

## NLAF Prisoners Forum Report to NLAF – November 2017

The NLAF Prisoners Forum met on 16 November 2017. As Camilla Panolfini, Chair of the Prisoners Forum, is on parental leave, Richard Funston chaired this meeting.

Key issues discussed include:

### **Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers for this meeting were Danielle Matsuo and Dr Phillip Snoyman, Directors State-wide Programs, from Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW). They presented on issues relating to access to the suite of EQUIPS (Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practise to Succeed) programs, the Remand Domestic Violence Intervention, intensive therapeutic programs and High Intensive Program Units (HIPU). The Prisoners Forum members also received an overview of CSNSW's Reception, Screening and Induction (RSI) process and the pre-release planning scheme, NEXUS which provides a whole of sentence process.

### **Review of Prisoners Legal Service**

Legal Aid NSW's Prisoners Legal Service Review will be conducted by Emma Keir (in-house civil law solicitor and former LawAccess solicitor), and Dr Garner Clancy (Senior Lecturer, Criminology, Sydney Law School). The object of the review is to develop a Legal Aid NSW service model for prisoners.

### **Prisoners and Health**

- Legal Aid NSW and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre have established a joint Prisoners Health project, which is assisting inmates to take matters to the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC). Issues relating to delay in accessing care, medication and continuity of care are all issues that have been identified through this casework. The project will involve further consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Justice Health and CSNSW.
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) have been working with the HCCC to develop systems to best manage patient complaints or concerns at an early stage. Patients will be able to contact a JH&FMHN clinician from the integrated care team through the internal CSNSW telephone system. Business rules are being developed to ensure a quick response and overview by the Nurse Managers, with any trends monitored and addressed.

### **Women in Prison**

- Mary Wade, a maximum-security prison for women, is due to open soon. It is repurposed from the old Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre at Parramatta, allowing Sydney inmates to be closer to family.
- Victims Services NSW approved counselling (22 sessions per inmate) will be implemented at all three HIPU sites that are catered for women. It will begin at Mid-North Coast and Broken Hill Correctional Centres. All staff at HIPU for women sites will undergo one day training on trauma informed practice at Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy.

The next meeting of the Prisoners Forum is on 22 February 2018.

### **Richard Funston**

Deputy CEO, Legal Aid NSW

A/Chair NLAF Prisoners Forum, November 2017