



MEDIA RELEASE

Five women charged in weekend visitor contraband blitz

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

Visitors to the state's Correctional Centres are being warned after five women were charged during a state-wide contraband blitz at the weekend.

The security operation by Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) officers and K9 sniffer dogs resulted in five women and one man being charged with bringing drugs and mobile phone accessories into NSW Correctional Centres.

In one case a 20-year-old woman was allegedly found smuggling five plastic-wrapped packages of cannabis in her bra at the visitor's entrance of Nowra's South Coast Correctional Centre on Saturday.

CSNSW' Security Operations Group (SOG) conducted visitor searches at South Coast, Cessnock, Cooma and Mid North Coast Correctional Centres and at Sydney's Silverwater and John Morony Correctional Complexes.

CSNSW Assistant Commissioner Security and Intelligence Mark Wilson said the operation highlighted a concerning trend of women risking criminal charges by trying to smuggle banned goods to inmates.

"Any contraband that enters the prison environment – including illegal and prescription drugs – poses a major risk to the health, safety and security of inmates," Mr Wilson said.

"If woman are being pressured to bring in contraband, or if they believe they are helping inmates, they are taking a serious risk and in addition to criminal charges, will be banned from future visits.

Among those charged at the weekend were two women, aged 46 and 37, who attended Cessnock Correctional Centre's visitors' entry area on Saturday to see a male inmate.

The 46-year-old allegedly had a contraband mobile phone SIM card concealed inside her shirt while a search of her purse in a nearby visitor's locker allegedly revealed a small amount of the illicit drug Ice.

A search of the women's car allegedly revealed a pipe used to smoke Ice and a sachet containing more Ice. Police were called and charged both women.

Also as a result of the operation:

- A 31-year-old woman was charged after allegedly being found with a balloon containing cannabis at the visitor's entrance of Cooma Correctional Centre on Saturday.

- A 50-year-old woman was charged after allegedly being found with 16 Xanax tablets in the visitor's car park at John Morony Correctional Complex on Sunday.
- A 25-year-old man was charged after allegedly being found with Suboxone wafers and cannabis at the main gate area of Cessnock Correctional Centre on Sunday.

Entry was refused to two more visitors at Silverwater Correctional Complex and one at Mid North Coast Correctional Centre over the weekend after various contraband items were found in their vehicles.

Mr Wilson said that from 1 January to 31 May 2013, Security Operations Group officer and K9 teams conducted almost 300 visitor search operations at Correctional facilities across the state, resulting in 47 visitors being charged and 183 denied entry.

"We've never been more serious about preventing contraband from entering our Correctional Centres and visitors can be guaranteed our specialist search teams are a regular presence through rolling operations at Centres around the state," Mr Wilson said.

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