



MEDIA RELEASE

Corrective Services NSW staff 'break in' the country's first Rapid-Build Prison

Thursday 14 December 2017

Corrective Services NSW staff have been put through their paces while testing emergency response procedures at Australia's most high-tech prison, which is due to open at Wellington in the state's west tomorrow (Friday 15 December).

Officers from the specialised Security Operations Group conducted the security response drills with the uniformed and non-uniformed staff set to work at the much anticipated Rapid-Build Prison - Macquarie Correctional Centre.

Minister for Corrections David Elliott said the 400-bed maximum-security facility featured a brand new design concept, as well as an innovative operating solution for managing inmates.

"This prison is the first of its kind in the country and it's important that staff have a comprehensive contingency plan and test every possible scenario," Mr Elliott said.

"The revolutionary open-plan, dormitory-style pods, mean staff need to familiarise themselves with this unique layout and get used to working in a new facility."

Assistant Commissioner of Security and Intelligence Mark Wilson PSM said the testing was standard practice for the opening of a correctional centre but the first to occur for a Rapid-Build Prison.

"The rehearsals are real life simulations and cover everything from basic gate-control to major incidents, including escape attempts, fires, assaults, self-harm situations and medical emergencies," Mr Wilson said.

"The drills are carried out to be as realistic as possible: when we're testing a fire emergency the room is filled with so much smoke you can't see. This is to ensure that those responding have experienced the worst and know how to overcome it.

"The result is that staff are competent and confident in dealing with any scenario and know every nook and cranny of the environment."

The emergency response testing was in conjunction to other operational testing of procedures including inmate movements, control room processes and visitor reception.

The Rapid-Build Prison design provides some of the highest level prison security in the state, featuring a central command post, round-the-clock monitoring and Immediate Action Team officers stationed within the centre 24/7.

Another Rapid-Build Prison at Cessnock, known as Hunter Correctional Centre, will open in early 2018.

Macquarie Correctional Centre will operate with around 220 staff and opens on 15 December.