

Farmers wait for flood cash

MORE than two months after the devastating NSW floods began, less than 8 per cent of the money that was promised to victims by the state government has been paid.

The NSW government has promised nearly \$1.6bn in state-funded support for flood-affected communities.

But Resilience NSW, which oversees the flood response, said this week just \$124m in financial assistance had been approved and allocated.

That means nearly 93 per cent of the money still hasn't hit victims' bank accounts.

Deputy Premier Paul Toole said support payments were proceeding slowly because of the need to weed out fraudulent applications.

Broadwater farmer Kath Robb said losses incurred during the floods amounted to \$180,000. Despite applying for several grants in mid-March, she said she still hadn't received any money.

Surprise ammo discovery

A POLICE pursuit led to the discovery of stolen power tools, more than 40 pairs of earrings and homemade ammunition on Saturday.

Police spotted a red Holden Captiva speeding along Grand Junction Rd, in Rosewater, at 1.50am. The driver refused to pull over and the car was pursued along Port Rd before the pursuit was terminated for safety reasons.

Police located the car on Etna Ave, at Cheltenham. It was searched and the stolen items, suspected to have been taken from an Elizabeth store on Thursday, were found. A gel blaster, drug paraphernalia and homemade ammunition were also found.

The driver, a West Hindmarsh woman, 22, and her passenger, a Newton man, 38, were charged with numerous offences including engage in a police pursuit, drive while disqualified and theft.

Alarming new report reveals the struggles

The hidden victims of our parents behind bars

JORDANNA SCHRIEVER

ALMOST one child in every classroom will experience having an incarcerated parent during their childhood – but they often remain invisible in the community and to policy makers.

A new report released by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly, calls for more to be done to support the children – who are innocent victims – when their parents become involved in the criminal justice system.

"It's simply not fair that a child should also be punished because their parent has been incarcerated and we must do better to change the experience, language and stigma associated," Ms Connolly said.

In Australia, the average class size is between 22 to 26 students and the most recent estimates show one in 20 children will have a parent who is jailed before they become an adult.

The report finds that in South Australia this may currently be as many as 6200 children.

Ms Connolly said those children often felt isolated and experienced bullying. They also have to deal with their own feelings of anger, shame and "guilt by association".

Before the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, Ms Connolly met with 66 children aged 10-16 to better understand the effect a parent's incarceration can have on their children.

Among them was Andrew, a now 18-year-old, whose life was turned upside down at 15 when his father – a single parent – went to prison.

He told Ms Connolly he was in a state of "absolute confusion" after his dad was arrested at the family home.

Andrew had no other family to call upon and did not know where to reach out for help.

He ended up in a youth shelter, which he found scary, "suddenly

(going) from living with people you know to living with strangers".

He struggled to find somewhere to live and found himself in unsafe situations and without money. He explained how he "got told nothing" and that children in his situation should be given as much information as possible.

"I feels as though you are living in a world that no one else would understand," he told Ms Connolly. "You lose your dignity as well as any hopes you had for the future."

His life has since become more settled but his father remains in jail.

Based on the interviews, Ms Connolly's report makes four key recommendations aimed at better informing – in an age-appropriate way – the child about their par-

ent's situation and the need to identify children of incarcerated parents as a priority access group for government support services.

"Many children and young people affected by parental incarceration see knowing the truth about their parent's situation as key to being able to seek effective help," Ms Connolly said.

"I am hopeful that because of this report, a group of SA children who are currently sitting under the policy radar will become more visible and that the services and supports they are rightfully owed will become available in the shortest possible time frames."

She said a key factor for better supporting children was identifying young people as a priority



Helen Glanville of Second Chances

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of innocent kids with mum or dad in jail

Yes, social media is harming teenagers

BEN PIKE

YOUNG people are blaming social media for their deteriorating mental health, research has found.

The revelations come as the nation is suffering a shortage of mental health workers.

Leading mental health organisation Headspace spoke to 6000 young people aged 12-25 and found 57 per cent believed their mental health was getting worse, with 42 per cent citing social media as the main reason.



This is a significant increase from the 2018 Headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey, where 37 per cent of young people named social media as the cause of declining mental health.

The second most common response was expectations from school, family and community (20 per cent). Global issues (16 per cent) and work and study pressure (13 per cent) were also significant factors.

"It's clear from the research that social media is something young people feel is putting more and more pressure on them," Headspace chief executive Jason Trethowan said.

"Spending too long on social media is associated with higher levels of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression and psychological distress."

Charlize Mulholland spends about 20 hours a week on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat and Twitter.

She feels anxious when separated from her device, saying she feels compelled to know what is going on the moment she receives a notification.

"The next thing it's 3am and you can't remember who you've texted or what you have looked at online," the 18-year-old said.

Ms Mulholland, pictured, said she had suffered harassment online.

SA prisoner numbers rose 4 per cent to 3105 in the year to June 30, 2021*
*Figures from ABS and SA Correctional Services Department, June 2019

An estimated 16,400 to 19,600 people under 18 years old have experienced parental incarceration at some point

One to two women each year are at risk of giving birth while in prison

60-65 per cent of women in SA prisons identify as having children

30-40 per cent of women prisoners identify as a primary carer to a child. 10-15 per cent identify as a sole carer



access group for government services.

Prisons currently do not ask those who enter the facility if they have children and consequently many slip through the cracks.

Ms Connolly said identifying at-risk children early allowed for protective measures to prevent intergenerational offending. Figures show children of prisoners are six times more likely to end up in jail than kids from law-abiding families.

"We can actually do something to reduce that likelihood, to make them feel connected. People who are connected, who belong, who feel loved and valued generally aren't people who are in our jails," she said.

"We need to do all we can to identify these children and we need to support them now."

Second Chances chief executive Helen Glanville agreed "so much more" could be done for the children who she said were "the forgotten vic-

"It's not their crime, it's not their fault. If we don't look after them, potentially they could become tomorrow's prisoners"

tims" of their parent's crimes. "It's not their crime, it's not their fault," Ms Glanville said. "If we don't look after them, potentially they could become tomorrow's prisoners."

Ms Glanville said the non-profit volunteer organisation worked with children in various programs to help ignite a sense of hope, dignity and belonging among the children who were often struggling to cope with trauma and upheaval caused by a parent's incarceration.

She said children learn by example but, in many cases, their parents were not ideal role models.

"Unfortunately, many are living in homes where values and life lessons many of us take for granted, such as work ethic, are just not taught," Ms Glanville said.

She emphasised that each child experienced a unique situation and not all families wanted help, least of all from the government, and some were afraid of having their children

removed. Ms Glanville said in one example, a single mother who knew she would be jailed left \$150 on the table for her three children – all aged under 10 – hoping it would sustain them during her incarceration.

Within a week the children were hungry and sought help via their teachers.

In another example, she said a 15-year-old girl whose single parent was jailed, remained living alone in her family home, determined to finish putting herself through school.

But she said, regardless of their circumstances, the children deserved hope, and a chance to make good decisions for their own lives.

A Correctional Services Department spokeswoman said: "The department was pleased to be able to help facilitate the sessions with prisoners as parents and looks forward to working through the relevant aspects of the report."

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