Covid-19 Response in Prisons

Description
Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) has put significant planning in place to ensure business continuity and ensure the security of our prisons, the safety of our officers and the wellbeing of the people in our care.

A dedicated COVID-19 Taskforce was established on 3 March 2020, however QCS operational planning commenced in January 2020 when the State Health Emergency Coordination Centre moved to lean forward in response to the emerging threat of COVID-19.

Due to the significant operational impacts expected, QCS formalised the establishment of the State Corrections Operations Centre (SCOC), to focus on the planning necessary for the safe and secure operations of the correctional system.

QCS is adopting a staged approach to implementing restrictions and measures to detect and avoid the spread of COVID-19. From 23 March 2020, QCS will be operating under Stage 2 restrictions while planning for further restrictions. Stage 2 will see all personal visits to our centres cease, in line with the latest health advice on social distancing and gatherings as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer. All other visits, including legal, service provider or official visits will be conducted in accordance with advice from the Chief Health Officer, particularly with regards to social distancing.

The Chief Health Officer has the power to make a direction to ‘restrict the movement of persons’ under the Public Health Act 2005. By necessity and design, these plans will significantly reduce the number of visitors entering our prisons, helping to protect the health of our officers and the people in our care.

QCS will actively encourage correctional centre visitors to use other means of communications, such as telephone, letter and the use of video and other technology.
Queensland Health, informed by advice from the World Health Organisation, is leading the provision of health and safety advice to all Queenslanders. Their website provides the most current advice on public health including information on self-quarantine procedures, personal hygiene practices and health alerts regarding confirmed cases. All communication pertaining to hygiene awareness for prisoners, staff and visitors is informed by Queensland Health advice and directives.

Every Queensland correctional centre has identified suitable initial isolation accommodation areas, and additional areas will be identified in a graduated approach as needed. At this stage, if a prisoner tests positive to COVID-19, they will be removed from the centre and transported to a Queensland Health facility regardless of the severity of symptoms. This will be coordinated by Queensland Health staff at the centre.

As this pandemic progresses, QCS is committed to continuation of service delivery to ensure safe, humane containment, treatment and rehabilitation of people in our care.

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Additional Covid-19 resources are available at: http://bit.ly/2U0oKLG
If you would like to send us information about Covid-19, please fill in this form: http://bit.ly/2WnqiRH