

## Facebook happy to slur dead

JANE HANSEN

FACEBOOK has been slammed for not only refusing to remove an “extremely offensive” post that attacked murdered mother Hannah Clarke but also stating it did not breach their policies.

Hannah Clarke and her three children were murdered by estranged husband Rowan Baxter. The crime shocked the nation and threw a spotlight

on the coercive control Baxter had used.

But the men's rights activist Facebook page Don't Believe All Women, run by Adam James, also known as Adam Benjamin Cocks, who has been convicted of stalking, has alleged Hannah Clarke used coercive control on Baxter.

A spokeswoman for Facebook's parent company Meta said Facebook did have community standards but the post did not breach them.

The post was “extremely offensive”, eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant said.

Mark Woolley, chair of the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation, said the posts were heartbreaking for her family.

## Grand plan for mosque

A \$9.8 million mosque is planned for Guildford as part of an Islamic group's proposal to expand on the site where they have a smaller prayer hall.

The Masjid Assalam Mosque project on McArthur St will include men's and women's prayer rooms, a religious training room, a dwelling for the imam and a three-deck basement carpark.

Development applications were lodged with Cumberland Council and the state government's Sydney Central City Planning Panel, which will ultimately determine the project's fate, in December.



Hannah Clarke.

Compassion, and a few simple things, can be key when a

# HOW A DRESS AND



A new dress and a suitcase for her few possessions made a world of difference for this woman when she was released from Dillwynia women's prison in Sydney. Picture: Tim Hunter

### EXCLUSIVE

CYDNEE MARDON

CATHY Padgen has a mission – there will be no Brooks Hatlens in the NSW prison system.

In one of the most poignant scenes from *The Shawshank Redemption*, a bewildered, scared Brooks, aged 73, is released from prison after 43 years. An old man in a strange new world, friendless, without support, he hangs himself.

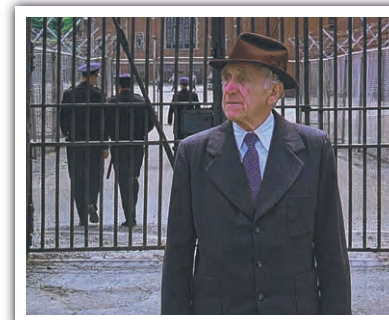
Cathy knows that a prisoner emerging after a long stint in jail can cut a lonely figure as they step out from behind the iron gates carrying everything they own in a garbage bag.

A drug user for example, can go in 50kg “wringing wet” and come out 10 years later weighing 100kg. Clothes that don't fit are a reminder of a troubled past, their court appearances and the consequences of their actions, on victims, their families and the wider community. They may be decades older – geriatrics where they were once young and fit.

Female prisoners in particular can struggle to feel comfortable in their own skin after years in a place when there's no mirrors, the best glimpse of themselves is captured in the stainless steel amenities mirror in their accommodation area, or windows as they pass by.

“Women in custody have no idea what they look like in anything other than in prison greens made from tracksuit material, and often have no idea what size they are,” says Cathy, a seasoned Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) Volunteer Mentoring Service (VMS) project co-ordinator.

“They have no idea what suits and what doesn't suit. That's a really big thing for



Old con Brooks Hatlen leaves prison in the *Shawshank Redemption*.

women and their perception of themselves. The old saying ‘clothes maketh the man’ is never truer than for our program participants especially for women who often have very low levels of self worth, confidence, say the brand new clothing with tags, is very empowering for them.”

Cathy is devoted to helping long-term prisoners step out into the world prepared as best as possible to reconnect with a place that has largely left them behind and forge or mend family relationships – be the best person they can be with the support of the VMS program and their mentor.

“The first person who came into our program when trying on his clothes came back bawling his eyes out. I thought ‘Oh know what's gone wrong’ but he was so happy,” Cathy said.

He said “This is the first time I've been in normal clothes and not prison greens in 22 years, you have no idea how excited I am, my release is really happening”. That blew me away I never expected that sort of response.”

Cathy says her role is the “best job in the world”, having long ago realised there was a desperate need for change in the way people were supported in the transition from custody to parole.

“Especially for long termers there are limited services and reintegration opportunities, and we relied heavily on the good will of the CSNSW Chaplaincy Services and a few select staff at jails who were prepared to help out,” she said.

An 18 year veteran of CSNSW with a vast range of experience in front line, operational roles, Cathy knew this needed fixing.

“I thought this is wrong, no wonder some are coming back they feel unsupported and are bereft of the basics of human life and dignity,” she said.

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prisoner leaves jail for a new start after decades behind bars

# SUITCASE START A LIFE



A bag of toiletries is part of the 'starter pack' for released inmates.

**“Often what belongings they have, will be put in a garbage bag ... they don't know how to do simple things like ordering a coffee or something off a menu”**  
**Cathy Padgen**

Corrective Services NSW's Cathy Padgen, with a former woman inmate who she has helped adjust to outside life after she finished her sentence at Dillwynia woman's prison. Picture: Tim Hunter

“Jail is a place where making choices and decisions about your life on the inside is very limited. Often the simple things are the hardest.

“It is the top of the list, hotly followed by grocery shopping, budgeting and navigating the myriad of services that are available in the community to assist them.”

For many, the first few times they go grocery shopping is sensory overload for them. Many of her participants are sex offenders, high profile murderers and violent criminals, but Cathy and the VMS program is not about focusing what they've done. It's about how best to put each and every one of them in the best possible position to be successful on parole, and give back to the families and communities who were so damaged by their offences.

“I tell them who they were in the lead up to their crime, who you were at sentencing, who you were in custody and who you will be when you're out can be very different people. The choice is up to them, supported by our program,” she said.

An important part of the program is providing clothes from charity partner Thread Together, toiletries and suitcases from a partnership with a local retirement village and U3A group. Local Community Corrections staff must be ready for when they venture out into the real world.

Cathy receives referrals from staff members at the four jails involved in the pilot program and she can also select people she knows fits the criteria. Participants come from Dillwynia Correctional Centre, Francis Greenway Correctional Complex, south coast Correctional and Long Bay.

Cathy hopes to broaden the program to every jail in the state with the help of volunteer mentors who are matched to suitable participants for as long as is required.

“The support is tailored to each person's individual needs and can be for as long as they need, sometimes it's a month, sometimes it's a lot more,” she said

Cathay is among 10,000 CSNSW staff celebrated on National Corrections Day this Friday for their commitment to community safety and reducing reoffending.

“Often what belongings they have, will be put in a garbage bag and they will have to wait for a bus or walk to a railway station, if there is no family member or service provider to assist. Standing out the front of jail waiting is such a dehumanising thing, is it any wonder they fall apart, breach parole and come back.”

The program Cathy oversees involves pre-release and post-release support with the volunteer mentor from Australian Red Cross.

“I thought this job is for me. I must

have this job, I know I can make a difference, not only for offenders but for the wider community,” she said.

Fifteen people so far have gone through the program and “not one” looks like reoffending.

“Some have jobs, a lot have found independent accommodation, one of our early fellows has done some phone counselling with offenders in custody and has two rescue dogs and has his own housing commission flat in the inner city. That's after 21 years in custody,” Cathy said.

“It makes me so happy each time I

check in on them all to see their positive progress and how they are adapting to the world of today.”

Cathy keeps in touch with all of the program participants after their release, catching up for coffee or lunch, to see how they are adapting to being out in community after a long time in jail, as well as staying in regular contact with their parole officers.

“When all they've spoken to is law enforcement and lawyers, they don't know how to do simple things like ordering a coffee or something off a menu,” she says.



Dillwynia women's prison.



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