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## Life inside Kerobokan: the prison where Scott Rush will serve life

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Some who have been inside Bali's Kerobokan prison describe it as hot, dangerous, dirty and crawling with vermin.

Others say it is tough but still a "very human" place, where prisoners pay for and prepare their own food and regularly see their loved ones.

Kerobokan is where Scott Rush will spend the rest of his days, after the 25-year-old convicted drug smuggler had his death penalty commuted to a life sentence.

Reports about poor conditions inside the jail have long been refuted by prison authorities and Rush's Bali Nine co-accused Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran have publicly said it is not that bad.

But Rush, who was only 19 when he was arrested with more than a kilogram of heroin strapped to his body, has almost no information about the outside world and his memories of Australia could slowly fade, his Australian lawyer Robert Welfare said.

"It becomes your world," he said.

"Your world shrinks to that society because you've got no reference point.

"Your memory of what Australia smells like, they'd fade.

"He'll never swim in the ocean again.

"He used to like swimming.

"These are pretty basic things of freedom."

Mr Welfare said he has seen Kerobokan prisoners carrying around their own makeshift toilets and doing their own plumbing, with cockroaches and other pests crawling around.

He said prisoners have to pay to get food and bottled water, and have not much to do except walk the boundaries of the prison, go to church services or play tennis on the prison's court.

"Your diet is dependent on your pockets really, and Scott hasn't got big pockets," he said.

Mr Welfare said inmates are locked in their cells for up to 13 hours a day, and Rush was at one time sharing a small cell with 11 others.

He has seen bruises on prisoners and heard reports of violence.

"It's not where I'd want to spend the rest of my life."

He said the state of Kerobokan reflects that there are greater financial priorities in Indonesia than the prison system.

In a rare insight into the prison, Chan and Sukumaran were filmed inside Kerobokan for SBS's *Dateline* late last year and were seen working out on gym equipment, using art supplies, and were part of a "cook up" in fellow Bali Nine inmate Matthew Norman's cell.

"It could be worse, it could be worse," Chan told the program.

"I suppose I'm thankful that everyday I actually get to wake up."

Both Chan and Sukumaran have been heading education courses for inmates as part of their rehabilitation and Chan has been studying theology after converting to Christianity.

The prison's Governor Siswanto allowed the cameras inside in the wake of bad publicity.

"I think that the Australian news coverage about the Kerobokan Prison has been very negative," the prison boss said.

"It doesn't describe the current situation or conditions."

In an online conversation with viewers after the program went to air, SBS journalist Mark Davis wrote: "It's still a prison. So it's tough."

"But it is also very human.

"Freedom to move, to cook, to see family."

Davis said he mostly spent time in the tower where death row inmates are held, which is less crowded than the rest of the jail.

"And the westerners in there have the resources to buy the comforts of beds etc," he said.

Early last year the Indonesian government had to hose down reports that rich prisoners were able to live in luxury behind bars.

The revelations came after a team established by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to probe judicial corruption did a surprise inspection of women's prisons in Jakarta.

Businesswoman Artalyta Suryani, jailed for bribing prosecutors, was reportedly interrupted in the middle of a laser beauty treatment in her apartment-style cell, complete with air conditioning, flat-screen TV, a fridge and a kitchen, *The Jakarta Globe* reported.

"We deeply regret that several prisoners might have received special treatment," presidential spokesman Julian Aldrin Pasha said at the time.

"President Yudhoyono believes that all inmates should receive equal treatment. There shouldn't be any privileges or special dispensations for prisoners."

AFP reported it is well-known that wealthy inmates are able to buy special treatment and even shorter sentences, while poor people are crammed into overcrowded cells and subjected to extortion and abuse.

At the end of last year, *The Jakarta Post* reported the government's plans to build new jails across Indonesia in response to complaints about overcrowding.

Rush and eight others were arrested at Denpasar airport on April 17, 2005, and jailed over a plot to smuggle 8.3 kilograms of heroin into Australia.

Chan and Sukumaran have appealed against their death sentences.

**with AAP and AFP**

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