

## NLAF Prisoners Forum Report to NLAF – August 2017

The NLAF Prisoners Forum met on 24 August 2017. A summary of the key issues discussed in the meeting are as follows:

### **AVL Project Presentation**

Peter Sharp, Manager of Video Conferencing at Corrective Services NSW, spoke about the Just Connect AVL Consolidation Project, which will replace VCSS and is designed to streamline and improve operations relating to communications with prisoners in Corrective Services custody. Video conferencing is currently available in every Local and District Court in NSW, and all NSW correctional centres except for two. Just Connect is to be deployed in three releases. The first release will concern inmate and solicitor access. OIMS will be synced with Just Connect so that whenever an inmate is moved between correctional centres, Just Connect is updated, and the inmate's solicitor is notified. The second release will enable friends and family to make online bookings for video conferencing sessions with inmates, including through the use of iPads in some circumstances. The third release will concern courts and other tribunals. Corrective Services have also applied for funding to upgrade holding areas and AVL suites.

### **The Miranda Project**

Deidre Hystop, Miranda Project Director, provided an overview and update on the Miranda Project, which is based on a UK model, and aims to provide diversionary options for women at risk of incarceration. A pilot has commenced in four locations namely: Bathurst, Penrith, Leichardt and Kings Cross. The Miranda Project has been receiving referrals from all over the state, and have so far been 100% successful in support of people in the Local, District and Supreme Courts. CRC have secured funding for the project from Women NSW, and have now began setting up a new model drop-in centre at 21 Queen St, Sydney.

### **Community Restorative Centre**

Alex Faraguna, Telephone Information and Referral Service Worker, Community Restorative Centre (CRC), provided an overview of the work CRC undertakes in relation to post-release support services. CRC provide post-release support to hundreds of people who are released from prison each year. CRC caseworkers engage with inmates three months prior to release, and then will assist with casework, counselling, financial assistance, and assistance with family video visits.

### **Other issues discussed**

- Overview of Corrective Services NSW new case management system and High Intensity Program Units; and
- Legal Aid NSW review of services provided to prisoners.

The next meeting of the NLAF Prisoners Forum is 16 November 2017.

### **Camilla Pandolfini**

Senior Solicitor PIAC

Chair NLAF Prisoners Forum, August 2017