



19 April 2017

POVB bulletin

Report of meeting with the Minister on 12 April 2017

On 12 April 2017, the PSA met the Minister for Corrective Services, David Elliott, to discuss members' concerns with benchmarking and other changes in Corrective Services.

The following attended for the PSA:

- Kylie McKelvie – PSA President, Senior SAPO Kirkconnell Correctional Centre
- Nicole Jess – PSA Senior Vice President, Chair POVB, Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre
- Julie Bond – PSA Senior Industrial Officer COVB, NCDC, Community Corrections, Juvenile Justice
- Evan Cole – PSA Industrial Manager – Justice

The Minister was accompanied by two advisors. There was no-one from Corrective Services present, including the Commissioner.

The Minister undertook to approach the Commissioner for information that the PSA has previously requested, but not been submitted by Corrective Services. This includes the following issues:

- Where do the benchmarking figures actually come from?
- Why are the Wellington CC and South Coast CC figures based on the Mid North Coast CC figures, when the centres are physically different and require different staffing?
- Why are the KPIs set up to fail e.g. why is the KPI zero contraband when an alternative KPI of finding contraband is actually possible?

- Management Plans have not been provided
- Corrective Services has not explained how the proposed role descriptions will work in practice or responded to members' concerns that duties will be pushed down the chain of command resulting on increased workloads
- Staff safety is the primary concern of members and the PSA, but Corrective Services is making decisions that we believe will compromise safety, such as reducing the number of posts without explanation.

The Minister stated he preferred publically owned gaols, but that gaols had to run as efficiently as possible. The PSA said the members have a history of cooperating with management and the Government to increase efficiency, but often their suggestions are ignored. The Minister said he appreciated the fact the members do have a history of practical cooperation.

We raised the fact members have been told that if they did not accept the benchmarking figures, centres would be market tested. The Minister said this was not Government policy – benchmarking was intended to keep centres in public ownership. We said this is not the message we are getting from local management. When members raise safety problems caused by reduced numbers, the response has been 'accept the numbers or you will be market tested'.

Below are the written dot points of members' concerns we left with the Minister.

All employees of Corrective Services and Juvenile Justice should be classified as Emergency Services Workers in relation to the workers' compensation legislation.

Custodial Corrections

- *Benchmarking is proceeding while the prison population is increasing, which is compounding difficulties dealing with the increased number of offenders*
- *Assaults and incidents are on the increase with the rise in population and members are concerned that the current workers' compensation is inadequate*
- *Corrective Services has not been able justify where the benchmarking figures come from*
- *The PSA has been contacted by senior management from a centre asking for advice on how to set benchmarking figures*
- *The PSA has significant concerns that safety will be compromised and Corrective Services has not responded*
- *The PSA has asked the South Coast Correctional Centre which posts Corrective Services proposes to strip*
- *When PSA members have provided minimum staff numbers, they have been told the staff numbers will be cut further*
- *Inappropriate comparisons are being made between centres e.g. South Coast is being directly compared with Mid North Coast and Wellington*
- *Wellington has only one ambulance to cover the potential 1,100 inmates when the rapid build is complete*
- *Inmates generally have to be escorted into the community for health checks and not dealt with at centres*
- *The rank of Assistant Superintendent is being deleted and the work is not being covered by remaining positions which will lead to work not being done as other staff*

- *Benchmarking is causing supervision to be 'pushed down' the ranks with no account of the increased workload*
- *Members have been told that if they do not accept the benchmarking result the centre will be subject to market testing*

Non-Custodial and Community Corrections

- *While overcrowding is occurring and benchmarking introduced, Custodial positions are and will be stripped and Non-Custodial staff are expected to fulfil Custodial responsibilities without any training*
- *The workload and expectation of the roles is increasing without additional resources or review of these factors*
- *The staffing level and reporting lines in OS&P are inconsistent with Government policy of eight direct reports*
- *There has not been enough consultation about changes in Case Management particularly role descriptions, implementation and the implications on other areas of the organisation*
- *The non-filling of positions across the organization is resulting in many vacancies*
- *Community Corrections members are concerned that there may be another restructure despite one having only recently been completed.*

The newly elected POVB State Executive delegates are as follows:

Nicole Jess - Silverwater Women's - Chair

Jason Charlton - Mt Druitt Court - Vice-Chair

Thor Sutherland - Bathurst CC - Country Vice-Chair

Natalie Howes - Oberon CC - Secretary

Darren King - Lithgow CC - Assistant Secretary

Nicole Jess – Chair POVB

Evan Cole – PSA Industrial Manager – Justice

