



VISION: Prisons boss Brian Edwards, left, and Pastor Norm Reed. Picture: KIM EISZELE

Unit set to boost prison visits

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A NEW accommodation unit aimed at making life easier for families of Risdon Prison inmates has opened in Hobart.

Hillside Haven is on church land a short distance from the prison and will provide subsidised accommodation for families who have to travel long distances to visit prisoners.

Figures show that about half of the Risdon Prison inmates have families and loved ones in rural and regional Tasmania. These

inmates receive fewer visits than prisoners with family in Hobart because of the time and costs involved.

But it is hoped the Hillside Haven project, which is a joint initiative of the Tasmanian Community Fund and the Christian Family Centre, will encourage more visits.

The facility aims to build better family bonds and help children who have parents in prison spend more time with their loved ones.

It will also reduce driver fatigue among those who have to travel from the North

and North-West to visit their loved ones.

Members of non-profit organisations involved in running programs at the prison will also be able to use the facility for overnight stays when the unit is not needed by families.

Tasmanian Community Fund chairperson Lynn Mason said the accommodation, which was modelled on a similar facility built in Victoria, was an important component of a long-term strategy to stabilise families of prisoners in Tasmania.