

Medical escorts update

Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) moved the medical escort meeting from Thursday 14 January 2021 to yesterday at 2.30pm.

Representing the POVB were PSA Manager Justice Julie Bond, POVB Chairperson Nicole Jess, Vice Chairperson Jason Charlton, Country Vice Chairperson Natalie Howes and Delegates from South Coast Correctional Centre Elizabeth Reid and Graeme Reid.

Discussion took place on the following points:

- **Staffing** It should not be based on cost but on the overall safety of the staff and the general public.
- **Risk assessments** Consideration needs to be factored in for medical escorts to private clinics and the logistics of that location. Risk assessments should not be completed days or a week prior to the scheduled escort. Assessments should be done based on up-to-date information and staff should be given that relevant information. For example, risks that should be factored in are road closures, traffic issues, the location of the medical appointment, the type of medical appointment.
- **Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)** Staff need more items of PPE to be looked at rather than handcuffs and then the next option being lethal force, a gun. Female escorts are not even armed so they have handcuffs and ankle cuffs only. Some centres have a standard protocol such as batons on escorts for Maximum and Medium inmates. There should be a set protocol to ensure safety to all staff in all centres and locations.
- **Restraints of inmates** There seems to be a decrease in restraining belts being used on hospital escorts.
- **Waiting areas** Having a secure location away from the general public when waiting in Accident and Emergency.
- **Parking issues** Set parking space for staff to park in at hospitals rather than parking spaces set for the general public
- **Location** The location of the medical appointment and whether a full risk assessment has been done of the location, the parking availability, phone service and the route the staff need to take to the location.
- **Handover** FMs or OICs need to do a full hand over to staff informing them of any risks, instructions regarding restraints and all current information that may be useful to the staff on how to best manage the inmate. Handovers should also consist of any relevant information regarding the route to take, the roads that may be closed or traffic issues.
- **Firearm recertification** This has been tabled previously in several forums including the Firearms and Tactical Meetings. There is no clear policy on when staff need to have their recertification. CSNSW could be sending staff out on a medical escort without being gun-qualified.
- **Training for medical escorts** Face-to-face and not the reliance on LMS.
- **Medical Escort Unit** There was discussion on the Medical Escort Unit. There have been several papers put up to the Commissioner and there needs to be further information added. Director Buckley will now be overseeing this and that should be tabled as soon as practicable. The medical escort unit however will not assist the country locations.
- **Terms of reference** Mr Corcoran will do up the terms of reference for the working party. CSNSW stated they wanted to act on the concerns quickly. It was noted that some of the points may take longer to resolve



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than others – like parking and waiting areas. CSNSW recognised that the points raised are valid points and it is envisaged that the working party will be able to address the concerns.

It was agreed by all parties that a working group would be formed. A Delegate from South Coast Correctional Centre and a Delegate from the Medical Escort Unit will be a part of the working group, as well as members of the POVB Executive.

The agreed approach was as follows:

- The motion will be held in abeyance to allow the working party to address the above concerns.
- CSNSW will put out written information to Governors and Managers of Security, this will then be forwarded to Functional Managers and OIC's of the watch.
- The written information will consist of the following:
 - Risk assessments are to be done on the day of the escort – not days in advance.
 - Risk assessment are to consider the location the escort is going to – if it is a private clinic and the location in the town, parking for the escort and the distance staff are to walk the inmate, the route the escort is to follow, if there is any roadworks and if there are any traffic incidents.
 - Managers and OIC of the watch are to give staff a full handover of the information pertaining to the escort.
 - Use of restraints can also include restraining belts.

If there are any other points that you would like to have raised through the working party, please email Nicole Jess or Jason Charlton.

Further information will be forthcoming once the working party meets and outcomes are achieved.

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