

## Prisoners Forum Report Quarter 2 | April to June 2020

### 1. Meeting of members of the Prisoners Forum

The Prisoners Forum met on 21 May 2020. Representatives of the following organisations participated in the meeting: the Aboriginal Legal Service, Community Legal Centres NSW, Corrective Services NSW, Inspector of Custodial Services, Just Reinvest, Just Connect, Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network, Kingsford Legal Centre, LawAccess, Legal Aid NSW, NSW Ombudsman, Revenue NSW and Women's Legal Service.

### 2. Ongoing review of Prisoners Forum Terms of Reference

The members discussed revised Terms of Reference that were circulated after the March 2019 meeting. It was agreed that further amendments to the objectives would be made and those amendments will be circulated out of session for feedback and review, with final Terms of Reference being tabled for discussion and consideration at the next meeting.

### 3. Update from Corrective Services NSW on the impact of the response to COVID-19 on prisoners

A document outlining the steps taken by Corrective Services NSW to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 was distributed to members before the meeting. Jeremy Tucker, Director Corrections Strategy and Executive Services, Corrective Services NSW, attended the meeting to provide an overview and further update on those arrangements. He informed the members that there are no current cases of COVID-19, but due to the ongoing risk of transmission the measures put in place will remain until it is considered safe to move to a recovery phase. Those arrangements include a temporary suspension of social visits, limits on movement of inmates to essential movements only, the screening of inmates and staff with temperature checks and alterations to staffing rosters. There have been over 17,000 social visits by video. Communication with lawyers is now predominantly through Audio Visual Link which has resulted in a roll-out of technology.

The role of technology and access to telephone and video will be an ongoing issue and point of liaison between Corrective Services NSW and the members of the Prisoners Forum.

### 4. Prisoners Legal Information Team

There was an update at the meeting on the Prisoners Legal Information Team (PLIT), which operates as a Subcommittee of the Prisoners Forum. The longstanding Librarian who maintained the Prisoners Information Portal has retired and recruitment is in progress. There will also be a reorganisation of the Portal. Members agreed to provide information to Corrective Services NSW for placement on the Portal.

## 5. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Prisoners Forum is on **Thursday 13 August 2020, from 9:30am to 11am.**

Nadine Miles

**Chair, Prisoners Forum**

June 2020