**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Transforming Lives: SilVR Adventures and Australian Prison Collaborate for Inmate Reintegration**

SilVR Adventures, in collaboration with Langi Kal Kal prison in Victoria, are looking to expand a pioneering pilot program aimed at transforming the lives of inmates and facilitating their reintegration into society. This initiative, sparked by a senior management member’s recognition of Virtual Reality’s potential in alleviating postpartum stress, addresses the significant health and mental health challenges prevalent in prison populations.

In a recent interview with Kirsty De Ruiter from The Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria, we delved into our groundbreaking pilot program initiated in March 2023 at Langi Kal Kal prison. Stemming from a senior management member's discovery of Virtual Reality's efficacy in aiding postpartum stress, the program spearheads a positive transformation within the prison environment.

Link to videos:

* SilVR Transitioning Beyond Bars - ATM: <https://youtu.be/c1v7c_mMnCw>
* SilVR Transitioning Beyond Bars - Supermarket: <https://youtu.be/e-wzfj--d7E>

Amidst the backdrop of Australia's prison landscape, where approximately 43,000 individuals were incarcerated as of mid-2018, the collaboration between SilVR Adventures and Langi Kal Kal stands out as a beacon of hope. With a focus on the holistic well-being of inmates, the initiative seeks to address the significant health needs and mental health conditions prevalent in prison populations, as highlighted in a 2018 report.

SilVR Adventures VR solution has become a transformative avenue to address the mental health challenges faced by individuals entering jail, where 40 percent have a mental health condition and nearly a quarter (23 percent) are on psychiatric medication. The platform provides meaningful and shared VR experiences, contributing to the enhancement of mental well-being for those navigating the complexities of incarceration.

Kirsty De Ruiter from The Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria, a key figure in Langi Kal Kal's innovations team, leads the charge in employing virtual reality as a tool for reintegration. Recognising the challenges faced by those leaving prison, the program aims to equip individuals with essential skills for navigating daily life outside the prison walls. It acknowledges the societal needs of former inmates, including employment, housing, and healthcare, with the goal of reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

*“After using SilVR, our reintegration team believed there was an opportunity to utilise VR for long term programs. We came up with several ideas that SilVR have implemented. These VR experiences have the potential to be very helpful for prisoners that have served long sentences, to give them an idea of what to expect when released.”* says Kirsty.

The 2018 report underlines the importance of such initiatives, revealing that a significant portion of individuals entering prison have prior incarceration experiences;

* Most people (73%) entering prison had been in prison before, and almost half (45%) of prison entrants had been in prison within the previous 12 months [(1)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/prisoners/health-australia-prisoners-2018/summary).
* Male prison entrants were more likely to have extensive prison histories than female entrants. More than one-third (35%) of male entrants had been in prison 5 or more times, compared with 15% of female entrants [(2)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/prisoners/health-australia-prisoners-2018/summary).
* Indigenous prison entrants were more likely than non-Indigenous entrants to have an extensive prison history. Almost half (43%) of Indigenous entrants had been in prison at least 5 times before, compared with 25% of non-Indigenous entrants [(3)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/prisoners/health-australia-prisoners-2018/summary).

SilVR Adventures, in collaboration with the prison team, is launching a trial program designed to provide an in-depth and immersive experience. The program initially is focusing on fundamental tasks like topping up a MYKI card and using self-checkout in grocery stores and aims to familiarize inmates with aspects of daily life often taken for granted by the wider community.

Through this innovative approach, SilVR Adventures and Langi Kal Kal aspire to facilitate a smoother transition into the broader community for individuals who have been incarcerated, offering them a newfound sense of confidence and skills as they embark on a journey of reintegration and renewal.

SilVR Adventures began in 2019, growing exponentially in ANZ during the COVID19 pandemic when lockdowns left elderly people more isolated than ever before. The company quickly adapted its technology to bring larger numbers of people together, no matter where they were.

SilVR Adventures was named Victorian Start-up of the Year at the prestigious iAwards in 2023, and a winner of the Monash Business Award for Innovation in 2022, and Future of Ageing Awards 2020, a finalist in the InnovAgeing National Awards and Eldercare Innovation Awards 2021 and named one of 2021’s top 500 global start-ups. They have dementia-based research with Deakin University - supported by the Aged Care Research & Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA), and strategic partnerships with major organisations like Optus, Amazon Web Services and La Trobe Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

To learn more, visit: [www.silvradventures.com.au](http://www.silvradventures.com.au)

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