

NLAF Prisoners Forum Report to NLAF – August 2016

The NLAF Prisoners Forum met on 18 August 2016. Key issues discussed included:

Miranda Project

Kelly-Anne Stewart from Department of Justice spoke about the Miranda Project as a member of the Steering Committee. This Project is being hosted by the Community Restorative Centre (<http://www.crcnsw.org.au/miranda-project>) and will be piloted in five NSW locations - Leichhardt and Penrith Women's Health Centres, Waminda (Nowra), Central West Women's Health Centre (Bathurst) and Lou's Place in Kings Cross. The model is aimed at keeping Aboriginal women out of custody using case management with a focus on their complex needs, health and wellbeing.

Prisoners Aid NSW (PANSW)

Roger West and Kate Wiechmann from PANSW spoke about their Inmate Property Service and Mates on the Move Project (<http://prisonersaidnsw.org/services/>).

The Inmate Property Service has re-commenced recently after a break in service due to a tender process. They assist prisoners in 11 NSW prisons who reside within a 100km radius of the Sydney GPO. The new model requires the prisoner who has property that needs to be collected and stored to complete a form in prison with their SAPO, which needs to be signed off by the MOSP before the request can be passed to PANSW for processing. PANSW are paid a fee for each pickup. Their new social enterprise Mates on the Move has been supported by the Ian Potter Foundation and is due to commence before the end of the year. The Program involves a 14 week training course incorporating work experience in the removalist service. PANSW is partnering with community housing providers to assist social housing tenants to relocate and also working with Job Active providers and employer groups to set up employment pathways for the prisoners who have completed the training course and work experience.

Calls from Prisoners to Legal Services

Legal Aid reported that the new telephone triage system has commenced and it appears that the calls coming in to the Legal Aid reception are more appropriate. Information about the new system has been circulated within Legal Aid, to CLCNSW Centres and Corrective Services NSW Centres.

Work and Development Orders in Prisons

State Debt Recovery reported that a MOU with Corrective Services will commence on 19 August to facilitate data exchange when a person enters prison so SDR knows the person is in custody to stop enforcement action and CS knows the person has fines debt to support discussions regarding WDO options while in custody.

The next meeting of the Prisoners Forum is 17 November 2016.

Richard Funston

Director Criminal Law Legal Aid NSW

Chair NLAF Prisoners Forum, August 2016