

PSA commences consultation on proposed change of model for custody-based sex and violent offender programs

At a meeting on 14 April 2021, your delegates along with PSA industrial staff, were provided with a briefing of a proposed change of model for facilitation of custody-based sex and violent offender programs. This would see co-facilitation of ITP programs by Senior SAPOs and Psychologists instead of just Psychologists.

The briefing followed an email that was sent to all staff on 22 March 2021 advising the changes were about to be implemented. The PSA threatened a dispute if this was not immediately withdrawn, given no consultation had taken place on a significant change to work practices.

The PSA has now collated feedback sent to Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) on Friday 30 April reflecting significant concerns from members, which included the following:

- The timelines proposed are far too ambitious for any meaningful consultation to take place.
- A recent proposal at Kirkconnell MISOP has had a number of issues tabled at the local level that remain outstanding.
- There are significant concerns about the disparity in pay scales for co-facilitation when completed by a (non-Specialist) Psychologist and a Senior SAPO.
- This proposal seems to have stemmed from issues with the recruitment and retention of Psychologists. This side of the problem is not being addressed, for example the significant hurdles in progressing to the Specialist Psychologist pay scale. In fact, this proposal could further exacerbate the challenges of recruiting and retaining Psychologists in CSNSW by undermining perceptions on the importance of the Psychologist vocation.
- The Intervention Pathways Model and the introduction of Custodial Case Management Units are both less than two years old and the repercussions of these already-significant changes have yet to flow through to ITP.
- CSNSW was to provide the PSA with evidence from the academic literature supporting models of co-facilitation. This has not yet happened.
- Comparisons between IDATP and ITP are questionable because IDATP is based on the CDTCC model, which is heavily case-management based.
- These roles assume that the required systems are changed (EDRMS SOP files recreated), consent processes are clarified, and information access is established otherwise this will not work. Clearly this would need to happen prior to implementation.
- There are a significant number of tasks that simply cannot be completed by SSAPOs, so would fall to psychologists to complete, including:
 - Risk Assessments (such as VRS)
 - Treatment Reports
 - HRO Reports
 - Progress notes tailored for use as evidence in reports and risk assessments



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- Acute mental health or safety assessments
- Providing opinions at court
- Consultation to custodial staff (for example regarding behaviour management)
- Psychology-specific Psychometric Assessment
- Individual therapy for responsivity needs or risk specific treatment (such as adapting treatment for inmates with intellectual disability, or individualised treatment for sex offenders while the offender is at VOTP).
- The difference between EQUIPS programs and high intensity programs is the complexity of the presentations and the increased accountability in the form of report-writing and risk assessment. Although there would be a valuable role for additional SSAPO positions in the program (for example case management, crisis support, liaising with families), the co-facilitation model does not make sense in this context.

Members will continue to be updated via bulletin as this consultation proceeds.

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