

## NLAF Prisoners Forum Report to NLAF – August 2019

The NLAF Prisoners Forum met on 22 August 2019. Key issues discussed at the meeting included:

### **Corrective Services Statewide Disability Services**

Berindah Aicken, Statewide Manager Specific Needs and Kathy Saul, Manager Statewide Disability Services, presented on Corrective Services' Statewide Disability Services (**SDS**).

SDS presented on the numbers and profiles of individuals in custody with a disability, which includes both physical and non-physical disabilities. SDS is part of the specific needs portfolio, and includes screening units, as it is recognised that people with disability in custody may require additional support needs. The team is relatively large and comprises psychologists, neuropsychologists, a project officer, a disability resource and training coordinator and senior services and programs officer. SDS works directly with individuals and also provides staff training. SDS' generic email receives between 150-200 emails weekly from staff asking for information on how to manage or advise a prisoner with disability, and the inquiry will be spread throughout the team to find the relevant answer or contact. Apart from internal advice, they also provide external assistance to stakeholders, including the NDIA, justice advocacy services, solicitors and NGOs, who may need more specific information about particular prisoners. SDS spoke about their role in assisting with reintegration and pre-release planning, and in making applications to and liaising with the NDIA.

### **Other issues covered**

Other issues covered at the meeting included:

- Update regarding construction of the Clarence Correctional Centre at Grafton;
- Update regarding bail refused individuals at Surry Hills cells;
- Update from the Prisoners and Identification subcommittee;
- The issue of concession cards for recently released prisoners, who have to wait for two weeks to receive a concession card for public transport, but must often attend appointments in this time;
- The issue of bridging visas

The next meeting is on Thursday 14 November 2019.

**Camilla Pandolfini**

NLAF Prisoners Forum Chair, August 2019.