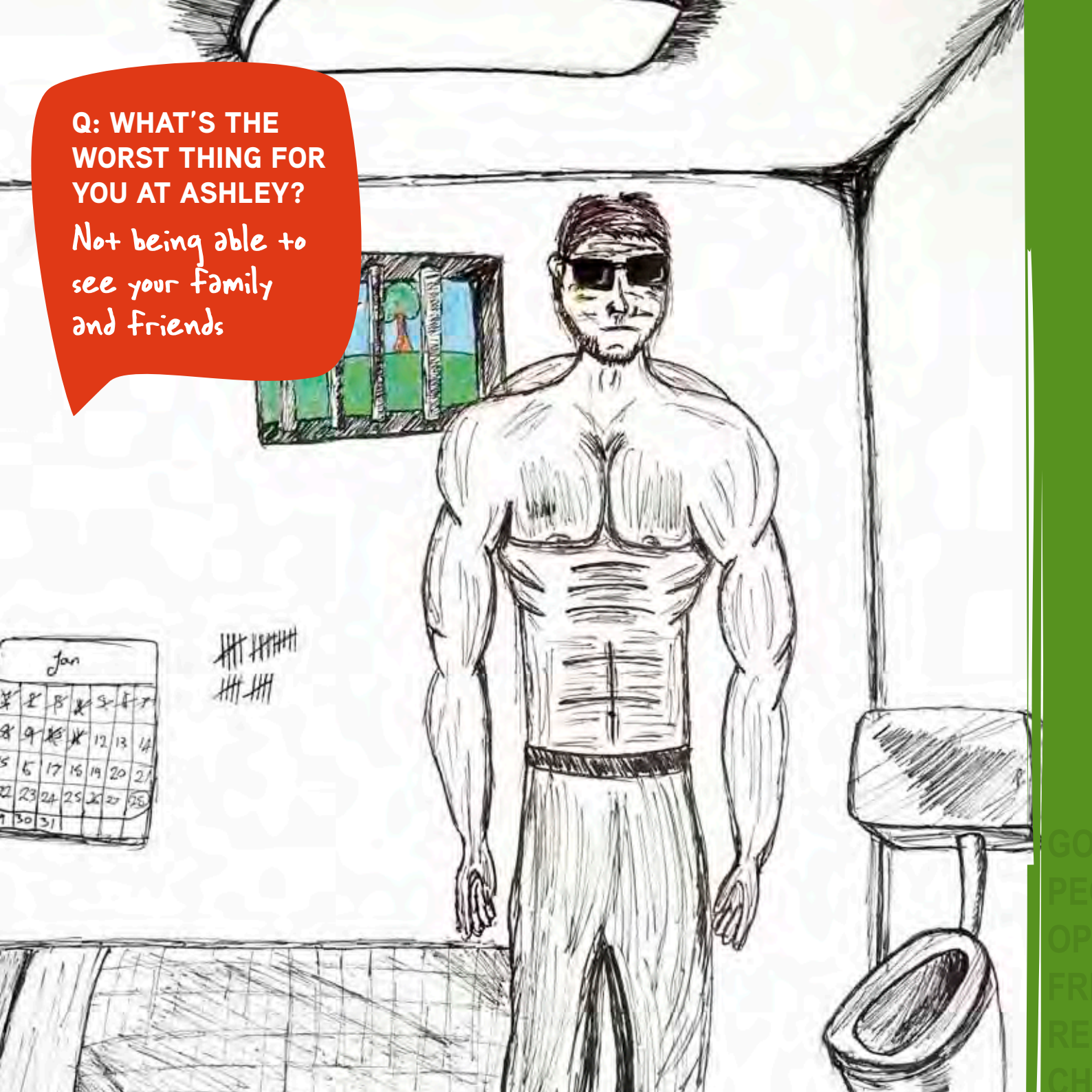
Worst

There's nothing good here Everything's shit
Not seeing your family Not being able to see your
family and friends How short the phone calls are –
You just get started having a conversation and you
have to stop The more people there are in here
the less calls you get to make All the restrictions
you didn't have on the outside Not being able to go
outside when you want Can't do anything when you
want – eat, drink go to the toilet Doing the same
things everyday Some of the programs like going
outside in the middle of winter to rake the leaves
Youth workers – They're just bad – They try to
make it harder and it's already hard enough here
Not enough fitness or access to the gym

The food

Q: WHAT'S THE WORST THING FOR YOU AT ASHLEY?

Not being able to see your family and friends



Jan

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sweetin! Day in the Lock Up?

These are my ideas This is my sweat
and tears, this is the stuff that I solved with
my mind, my ryms. This is me thats gota be
what you see on TV Whot you hear on CD,
man these Teeny Bopers see me on these
magazine covers in these benies and these
Rags, livin fantisies, frontin like its all fun
and games till they shoot them up Bang,
then you see that things are red, just lie
instead, then you see we aint playing,
aint sayin, we aint Layin down at night
and aint prayin.

I bully my way in this game.

Man I'be done playin and i've sayin
I'm gunna stop playin.

Franklin Group 6 Rap Song

CST are Dogs argh, argh, argh
Screw you over lock you down
More or less bury you 6 feet
under 'd' ground.

Food sucks and Programs are shit.
But we still eat and try and enjoy it.
Mr *** is a winging bitch and
*** *** is a mother f***ing snitch.

They have taken our freedom and now
they are trying to take our dignity.

But we won't stand for it.

Bad Boys For Life

Will be supreme 4 eva

LEARNING PEOPLE
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



LAST TIME

Being kicked when I'm down, no one knows what goes down, back in Ashley for doing crime that I defined. Sitting writing what's on my mind, it ain't no mystery I'm going to get out and make it all history, move on from living this life style and make a better life. Be a somebody instead of a no-body make myself proud not hang around the same croud. I'm going to make this my last time I hope... this time around!!

Q: DO YOU MISS ANYTHING FROM OUTSIDE AND WHAT?

A hot shower / bath, mums cooking and my bed

GO
PE
OP
FR
RE
CH

Not the place 2 be

I've being here nearly 4 months there's no life in jail it's f*****

I miss my loved ones but my beautiful little sister the most of all! Ashley's a jail it's not a place where u'd wish any-one to be.

It's time in your life you can never get back or replace.

Just wish I could be free back out in society When your in here it feels like ya gunna be in here forever

I really just hope I can make the right choices in life when I get out and be better. Wish I could go back in time and relive my lifetime. I would never have ran away from home I should have listened to Mum and dad of what they had to say. Just thort it was all lies and wrong. In the end I realised they only wanted me to do good but by time I realised it was to late I was gone locked up for stupid crimes one day soon I'll be out and free setting example for the little ones I love teaching them right from wrong and tell em not to do the things I've done wrong.

**Q: DO YOU MISS ANYTHING FROM OUTSIDE
AND WHAT?**

Freedom Family and friends

Family — You have to visit in the visit room.

I don't want my family to see me in there

Good times with your mates — getting on the piss

Being able to go to the toilet when you need to
go without having to ask

Proper toilets A hot shower / bath

Being able to do what I want to

Mums cooking My bed

Proper clothing — decent socks and undies

My mobile phone Hair straightener

Chewing gum Maccas Cigarettes

Everything

all alone

Sitting in here all alone thinking about my loved ones I should be at home I only ever seem to do them wrong but somehow Mum and Dad always stay strong and stick by me unlike some. I never thought I'd be back but the strangest things can happen that you never expect! It's a love hate world you win some you lose some It ain't like I'm gonna be here forever I can't imagine how my parents feel haven't two children locked behind cells.

regrets

Sitting here reminiscing about that time last year thinking and regretting about being back here!!
Behind locked gates once again for breaking law, stealing cars and fuel, getting into fights. Wish I could go back and change what happened on them nights. We all make stupid mistakes that later on we soon regret we soon hope to forget and learn to not go out and reoffend again. Life's too precious to spend behind locked gates, not seeing family or friends, so grow up and stop breaking the law face true facts and never come back.

handcuffs

*** puts em on,
he makes them
Really tight, they drag me to
my room
Dump me in a corner and tell
me not to move
Blood's coming down my wrist
this time i
Didn't self-harm. My hands are
turning
Purple from the tightness of
the cuffs. I move
Were I can see out the window
I don't need to get told I'm low
it doesn't
Take a lot 2 show. 20 minutes
have passed and
I'm sitting all alone with a
room with nothing in it
It ain't that big of a hit, i hate
how they think there
strong, it's so wrong

growing up

Here's some works that relate to
Me growing up.

And now finally I'm sick of these fake
People showing up..

Growing up..

From nappies and rocking horses
To anger management courses.

Because we been in trouble with the
Law enforces,

Growing up..

Over a matter of years,

Doing wrong with my peers,

Gang fights like I was confronting my fears,

Never stopped to realise the ones I love

Were in tears,

Growing up..

Always getting kicked out of home,

Stepping this earth I roam,

Thinking I'd do better on my own,

Now the only conversations I got are

Over the phone,

Growing up..

Now it's time,

Time to choose the right road to take,

For god's sake,

A life of crime is not my fate.

**Q: HAS BEING IN
ASHLEY HELPED
YOU WITH ANYTHING
IN YOUR LIFE?**

*The school helps you
with everything*

wishing and hoping
you were here

When I first walked through these gates
My heart began to shake
Thinking that we were going to break
Sick of making mistakes
You know I love you like a fat kid loves a cake

In the first week I was here
I shed so many tears
Wanted to drown my sorrows with an ice cold beer
Sitting behind my door with so much fear
Wishing and hoping that you were hear

When you're on the outside and I'm in here
I get lonely and shed a tear
The distance between us tears me apart
The emptiness I feel near breaks my heart

Now I've been here for months on end
Trying to write this love song to you my girlfriend
Hoping our relationship we can mend
Because I'll love you till the end

When you're on the outside and I'm in here
I get lonely and shed a tear
The distance between us tears me apart
The emptiness I feel near breaks my heart



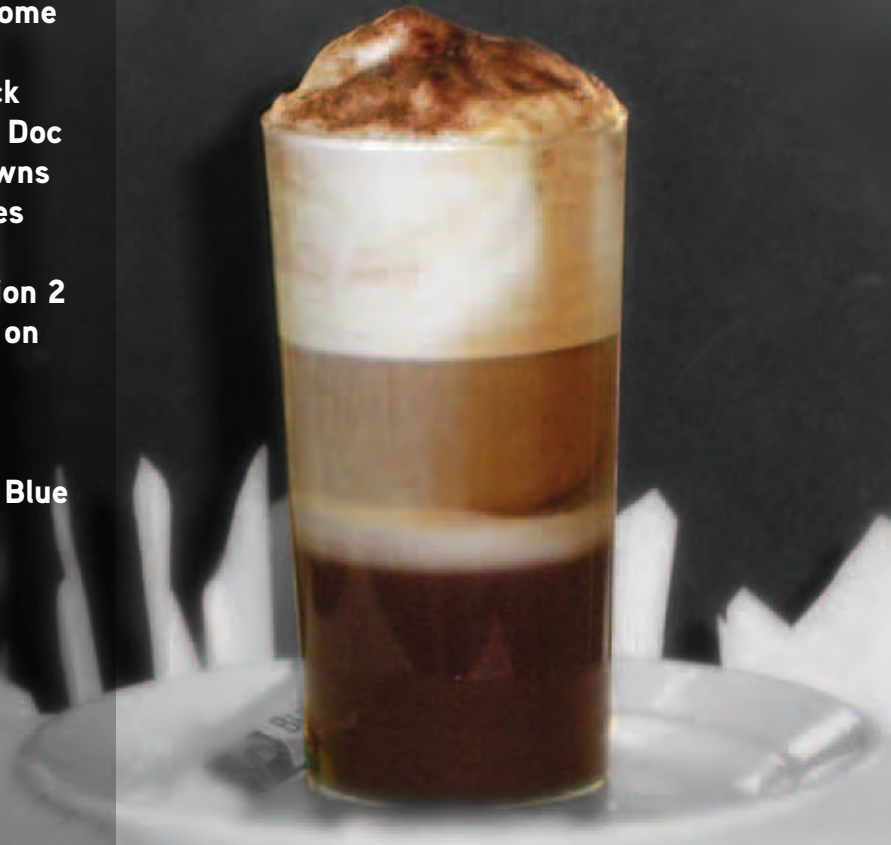
Many mistakes made on that day
Brings me to my humble abode
Were i shall stay for how long
No-one no's.

Many nights i lay awake
I wonder when my life shall take
Many nights i lay alone
Wondering when i will be home

To much time on the clock
Wondering when i'll see the Doc
Waiting till the morning dawns
Getting up to do my chores

Nothing to do but a playstation 2
Nothing to watch but crap on
the box
Nothing to do except
shooting through
Nothing to do except feeling Blue

Confined to this space
Without a trace
For the life I once had
That was obviously bad.



Q. HAS BEING IN ASHLEY HELPED YOU WITH ANYTHING IN YOUR LIFE?

Nothing You don't have any worries about coming back once you have been here because it's nothing like the rumours eg people getting stabbed all the time Education The school helps you with everything I got my grade 10 certificate Reading, spelling, writing, maths I got my L's Physical health I'm the healthiest I have been in 3 years I get back on track and get everything checked up (health) It makes you want to get out and not come back You have to think about what you have done It stopped me — Made me realise that crime was no good for me Helped me control my anger I can talk with other people. I don't do that on the outside Stops you from being on drugs

my life

Yo so I'm sitting in Ashley's thinking 'bout what I've done wrong
Thinking what I can do right, yeah, yeah that's what I said.
Yeah you know you've got our right and wrong
But me I've decided I'm gonna do the right thing
I've had enough of c**** getting me involved in shit that I shouldn't be doing.
Like you know, there's good and bad
Right now if only I weren't in Ashley's I'd be home with my Mum or doing a show.
For quite some time, this is the reason I'm writing this rhyme.
To let you Mother f***** know what I do best
And to let you Mother f***** know how hard it can get
Breaking a sweat.
But like I'm not there for the money, I'm there for the hunny's
On show day I check 'em out under my sunnies
You know the hunnies.
So take a crack and let me see what you think
How far you make it, and see if you make it back


yeah I'm out.

Count down to the day that I can go free

Where there's no one around to supervise me
Tell me what to do
Tell me what to say
Every day that I lose is like a physical pain
Think'in bout ladies it can haunt ya
Youst to meet them down the beach or the corner
Drivin down the street in my Torana
Give death stares I snap like a piranha
Fightin' this fool that made the decision
Boys so big out of my weight division
Desperation fuel determination,
Black pool launches to the space station
Play GTA on the play station
Scores that good they re on top of the nation
This is con verses throwin down
Don't mess with us we're the talk of the town

Yo what's up, is the barbell on this
Once knew good now you look at us bad
Living in this place is making us sad
Came here weeks, months, possibly years
Worst fear is that the workers are our peers.

When I was a boy I never thought
I would be stuck in a prison cause I got caught
All our emotion bottled up tight
Writing our letters to bring us some light
Lookin out our window late at night
Place we once thought that's still in sight
Turning eighteen inside of here
Can't even get out to have that beer
Hopefully Risdon isn't near
Inside here it's hard to shed a tear
Day by day is like a time table
Living like a horse stuck in a stable



**Q. IS THERE ANYTHING
ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE
TO SAY ABOUT YOUR
LIFE IN ASHLEY**

*Don't come to Ashley
- You don't have a say
- They have the keys*

Q. IF YOU'RE HERE ON REMAND NOT DETENTION, WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WERE REFUSED BAIL THIS TIME?

According to the Judge you are dangerous to society They feel happy about locking young people up. They think we will just do the same thing again. You get judged on your past —so they think you are guilty even if your not They just keep adjourning it and adjourning it so you stay here longer. I've been here a lot but I have never been sentenced here before. No point going for bail as it will only be refused and then the time you have been on remand comes off what you get I didn't want bail No where to be bailed to — A shelter is not seen the same way as family. You don't get bailed if you live at a shelter
Prior convictions Drug and alcohol abuse High risk of violence Serious charges

Q. HAVE YOU EVER ASKED FOR HELP HERE IN ASHLEY AND NO ONE LISTENED?

No I asked to see the doctor for a couple of weeks and by the time I did get to see one my ankle was better I asked to go to my room but I wasn't allowed - they said I had to keep using the computer I tried to challenge a Detention Offence for something that I didn't do and I tried to talk to people about it but they wouldn't listen - they said I was just whinging Now youse (the RA / CFC) are here we can talk to you and you try and do something about it When we ask unit staff for something or tell them something they don't listen

Q. IF YOU'VE BEEN IN BEFORE WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU WHEN YOU WENT OUT LAST TIME?

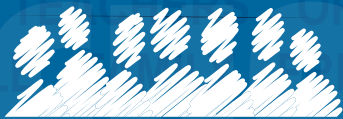
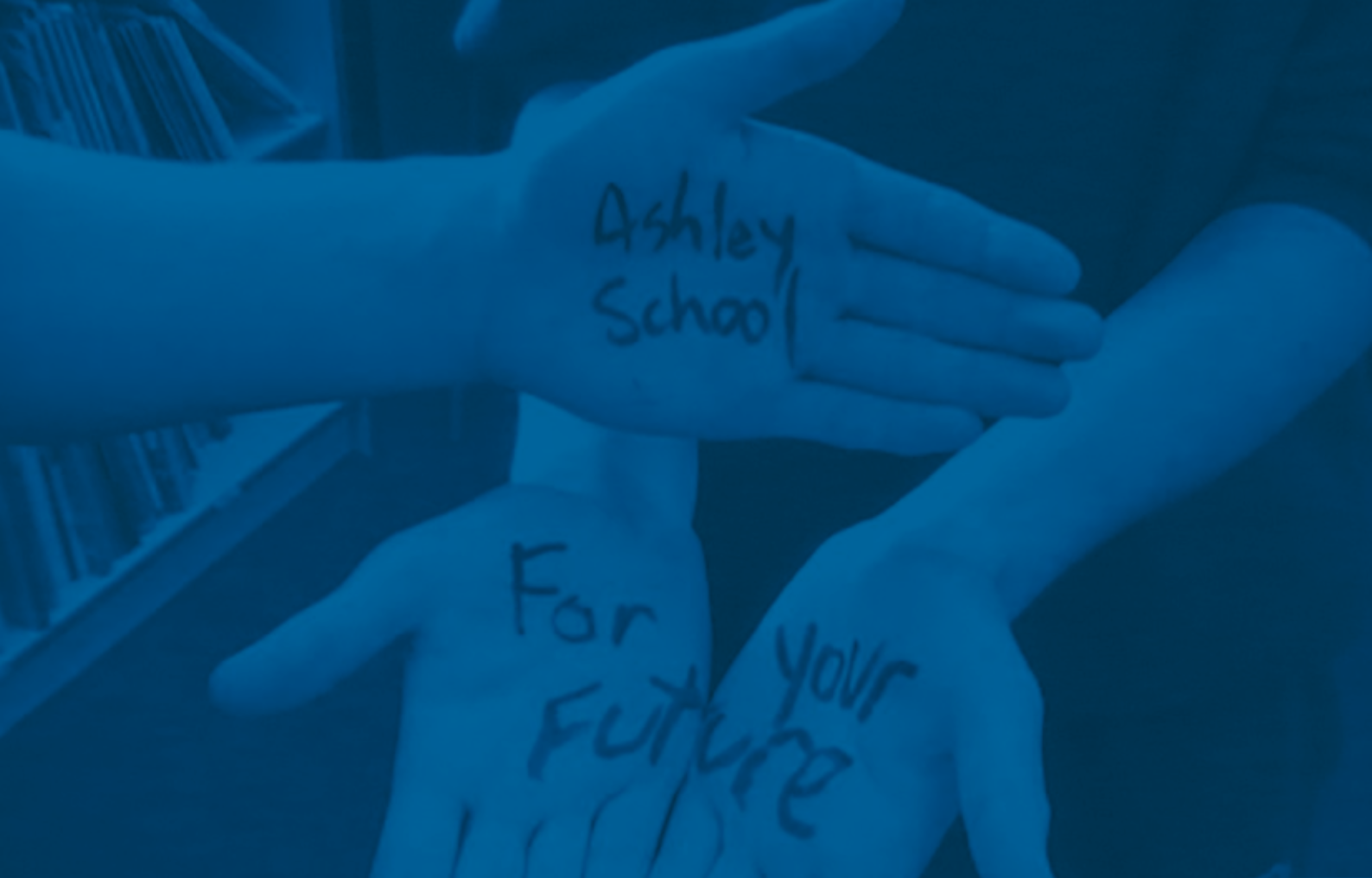
It feels weird Different It's weird being able to do what you want when you want — eat, go to the toilet I don't really care how weird it is because you are out It's awesome — You can see your family whenever you want It's just like Christmas — it's awesome I get freaked out by the number of people Like when you are walking down the street you think they are all looking at you You have to learn things again You forget to think about normal things like watching out for cars before you cross the street Normal things become exciting eg toasted sandwiches

I hate this place
I wanna get out
And these workers make
you shout
I'm over crime
I'm over time
I wanna move on from this
When I'm alone I wonder why
I did this crime
It makes me cry!!
I want out and to be with Holly
I hate this life that I'm living
I just wanna be me
And live the way I should be
I want my Mum and my family
Visits are shit getting' watched

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE
TO LEARN WHILE YOU'RE HERE?

Metal work Self discipline
More education Everything – like how
not to do the same stuff when you get
out They give us a good range – all
the main things we need Good access
to school – grade 10, 11 and 12 which
I wouldn't have outside Help with
trying to get a house before
you leave





**COMMISSIONER
FOR CHILDREN**
TASMANIA

The Commissioner for Children is an independent, statutory office responsible to the Parliament of Tasmania. The Commissioner's functions include promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people along with examining and advising Government on policies, practices and services provided for children and laws affecting their health, welfare, care, protection and development. www.childcomm.tas.gov.au