19 November 2020

Resumption of visits

Due to COVID-19, visits in all correctional centres were ceased in March of this year.

Legislation was changed to give Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) an exemption so contact visits did not need to occur. This legislation will cease in March 2021, which means CSNSW will need to resume full-contact visits if COVID-19 remains at low levels. This will be based on NSW Health advice.

CSNSW wants to perform a slow progression back to full-contact visits.

In June 2020 representatives from all sub branches met and the three motions were carried in regards to visits.

Motion 1

We the delegates to management hereby inform CSNSW, members will not perform any duty which assists the process or action of inmate contact visits of any description with person/s from within the community until departmental approved and funded screening instruments, temperature testing and body scanners are securely fixed in all correctional centre visitor entry points.

Motion 2

We the delegates to management are opposed to the reintroduction of contact/social visits with restrictions on not touching. We believe these restrictions of us policing inmates and visitors not touching puts staff at a greater risk of assault. It is also believed that if adults cannot touch, this will put children visitors at a greater risk of being the conduit for drug trafficking.

Motion 3

We the delegates to management request all visitors to Correctional Centres be temperature tested at the first available opportunity on entering complexes/grounds under control of CSNSW.

Since June 2020 15 body scanners have been sourced and delivered to specific centres and CSNSW has stated that they will be operational by 23 November 2020. CSNSW has stated it is in the process of sourcing more to place in other centres.

On 2 November 2020 Cessnock sub branch passed the following motion:

We the members of the Cessnock POVB Sub-Branch advise the following: Whilst no COVID-19 vaccine/cure is available to all staff under no circumstances will our members participate in CSNSW's proposed "Re-Introduction of In Person Visits". Members consider that our WHS will be severely compromised. Members will not risk the possibility of infecting ourselves, our families and our local community. We encourage CSNSW to extend and expand the AVL and tablet visits, providing that it is

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resourced appropriately. We inform that we are giving 72 hours' notice of possible future industrial action.

This motion was also passed at Bathurst CC and Emu Plains CC.

Yesterday delegates from all sub branches met and the resumption of visits was discussed robustly. This discussion took place after representatives from the Command Post did a presentation to delegates and answered all questions and concerns.

The following occurred:

- Delegates decided that CSNSW has fulfilled the request to have all visitors' temperatures checked at the first available opportunity on entering complexes and grounds.
- Delegates decided that CSNSW's decision to not impose a no-touching rule has addressed motion 2. Visitors will be allowed, as per social distancing guidelines an elbow touch or a fist pump.
- Motion 1 was heavily discussed and delegates decided to rescind this motion as it was an unrealistic motion when CSNSW has stated that small centres will not get body scanners, only medium and large. CSNSW is also currently sourcing body scanners specific for female inmates and this will take some time to source.
- Due to some centres having body scanners and being ready to go by 23 November 2020 the motion would split and divide the membership.
- The motion that Cessnock raised and was also passed by Emu Plains CC and Bathurst CC was put to the delegates and it did not get carried.
- Another motion from Cessnock CC was put to the delegates and this motion was:

  That the members of the Cessnock POVB Sub-Branch move that due to Health & Safety concerns, members are strongly against the CSNSW plan to re-introduce Contact/In-Person Visits prior to staff receiving the COVID 19 vaccine.

  Members will hold CSNSW fully responsible for any COVID019 related illness or death, if any Staff member of CSNSW is directed to implement Contact/In-Person Visits without a COVID vaccine being readily available.

This motion was carried by the delegates.

Today, 19 November 2020, delegates attended and further motions were raised in regards to the resumption of visits.

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We the delegates to management request that we have a member of the POVB State Executive present at the CP to review all visits plans prior to the recommencement of visits on 23 November 2020. If any visit plan isn't consistent and/or doesn't meet the recommendations of the CP we will not participate in any aspect of the visits process at the centre that isn't complying.

This motion was carried.

We the delegates to management believe that with the reintroduction of contact/social visits that maintaining the additional staffing profiles such as COVID intel/phone, COVID IAT and COVID security and/or additional COVID posts as per originally agreed COVID plans are essential to ensure the safety and security of the centres and should continue over the Christmas period at minimum and at centres where the body scanners were to be installed but have not yet been installed. The additional COVID positions should remain in place until the installation is complete.

This motion was carried.

We the delegates of the POVB management committee are opposed to the resumption of in person visits recommencing on 23 November 2020

This motion did not get carried.

We meet with CSNSW management tomorrow and we will keep members informed of information that comes out of the meeting.

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