STREAMLINING COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Wednesday 19 December 2012

Community Corrections in NSW is being re-shaped to deliver best-practice, flexible and improved supervision and management of offenders.

Corrective Services NSW Commissioner Peter Severin said today months of planning and consultation with staff and unions had already taken place to merge two branches responsible for management of offenders in the community into a new Community Corrections Division. This consultation is continuing.

Mr Severin said merging the existing Community Compliance and Monitoring Group (CCMG) and Community Offender Management (COM) branches would remove duplication of effort and boost the effectiveness of community offender supervision in NSW.

“This plan is part of a broader restructure underway in Corrective Services since the independent Hamburger Reviews were adopted by the NSW Government earlier this year,” Mr Severin said.

“Community Safety and reducing re-offending remain the highest priorities for Corrective Services NSW. Offenders who require greater supervision will continue to be monitored around the clock, seven days a week.”

Attorney General Greg Smith SC praised the progress towards implementation of the new Community Corrections Division.

“There is significant work being done in Corrective Services and the broader NSW Justice System and I am delighted to see great progress occurring in the delivery of the Government’s plans,” Mr Smith said.

Under the plan, Community Corrections will have 60 offices, including 15 smaller satellite offices to provide strong supervision and faster response times in management of community offenders across NSW. Most of the offices will see an increase in staff numbers.

All case management responsibilities will be delivered by Community Corrections staff and all electronic monitoring and intelligence services will be delivered under CSNSW’ Security and Intelligence Division.

The Hamburger Review recommended creation of a single Community Corrections Division for reasons including:

- CCMG and COM branches were duplicating work
- Both divisions were applying different risk assessment models that produced inconsistent supervision of community offenders
- Case management of offenders could involve multiple staff applying different management approaches to offenders with complex needs.

Mr Severin said the merger would remove a significant amount of duplication of work including drug testing, psychological assessments and home visits.
Monitoring and management of offenders would also be better targeted and enhanced using a single, innovative risk assessment process.

“This means that all offenders will be assessed using the same contemporary methodology,” Mr Severin said.

“Smarter risk assessments will allow us to deliver the most appropriate and targeted management of offenders.

“Those who require lower levels of supervision, like traffic or fraud offenders, don’t need the same intensive intervention techniques – such as home visits and urinalysis – which are more appropriate for those deemed at higher risk of re-offending.

“This is all about creating greater consistency and effectiveness of case management for all community offenders and enhancing public safety.

“While staff from both existing divisions are working professionally, the separate management structures have created inconsistent approaches. There is also some confusion among external stakeholders about who they should be dealing with inside our agency.

Mr Severin said no towns which have a single Corrective Services Office would lose that office, however in nine locations where two separate offices are operating – sometimes within hundreds of metres of each other – the two will be merged.

“Voluntary redundancies are being offered to those who seek them, however I’m confident we will place all staff affected by the restructure into positions.

“We have taken a very inclusive approach to consultation and staff have met many times to provide feedback to help shape the final implementation plan. I congratulate all staff for their engagement in this process.”

Staff are being encouraged to provide input into the proposed structure which will be implemented in the new year.

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