
COSP CLOSURES

On 8 August 2013 Corrective Services announced that following a review, most of the Community Offender Support Programs centres (COSPs) would close at the end of November 2013. Of the eight COSPs, six (Emu Plains, Kempsey, Cooma, Windsor, Tomago and Wollongong) will close completely, and Campbelltown will close and re-open in 2014 as a privatised centre run by a non-government organisation (NGO). Only the COSP at Malabar (Long Bay) will remain open and remain under the control of Community Corrections. The COSPs that are closing won't be accepting new residents from 8 August.

This affects approximately 60 positions but when asked Corrective Services did not provide the exact number.

The PSA is opposed to these closures and the privatisation of Campbelltown COSP. When the PSA was first told about the COSP review we asked how much it cost an NGO to run a similar service. Corrective Services didn't know, yet, it will fund NGOs to effectively take over these beds. This raises the question that it may cost more!

This Government says reducing re-offending is a priority – if so, why close COSPs which provide accommodation which helps do this? Offenders needing accommodation will now have to ask understaffed and under resourced Community Corrections officers to find the accommodation.

The PSA (Peter Devine (NCDC Chair), Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (Delegate), Evan Cole (Senior Industrial Officer)) met with Assistant Commissioner Rosemary Caruana, Community Corrections management and HR and IR representatives in the afternoon of 8

August to be informed about the closures and ask questions about what happens next. The reasons for the closures are on the Corrective Services intranet along with a series of questions and answers so there is no need to go through that here.

The PSA's concern is what options are available for members working in COSPs. As no new residents are being accepted each COSP will run out of current residents at different rates. Corrective Services said that if a COSP empties before the end of November the staff will be given work at a different location. The PSA previously raised the possibility of having an accommodation officer at each Community Corrections office and will follow up on this.

On Monday 12 August Corrective Services will send out an expression of interest in voluntary redundancy to ALL non-custodial staff to see if there are COSP staff wanting to take a VR and if other staff who want to take a VR can be used as a job swap for COSP staff who want to keep working.

Because this is an Expression of Interest you do not have to accept a VR if it is offered. Under the new Government policy if you are declared 'excess' you will be sent another VR offer. It is only when you refuse that offer that the 3 month clock starts ticking and you will be retrenched after 3 months if you haven't found another job.

There are vacancies, mainly as grade 5/6 Community Corrections Officers, which COSP staff can be priority assessed for. These vacancies are across NSW. If you are interested please contact HR. There a limited number of Community Corrections vacancies

at other grades. Again, contact HR to find out where these are.

We were told that members who came from Custodial positions may be able to return depending on where the vacancies are and agreeing to return to the grade they left at.

It is important to remember that you cannot be forced to accept a lower graded position – it is your choice. We will discuss salary maintenance with Corrective Services.

Depending on the individual circumstances Transferred Employees Compensation may be payable for moves made at grade and possibly also for those who agree to a lower graded position.

We raised the possibility of staff being employed by the NGOs as they take over the role and this may be possible but we need to clarify how this would affect a VR and if it is possible to continue under your current salary

and conditions of employment for a specific period.

There are other reviews in Corrective Services, such as Offender Management and Programs, and there is always the possibility that there will be further job cuts, and you may need to consider this in any choice you make. Unfortunately, the PSA has no information that can help you make this choice – we are told there will be more information about OM&P at the end of August 2013.

If you have any questions please contact a delegate or the PSA. If we can't provide an answer we will get one from Corrective Services. Also, if you would like the PSA to come to your COSP please contact us.

Regards,

Peter Devine
Chair, PSA Non-Custodial Departmental
Committee

Delegates:

Head Office:	Craig Wunsch, Ananka Gold
Metropolitan Area:	Kathy Dwyer, Linda Codling, Peter Devine (Chair), Robert Steuart, Elizabeth Fitzsimmons, Neil Robertson
Central West Area:	Scott Chapman (Deputy Chair) Kylie McKelvie (Secretary -on secondment to the PSA)
Central Coast & Hunter Area:	Carrienne Wilton-Howarth (Assistant Secretary)
North Coast Area:	Donna Symes
North West Area:	Kevin Jones
South East Area:	Darren Plumb, Carol Quilter, David Rowe
Community Corrections Advisory Group:	Stewart McNaughton

PSA:

Senior Industrial Officer: Evan Cole ph 9220 0900, email ecole@psa.asn.au

Organiser: Sharon Richards ph 9220 9000, email srichards@psa.asn.au

PSA Regional Offices:

Wollongong, Lismore, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Newcastle: ph 9220 9000