

## COVID19 Command Centre

*Information valid as of 5pm, Thursday 19 March.*

Corrective Services has established a temporary Command Centre on the COVID-19 Pandemic at Henry Deane Building. This arises from a meeting between the PSA General Secretary Stewart Little, PSA Corrective Service Branch Execs and Commissioner Severin on Monday.

The Command Centre is staffed by various senior officers from across the organisation, in management and operational roles and by invitation to representatives from the PSA.

The Command Centre meets every day in person and by teleconference. An established teleconference line is established to allow members of the command centre and governors and directors to communicate issues as they arise in the centres, court locations and community offices and also your union branch executives as the COVID pandemic develops. There is also a dedicated email address.

The PSA is committed to working with Corrective Services COVID-19 Command Centre in order to assist our members maintain their workplaces as safe as possible, be it in a correctional complex or in a community setting. The prison population is considered by health Authorities as being of a higher risk in this pandemic, due to a range of co-morbidities, and other demographic factors. Therefore, PSA members' essential work needs to be kept as safe as possible. Some measures will not be popular among staff or inmates, but will be done based on the best health information available, keeping the staff and inmates as safe as possible, and whilst maintaining the operations of Correctives Services.

### Communications

Communications are starting to come more frequently from the Command Centre in a variety of forms from Commissioner's Instructions to the latest information on the DCJ website and intranet.

Your Governors and PSA Branch Executives also have direct access to the Command Centre for feeding issues

through to the centre and working on solutions. There is a 24-hour mobile phone to the Command Centre and a daytime telephone link to find solutions to COVID-related incidents as they arise from the Command Centre. Members are encouraged to try and resolve issues locally through site delegates and local management, then feed issues to the PSA before sending to the Coronavirus Command. Members are asked to be patient: the Command Centre deals with all issues, but prioritises higher-risk issues, then progresses to other matters. The Command Centre is dealing with a significant number of issues.

### Issues being addressed

The following lists a number of the issues that the Command Centre has been working on for custodial setting:

- Monitoring unplanned sick leave across locations to see where possible staff shortages are occurring.
- We were advised that a broadcast was coming today from HR regarding casuals access to special leave. This is a key component in keeping the gaols infection free and also ensuring adequate staffing as staff attendance is affected by the pandemic.
- Governors have been instructed to put in place COVID-19 contingency plans after consulting with all stakeholders (including local unions and HSRs). There may be variations required that go beyond the benchmarks in the gaol and a COVID-19 cost centre will be created.
- Commissioner's Instruction 03-2020 regarding suspension of programs in the community.
- Governors have been instructed to increase hygiene measures, increase cleaning regimes and make more hand wash and PPE available.
- The Prison Bed Capacity program will be revised with changes to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic.



## COVID19 Command Centre

- Justice Health is now screening inmates at point of departure and arrival of escort vehicles, where there is nursing staff present at a centre.
- CSU locations without nursing staff will have Justice Health questions and protocols incorporated into New Inmate Lodgement and Special Instruction Sheet assessment process.
- As a result of a Chief Magistrate's Direction, warrant matters are varied to have all court matters via AVL, email and teleconference.
- Due to Ombudsman COVID-19 precautions, the Ombudsman may have less availability at times and this should be communicated with inmates
- Legal Aid and other legal visits are now going through AVL or telephone
- The Command Centre has put forward recommendations to the Commissioner in regard to visits suspension, non-essential visitors and contractors, works release, day release, all other non-essential escorts, and procedures for inmates with COVID-19

The Command Centre is dealing with issues in the custodial environment, first to minimise infection risk and also progressing with community issues.

We also wanted to repeat again, that as workers for Corrective Services we have proven in the past that we will get through this pandemic by working together. Our workforce is a community that does its best when confronted with challenges such as this one, and we do our best by supporting each other. However, we wanted to remind everyone that if you are feeling overwhelmed, or one of your workmates is not coping, that is OK and reach out and have a conversation. We all have to look out for each other.

**Document prepared by the PSA with assistance of:**

**Amanda Cotter** Secretary POVB (Goulburn CC)

**Darren Wells** President COVB (Shortland CC)

**Nicole Jess** President POVB (Silverwater Women's CC)

