



Office of the Hon Brad Hazzard MP
Attorney General
Minister for Justice

13/11/14
Received 27/14

Ms Danielle Cutler
Justice Action
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BROADWAY NSW 2007

IM14/25337
MLU14/01175

Dear Ms Cutler

Thank you for your email and attached paper about on-line counselling in prison cells. The Attorney General and Minister for Justice, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

I am advised by the Commissioner of Corrective Services Justice Action has been briefed on Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) in-cell computer project, and representatives of your organisation addressed the Offender Access Computers Steering Committee about this proposal in July.

I understand from the Commissioner CSNSW expects to begin a pilot of computers in cells at South Coast Correctional Centre (CC) in November 2014. Extending in-cell computer access to other correctional centres will depend on the outcome of the pilot. However, the new maximum security facility at Cessnock CC is the only other correctional centre where in-cell connectivity will be cost effective. CSNSW will need to weigh the cost of installing cabling for in-cell connectivity in other centres against other priorities and tight fiscal constraints.

In regard to using in-cell computers for on-line counselling, CSNSW considers this would not be appropriate without adequate support and engagement with mental health staff. Currently this is provided through mental health services including the Mental Health Screening Unit, step-down units and the Long Bay Hospital, and under the direct medical supervision of Justice Health & the Forensic Mental Health Network staff. It is the firm view of CSNSW that this is the only suitable method of intervention which can ensure the safety and wellbeing of inmates with serious mental illness.

CSNSW will consider introducing computer-based programs such as interactive modules which would be for self-guided skill development, in areas such as adjustment and coping, through interactive exercises. It is the intention also of CSNSW to provide computer-based options such as maintenance programs to inmates who have completed accredited group treatment. Information to assist smoking cessation and with alcohol and other drug addictions will also be available on computers via health programs.

I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely


The Hon David Clarke MLC
Parliamentary Secretary for Justice

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