



Inspector of
Custodial Services

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Inspection of Cooma
Correctional Centre



Inspector of Custodial Services

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(November 2020)

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Foreword

Cooma Correctional Centre (Cooma CC) was first inspected in 2015 as part of the Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) report *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW*. It was chosen for that report due its location near the Snowy Mountains in NSW and the cold climate it experiences for much of the year.

The ICS is required to inspect each correctional facility at least once every five years. This report is the result of the second round of five year inspections of NSW correctional facilities. In contrast to the previous ‘theme based’ inspections, this inspection employed an inspection methodology that addressed all areas of operation of Cooma CC.¹ Terms of Reference (TOR) for the inspection were informed by the ICS inspection standards for adult custodial services in New South Wales.²

Cooma CC is in the centre of Cooma and is an important part of the local community. It plays a unique role in operating the Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW) Museum that has become a local tourist attraction for the town of Cooma and provides employment for a number of inmates. It is not surprising that there is so much history attached to Cooma CC as it was originally opened in the 1870s.

This inspection took place in February 2020, shortly after the devastating bushfires of the summer of 2019-2020 and before the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The area surrounding Cooma has been significantly affected by drought and then fire and we heard numerous accounts from staff about the impact of the fires on the centre and local community. Management and staff at Cooma CC embraced the inspection process and we received high levels of co-operation during the inspection.

Fiona Rafter
Inspector of Custodial Services
November 2020

1 Theme based inspections address a specific issue such as Programs Employment and Education; and Women on Remand. See www.custodialinspector.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/Reports-and-publications.aspx

2 Inspector of Custodial Services (NSW), *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales*, June 2020.

Acknowledgements

The Inspector would like to acknowledge the assistance and co-operation of staff and inmates at Cooma CC. The assistance of the staff from the Corrective Services New South Wales Corrections Research Evaluation and Statistics unit and Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network is also appreciated. I am also grateful for the help provided by Victoria Oakden, the Official Visitor appointed to Cooma CC.

Glossary of terms and acronyms

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| AVL | Audio Visual Link |
| Buy-up | Purchase by inmate of pre-approved items |
| CCTV | Closed circuit television |
| CMU | Case Management Unit |
| CPT | Classification and Placement Team |
| CSNSW | Corrective Services New South Wales |
| CSI | Corrective Services Industries |
| EQUIPS | Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice and Succeed programs including EQUIPS Addiction, EQUIPS Aggression, EQUIPS Domestic Abuse and EQUIPS Foundation. |
| HIPU | High Intensity Programs Unit |
| ICO | Intensive Corrections Order |
| ICS | Inspector of Custodial Services |
| JH&FMHN | Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network |
| MOS | Manager of Security |
| MOSP | Manager of Services and Programs |
| OIMS | Offender Integrated Management System is CSNSW centralised data recording system. |
| RAPO | Regional Aboriginal Programs Officer |
| RIT | Risk Intervention Team |
| ROGS | Report on Government Services |
| SAPO | Services and Programs Officer |
| Section 6.2 Order | An Order, in accordance with the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, directing an inmate to carry out work in or outside the centre, as the Governor considers suitable |
| SMAP | Special Management Area Placement |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |

Executive summary

Cooma Correctional Centre (Cooma CC) was built in the 1870's. The original gaol incorporating a 1950s extension is a medium security facility that can accommodate 175 people. A separate minimum security area, known as Area 2, is located approximately 500 metres away from the main gaol with accommodation for up to 50 minimum security inmates.

Management and staff at Cooma CC are clearly proud of their centre and the role it plays in their local community. This was particularly so during recent periods of drought followed by bushfire. Staff and inmates in the minimum security area of the gaol helped drought affected farmers by feeding and housing orphaned lambs during 2019. Cooma CC also has a well-established relationship with the regional Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). The dog re-homing program has been operating for several years and provided care and protection to dogs during the 2019/2020 bushfires.

Custodial and non-custodial staff are committed to providing rehabilitation opportunities for inmates at the centre and preparing minimum security inmates for release into the community. However, despite the best efforts of staff at the centre to provide a safe and secure environment with a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration, the centre has a number of limitations due to its age, design and location.

Arriving at Cooma Correctional Centre

Cooma CC is not a reception centre. It receives inmates from other correctional centres on a weekly basis. Many inmates who arrive at Cooma CC are progressing in classification from a modern high security facility to the medium security 1800s facility or the more modern minimum security area to complete rehabilitation programs.

On arrival, inmates alight the transport vehicle outside the secure perimeter and enter the centre through a smaller gate within the main gate structure. This is because inmate transport vehicles are unable to fit through the main gate. This is not ideal from either a security or privacy perspective. It would be preferable for transport vehicles to have a secure entrance to address security and privacy concerns.

The admission of new inmates was observed to be professional and respectful, however it raised some privacy concerns around how personal information is obtained, stored and protected. It is important for inmates to be interviewed on admission in a private room away from other inmates to ensure full disclosure of all relevant issues. It is also important to store personal information and property securely. These matters were immediately raised with the Manager of Security.

All inmates are accommodated in the older part of the centre on arrival, even if they are classified as minimum security. Cells built in the 1800s do not conform to contemporary correctional standards. Although the cells have a toilet and hand basin, inmates must use a communal shower block. The cells are small and were not designed to accommodate two people. Despite this, the majority of cells have two people sharing in double bunks. There are also 42 designated single cells and two single cells with cameras. Consideration should be given to reducing the number of inmates who are accommodated in cells built in the 1870s.

Cooma CC has adequate stocks of clothing, including warm socks and jackets, and shoes for inmates. However, as inmates arrive in the afternoon they do not have access to showers or receive clothing entitlements until the following day. This can be problematic due to the cold climate at Cooma. Although there is heating in some areas, there were also broken windows in need of repair. It was also unclear whether any stock management controls are employed at the centre as recommended in Prison Greens:

The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW.³ Mattress stocks were a mix of covered, uncovered and torn mattresses. Damaged mattresses should be repaired or replaced.

The minimum security area is of more recent construction and has an open layout in keeping with its security classification. There are 25 rooms, accommodating two people per room, which open onto a communal grassed area. There are also a number of communal living spaces that allow inmates to cook and socialise. This is an important element of minimum security environments to prepare inmates for release to the community.

It is not surprising to observe maintenance issues in a gaol built in the 1800s; however the more modern minimum security area also had outstanding maintenance issues. Ongoing maintenance should be addressed through regular maintenance audits. The inspection also found there was a need to review the centre's emergency management plan to include the threat of bushfires to the centre. Cooma CC has recently received a bush fire assessment from Cooma Fire and Rescue NSW and a Bush Fire Management Plan is being developed by management at the centre.

It was pleasing to see a centre induction taking place on the morning following admission. However, this took place in a group setting. Although group inductions are an efficient way to provide information, they do not allow inmates to ask questions that address their individual concerns due to privacy issues. The inspector recommends that Cooma CC reviews this practice.

Classification, placement and transfers

The inspection found that classification reviews are occurring as required by Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW) policy with some inmates being considered for early review. This sometimes results in inmates being progressed from medium security to minimum security at Cooma CC. The work of classification and placement staff could be further enhanced with the delivery of training.

A considerable part of the Classification and Placement Team workload is attributable to change of placement. Generally these occur at Cooma CC following program completions. Although, a change of placement may also happen due to safety issues, unacceptable institutional behaviour, or mental health needs. A change of placement will result in a transfer to another correctional centre.

The inspection found the length of time inmates on separation orders are kept in the segregation unit, whilst awaiting transport out of Cooma CC to be concerning. The segregation facilities at Cooma CC were not designed to accommodate inmates for lengthy periods, particularly for inmates at risk. It is recommended that inmates at risk are provided with appropriate bedding and that inmates on separation orders are monitored to ensure their timely transfer from Cooma CC.

The movement of inmates out of Cooma CC is challenging. All inmates leaving Cooma CC must transit through Goulburn Correctional Centre. Those arrangements present operational problems for Cooma CC as movements are reliant on overnight bed capacity at Goulburn Correctional Centre. Any inmates on segregation or separation orders transferring out of Cooma CC must be placed in special accommodation at Goulburn Correctional Centre, of which there are only six available beds. This impacts the ability to move inmates from Cooma CC. The inspection found it often took days if not weeks to transfer inmates to another correctional centre. For example for an inmate to transfer to South Coast Correctional Centre, they need to transfer to Goulburn Correctional Centre, then to the Metropolitan and Remand and Reception Centre in Sydney, and then to South Coast CC. A review of inmate movements is recommended to ensure the timely and efficient transfer of inmates from Cooma CC to their next gaol of classification.

³ Recommendation 19 Prison Greens: The Clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW, June 2017; NSW Inspector of Custodial Services.

Rehabilitation

Programs at Cooma CC are primarily delivered through the High Intensity Programs Unit (HIPU). There are two HIPUs at Cooma CC, one in the original gaol known as Area 1 and the other in the minimum security section known as Area 2. HIPU programs are 16 weeks in duration and incorporate the EQUIPS suite of programs; EQUIPS Addiction, EQUIPS Aggression, EQUIPS Domestic Abuse and EQUIPS Foundation. The HIPUs have a 58% completion rate and the Inspector recommends a review of the HIPUs to identify how completion rates can be improved.

The HIPUs schedule programs four or five days per week and HIPU inmates attend programs between three and five days per week, dependant on their needs. Recent operational changes at Cooma CC have resulted in HIPU inmates being able to participate in paid employment when they are not undertaking programs. This includes inmates waiting to commence the HIPU assessment phase, inmates who have completed the HIPU and are waiting for a change of placement, and inmates who are not scheduled for HIPU programs every day.⁴ The ability to work minimises idle time and provides opportunities for inmates to earn money and acquire skills.

Cooma CC provides employment opportunities to inmates in Area 1 in the textiles workshop, kitchen and laundry, general maintenance, and some administrative duties around the centre. Although Cooma CC has a high employment rate there are not sufficient roles to provide full employment. This prompted concern to be expressed by staff and inmates around a recently introduced arbitrary practice of punishing some inmates who refused to work by placing them in a small holding cell that was exposed to the elements, for six hours per day for 10 working days. The Inspector has raised this issue previously with CSNSW.⁵

At the time of inspection, minimum security inmates in Area 2 who were not completing programs in the HIPU were working. The centre has strong community partnerships with the local council and community groups to provide community project work opportunities for inmates. There is also a commitment from both management and local business to increase work release opportunities for inmates.

There is a genuine will to raise the education profile at Cooma CC. This is required as course completion rates are low. Vocational education and training (VET) is linked to CSNSW industries (CSI) and inmates are able to obtain qualifications that are relevant to their place of work in Cooma CC. However, the inspection found courses offered for industry skill sets fell short of complete qualifications with certificate II being the highest attainment. The only full qualification certificate available at Cooma CC was a laundry traineeship which one inmate completed in January 2020. Incomplete skill sets make it difficult for inmates to secure employment on release. The NSW Premier's priority is to reduce recidivism by five percent by 2023.⁶ Providing opportunities for inmates to attain vocational skill sets whilst incarcerated will assist CSNSW in reaching that goal. It is also consistent with CSI's purpose to improve vocational training for inmates. Cooma CC also provides ongoing support to those inmates who wish to pursue tertiary education.

The Case Management Unit (CMU) at Cooma CC is a professional and efficient team. Individualised case plans produced at Cooma CC are comprehensive and the CMU work collaboratively with community corrections to develop plans relating to an inmate's release.

4 Information received from CSNSW 28 October 2020.

5 Response from CSNSW to recommendation 12 *Programs, Employment and Education Inspection*, February 2020, Inspector of Custodial Services, see also discussion at page 84 *ICS Women on Remand Report*, February 2020, Inspector of Custodial Services.

6 Premier's Priorities ; <https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/reducing-recidivism-prison-population>

Purposeful day

The average daily out of cell hours in Area 1 is 5.73.⁷ This is less than the average out of cell hours for secure centres in NSW.⁸ By way of contrast the minimum security Area 2 performs well with 11.97 hours out of cell each day. Low out of cell hours make it difficult for inmates to participate in purposeful activity such as work, programs and education. It is likely that this is contributing to low completion rates in programs and education. CSNSW need to closely monitor time out of cells at Cooma CC and work towards increasing time out of cells. The centre would also benefit from increasing purposeful day activities for inmates not eligible for custody based criminogenic programs.

Area 1 has a small concrete yard area for inmates to exercise. Despite the physical constraints of the centre many activities are available to inmates. The primary source of activity is the gym. Daily rosters of activities include table tennis, soccer, racquetball, basketball and cricket. Movies, board games, guitar and music, are also offered. An additional outdoor exercise space was recently opened in Area 1 for minimum security inmates. Area 2 includes a large grassed outdoor space with a gym. There are also plans to establish an oval in Area 2.

Inmates also have access to a library in both Areas 1 and 2 which appeared well stocked with various reading resources. Inmates in Area 1 would benefit from a weekend library or out of hours lending service.

Inmate health and welfare

The health centre at Cooma CC is located in the original gaol. It is well-staffed and a General Practitioner attends the centre on a regular basis. Cooma CC does not provide a comprehensive suite of health services and is therefore not a suitable placement for any inmates with mental health or chronic health issues. The recent installation of telehealth facilities and changes to the opioid treatment program (OTP)⁹ are welcomed. However, the location of the health centre requires regular movement between the medium and minimum security areas of the gaol. The centre would benefit from having a satellite health clinic in the minimum security area, to minimise the need for medical movements.

There is no waitlist for psychology services at Cooma CC. Psychology services are operating well and psychologists work collaboratively with the health centre and case management staff to ensure the best outcomes for inmates. The greatest challenge for psychology services is access to adequate interview room space.

At the time of inspection 15% of the population were Aboriginal. Despite this, it appeared there was little cultural support for Aboriginal inmates. The ICS welcomes a plan to commence an Aboriginal Cultural Program and Aboriginal Agricultural Program in 2020.¹⁰ Aboriginal inmates would also benefit from regular connection with a visiting Elder for spiritual and cultural support.

7 Information provided by CSNSW February 2020.

8 Report on Government Services 2020, 8 Corrective Services data tables, 8A.13 Time out-of-cells (average hours per day), viewed September 2020, <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2020/justice/corrective-services#downloads>

9 JH&FMHN opioid substitution treatment (OST) changes issued: 29 April 2020 (v1) "People started on OST in custody will be given a buprenorphine injection, known as a depot, which lasts for one month. Patients entering custody on sublingual buprenorphine will be transferred to depot buprenorphine treatment. • Patients who are already receiving methadone will be continued on methadone"

10 Advice from Cooma Correctional Centre that the programs are currently on hold due to COVID 19.

Maintaining Family Contact

At the time of inspection weekend visits were available for family and friends of inmates. It was also pleasing to see the Audio Visual Link (AVL) studio regularly accommodating international conference calls for inmates whose families reside outside of Australia. Inmates have good access to telephones. However, time out of cell between 8.30am and 3.30pm can impact the ability for inmates to communicate with their family, if they are at school and work. Area 2 phones require attention with poor telephone reception and little privacy. A sound barrier/ privacy screen would, to some extent, address privacy issues.

Since the inspection, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSNSW ceased all centre visits from families and friends to inmates to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 to correctional centres. To accommodate and encourage continued connectivity with family and friends CSNSW introduced the use of tablets for inmates.¹¹ The ICS supports the continued use of tablets after the re-introduction of in person family visits, as a way of maintaining contact with family. This is particularly important for inmates at regional and remote centres to support their connection to family, and for minimum security inmates preparing for release and reintegration back into the community.

¹¹ Commissioner's Instruction 2020/15, 'Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Interim Measure – Temporary inmate use of tablets with SIM cards in correctional centre visiting sections for social visits' 27 March 2020.

Recommendations

The Inspector recommends:

1. Corrective Services NSW review emergency management plans at Cooma Correctional Centre and develop a bushfire management plan.
2. Corrective Services NSW ensure inmates assessed as being at risk of self-harm are safely accommodated with suitably covered mattresses.
3. Corrective Services NSW monitor separation orders at Cooma Correctional Centre and ensure timely transfer of those inmates from Cooma Correctional Centre.
4. Corrective Services NSW review the reception and induction process at Cooma Correctional Centre.
5. Corrective Services NSW ensures Cooma Correctional Centre is maintaining stock management and quality controls to ensure they meet inmate demand for clothing and bedding.
6. Corrective Services NSW reviews the adequacy of training of all Classification and Placement staff.
7. Corrective Services NSW constructs a secure vehicle entry at Cooma Correctional Centre.
8. Corrective Services NSW review inmate movements at Cooma Correctional Centre and explore timely and efficient transfer of inmates to their goal of classification.
9. Corrective Services NSW reduces the number of inmates who are accommodated in cells built in the 1870s.
10. Corrective Services NSW ensures regular maintenance audits are undertaken, at Cooma Correctional Centre.
11. Corrective Services NSW and JH&FMHN explore the establishment of a satellite health clinic in Area 2.
12. Corrective Services NSW review the adequacy of facilities for psychology services at Cooma Correctional Centre.
13. Corrective Services NSW increases the average time out of cells in Area 1.
14. Corrective Services NSW explore a weekend library or out of hours lending service for inmates in Area 1.
15. Corrective Services NSW establishes a visiting Elder program to Cooma Correctional Centre.
16. Corrective Services NSW installs a sound barrier/ privacy screen to inmate phones in Area 2.
17. Corrective Services NSW continues the use of tablets at Cooma Correctional Centre to facilitate family contact.
18. Corrective Services NSW increase purposeful day activities at Cooma Correctional Centre for inmates who are no longer eligible for custody-based criminogenic programs.

19. Corrective Services NSW review the operation of the High Intensity Programs Unit at Cooma Correctional Centre.
20. Corrective Services NSW ceases the practice of placing inmates in the non-worker holding cell at Cooma Correctional Centre.
21. Corrective Services NSW increase education and training opportunities for inmates and increase completions in vocational training courses and qualification skill sets.
22. That this report is made public immediately upon being tabled in NSW Parliament, in accordance with section 16(2) of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* (NSW).

Introduction

Role, powers and function of ICS

The office of the Inspector of Custodial Services was established by the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* (the ICS Act) in October 2013. The mandate of the office is to provide independent scrutiny of the conditions, treatment and outcomes for adults and young people in custody, and to promote excellence in staff professional practice.

The principal functions of the Inspector, as set out in section 6 of the ICS Act, are as follows:

- to inspect each custodial centre (other than juvenile justice centres and juvenile correctional centres) at least once every 5 years,
- to inspect each juvenile justice centre and juvenile correctional centre at least once every 3 years,
- to examine and review any custodial service at any time,
- to report to Parliament on each such inspection, examination or review,
- to report to Parliament on any particular issue or general matter relating to the functions of the Inspector if, in the Inspector's opinion, it is in the interest of any person or in the public interest to do so,
- to report to Parliament on any particular issue or general matter relating to the functions of the inspector if requested to do so by the Minister,
- to include in any report such advice or recommendations as the Inspector thinks appropriate (including advice or recommendations relating to the efficiency, economy and proper administration of custodial centres and custodial services),
- to oversee Official Visitor programs conducted under the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* and the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987*,
- to advise, train and assist Official Visitors in the exercise of the functions conferred or imposed on them under those Acts,
- such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Inspector under this or any other Act.

In addition to the purpose and powers of the Inspector as detailed in the legislation, the Inspector also has a responsibility to ensure that ethical and professional practice is observed across the custodial environment in NSW.

Methodology

The inspection of Cooma CC had regard to the standards for adult custodial services in New South Wales in conjunction with other relevant standards, legislation, policies and procedures.

The inspections examined the following four areas from the Inspection standards for adult custodial services in New South Wales:

- a. Custody
- b. Care and wellbeing
- c. Rehabilitation
- d. Resources and systems

The inspection involved an onsite visit, by an inspection team, to the correctional centre over several days. The inspection team consisted of four people including the Inspector of Custodial Services, a Principal Inspection and Research Officer, a Senior Inspection and Research Officer, and an Inspection and Research Officer.

Inspection methodology involves interviews, observations and data analyses. For the inspection, structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior management, correctional staff and employees, and community agencies. They included the following:

- Manager of Security (MOS)
- Manager of Industries (MOI)
- Manager of Services and Programs (MOSP)
- Psychologist
- Case Management
- Classification
- Education Services Coordinator
- BSI Learning and TAFE
- Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) – Health centre Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) and staff
- Correctional Officers
- Community Corrections
- Regional Aboriginal Programs Officer (RAPO)
- Community Agencies
- Inmates and inmate representatives on the Inmate Development Committee (IDC)

Approximately two months prior to inspection document and data requests were forwarded to the MOS at Cooma CC and to Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW). A day visit to the centre also took place by ICS staff which provided essential context to scope the inspection. Supporting documentation and data concerning the management and operations of Cooma CC was provided by the centre and CSNSW for analyses prior to the inspection. Additional data and information requests were made following the inspection.

Cooma Correctional Centre overview

Cooma Correctional Centre is situated in the heart of Cooma approximately 400 kilometres from Sydney. It is the most southern correctional centre in NSW and can experience extremely cold winters. It was built in the 1870s and served as a police gaol, mental health facility and correctional facility before it closed in the early 1900's. It reopened in 1957 and closed again on 10 July 1998. Following a substantial increase in prisoner numbers in NSW it reopened for a second time in November 2001.¹²

Cooma CC accommodates both minimum and medium security sentenced inmates. The main gaol is referred to as Area 1 and includes the original 1870s building and an expansion to the gaol that was built in 1950. It has capacity to hold 175 inmates. It primarily accommodates inmates classified as medium security. The majority of inmates at Cooma CC share a cell. There are 42 single cells and two camera cells which allow for observation of inmates. Area 2 is colloquially known as 'The Farm' and houses 50 minimum security inmates. It is located approximately 500 metres from the main gaol.

Cooma CC has 90 staff covering custodial, industries, programs and services, and administrative positions. At the time of inspection custodial staff numbers were down and the casual pool of custodial staff had been exhausted.¹³

Cooma CC offers employment to inmates in its textile workshop, laundry and kitchen. In addition there are opportunities for inmates to work outside the correctional centre under supervision which include grounds maintenance, the CSNSW Museum and community projects. Inmate employment at Cooma CC was high, with 155 inmates employed on average.¹⁴ There are two High Intensity Programs Units (HIPU) at Cooma CC, one in Area 1 and the other in Area 2. Each HIPU has a capacity for 25 inmates to participate in programs.

The CSNSW Museum is located in a separate building adjacent to the main gaol.

12 CSNSW website <https://www.correctiveservices.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/CorrectiveServices/custodial-corrections/table-of-correctional-centres/cooma>

13 6 substantive vacancies, 2 temporary vacancies and 3 long term custodial vacancies. Information provided by Cooma Correctional Centre - KPI Stretch Targets 2019-2020.

14 Information provided by CSNSW Cooma Correctional Centre Strategic Review 2019 (page 3).

Correctional Centre Security

Operational Security

Reflective of their differing security classifications, differing security processes are employed in Area 1 and Area 2. Area 1 was constructed in the 1870s and has a brick exterior wall with razor wire. A sterile zone exists between the exterior wall and the inmate accommodation unit and surveillance cameras are positioned around the centre. Area 1 has three entry points with staff, inmates and visitors entering the centre through separate areas.

All staff and approved visitors (e.g. tradespeople, community representatives) enter through the reception area and are registered. Their approved items are processed through an X-ray scanner and they are required to walk through a metal detector. Inmates enter through the main gate, which historically was the original entry point for all visitors to the centre.

Regular headcounts are an important part of security and occur several times a day. The inspection team observed a headcount at lunch and prior to lock in. Inmates were required to line up in the yard whilst the count was conducted. Upon being locked into their cells officers cross check the record book with the inmate's cell card.¹⁵

The summer of 2019-2020 saw the area surrounding the township of Cooma significantly impacted by bushfires. The inspection team heard numerous accounts from staff about the impact of the fires on the centre and local community. Despite the centre having various local operating procedures that cover emergency situations, it would be prudent for the centre to review its emergency management plan to include the threat of bushfire. This is particularly relevant for Area 2 due to its close proximity to bushland. An assessment has recently been performed by Cooma Fire and Rescue NSW and a Bush Fire Management Plan is currently being prepared.¹⁶

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW review emergency management plans at Cooma Correctional Centre and develops a Bushfire management plan.

Correctional centre discipline

The *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (the Act) and the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* (the Regulation) make provision for correctional centre offences.¹⁷ A correctional centre offence is defined in the Act as any act or omission by an inmate (whether or not it is also a criminal offence) that occurs while the inmate is within a correctional centre or correctional complex or is taken to be in the custody of the Governor of a correctional centre and is declared as a correctional centre offence by the regulations.¹⁸ Where it is alleged that an inmate has committed a correctional centre offence, the Governor of the correctional centre may charge the inmate with the offence and conduct an inquiry into the allegation. If satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that an inmate is guilty of a correctional centre offence the Governor may apply a penalty provided for in the Act.¹⁹

In 2019 Cooma CC recorded 476 offences in custody. The most common offences related to drugs (n=185, 38.9%) or acts against the good order of the prison (n=150, 31.5%). The next most common categories

15 Corrective Services NSW, Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures, 5.3 Musters, lock in and let go v.1.0, (16 December 2017).

16 Information received by CSNSW 28 October 2020.

17 Part 2 Div. 6 Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999; Part 6 Div. 5 Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulations 1999.

18 Section 51 Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999.

19 Section 52 Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999.

related to fighting (n=39, 8.2%), abusive behaviour (n=34, 7.1%), smoking (n=33, 6.9%) and property damage (n=23, 4.8%).²⁰ See table 1 below for details.

**Table 1: Cooma Correctional Centre - breaches of correctional centre regulations by category
Period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019**

| Offence Category | Number | (%) |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Other Drug charges | 185 | 38.9 |
| Charges against good order | 150 | 31.5 |
| Fighting or assault | 39 | 8.2 |
| Abusive behaviour | 34 | 7.1 |
| Smoking related | 33 | 6.9 |
| Property damage | 23 | 4.8 |
| Stealing | 5 | 1.1 |
| Failure to attend muster | 4 | 0.8 |
| Phone related | 2 | 0.4 |
| Alcohol charges | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 476 | 100% |

The most common sanctions imposed on inmates for correctional centre offences at Cooma CC between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2019 were the removal of buy-ups (n=72; 34.61%) and confinement to cell (n=67; 32.21%).²¹ See Table 2 below for details.

**Table 2: Cooma Correctional Centre - correctional centre sanctions by category
Period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019²²**

| Sanction Imposed | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Off buy-ups | 72 | 34.61 |
| Confined to Cell | 67 | 32.21 |
| Off contact visits | 35 | 16.82 |
| Off amenities | 12 | 5.76 |
| Off phone calls | 9 | 4.32 |
| Off Television | 7 | 3.36 |
| Partake at leisure time activity | 4 | 1.92 |
| Good Behaviour | 2 | 0.96 |
| Total sanctions | 208 | 100% |

²⁰ Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

²¹ Data provided by CSNSW dated 16 June 2020.

²² Note not every offence in custody results in a sanction.

Contraband

Preventing the introduction of contraband is a constant challenge in any correctional environment and Cooma CC is no different. In 2019 there were 105 cases of drug or tobacco related contraband. Buprenorphine (n=31) was the most commonly recorded with a small amount attributable to tobacco and prescription medication (n=14).²³ CSNSW urinalysis results confirm buprenorphine as being the drug most commonly used.²⁴

Cooma CC employs both targeted and random drug testing. Dynamic security practices are also recognised as playing an important role in identifying and minimising contraband within the centre. The Security Operations Group (South) also undertakes random or centre requested search operations as a means of supporting the centre's efforts to combat contraband.²⁵

More recently management introduced a number of additional security measures to reduce the introduction of contraband in Cooma CC. This involved upgrading security at visits in Area 1 through additional monitoring and requiring inmates to wear overalls.

Limiting inmate movement between Areas 1 and 2 also assists in preventing the introduction of contraband. Although separate laundries have been established in each area, inmates from Area 2 are still required to attend Area 1 to visit the health centre and obtain treatment and medication. JH&FMHN have conducted an evaluation of Area 2 and have assessed it as not meeting the requirements and standard required to establish a satellite health centre.²⁶ A satellite or mobile health clinic in Area 2 would minimise the need for movement between Area 1 and 2.

Assaults and use of force

Cooma CC recorded 39 incidents of assault in 2019. One of the 39 was a staff assault. The other 38 involved inmates with most occurring in the accommodation unit. Report on Government Services (ROGS) data 2018-2019 records the state average of 27 (inmate upon inmate) assaults per 100 prisoners.²⁷ Cooma CC recorded approximately 20 (inmate upon inmate) assaults per 100 prisoners. The centre reports low rates of use of force with no consequential injuries to inmates reported by the JH&FMHN.²⁸

23 Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

24 Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

25 Information provided by CSNSW 28 October 2020.

26 Information provided by JH&FMHN 23 October 2020.

27 See Corrective Services Data Tables <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2020/justice/corrective-services>.

28 All inmates subject to use of force must be assessed by JH&FMHN personnel: Clause 6.1 Corrective Services NSW, Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures, 13.7 Use of force v.1.8, (16 December 2017).

Segregation and separation orders

CSNSW is responsible for the care and safety of all inmates in correctional facilities. At times inmates are placed in the segregation unit for their own safety or the safety of others and the security, good order and discipline of the centre.²⁹ Inmates may also be separated from other inmates for their care, control and management.³⁰

Cooma CC has a segregation unit comprised of three cells that can each accommodate two inmates. The exterior yards to each cell were recently painted however the interior of the cells were dilapidated and shower floors needed resurfacing. One is a camera cell equipped with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) which is used to house inmates at risk of self-harm.



Segregation cell



Amenities in segregation cell

An inmate identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm must be managed in the least restrictive manner based on an objective assessment of their individual risk, needs, health and welfare'.³¹ This principle is reflected in CSNSW policy.³²

In 2019 Cooma CC recorded 30 (14.6%) inmates who were placed on a Risk Intervention Team (RIT) Management Plan.³³ The inspection found that Cooma CC is not well equipped to manage inmates at risk. It has one camera cell equipped with CCTV which can accommodate two inmates and has an exterior yard. Uncovered mattresses were observed in the camera cell. All mattresses issued to inmates should be covered and even more so in camera cells where at-risk inmates are accommodated.

In 2019 Cooma CC recorded 11 inmates requiring segregation. The maximum time in segregation was 14 days and the shortest period was one day. The average length of time in segregation was eight to nine days.³⁴

The segregation unit is primarily used to accommodate inmates who are in need of separation from other

²⁹ Section 10 and 11 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*.

³⁰ Section 78A *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*; Part 4 Div 1 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 014*.

³¹ Corrective Services Administrators Council, *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia* (2018) 3.1.7, 15.

³² Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures*, 3.7 Management of inmates at risk of self-harm or suicide v.1.2, (16 December 2017).

³³ Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

³⁴ Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

inmates and are placed on Section 78A separation orders.³⁵ Due to the size of the centre and inmate cohort, those on separation orders must be transferred out of the centre, as soon as possible. However, due to a delay in movements out of the segregation unit, there were insufficient cells in the segregation unit and a further two cells were being used in the accommodation block in Area 1 to accommodate inmates on separation orders. Unlike the purpose built segregation cells those cells have no external exercise area or shower facilities. Inmates in these cells were only allowed out of their cell for one hour a day to shower, make phone calls and exercise, after the other inmates were locked in their cells.

Data provided by the centre shows that during 2019, 54 inmates were on separation orders of which almost a quarter (22%, n=12) spent over 30 days in either the segregation unit or separation cells in Area 1. Of those, two were on separation orders for over 40 days and one for 50 days before being transferred out of Cooma CC.³⁶

The number of inmates on separation orders and the length of time they are kept in the segregation unit, whilst waiting to be transferred from Cooma CC, is concerning. The facilities at Cooma CC are inadequate for inmates on separation orders for lengthy periods and every effort should be made to move those inmates out of the centre as soon as possible.

Recommendation: CSNSW ensure inmates assessed as being at risk of self-harm are safely accommodated with suitably covered mattresses.

Recommendation: CSNSW monitor separation orders at Cooma Correctional Centre and ensure timely transfer of those inmates from Cooma Correctional Centre.

³⁵ Section 78A Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999; Part 4 Div 1 Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014..

³⁶ Data provided by Cooma CC. Document titled 'Cooma Correctional Centre Change of Placements and wait times for escort January 2019 to March 2020'. (inmates on separation orders are recorded as SMAP).

Reception and Admission

Reception

Cooma CC does not receive inmates directly from court or police custody; it only receives inmates who have been transferred from other correctional centres.

New inmates are interviewed by the admissions officer on arrival and provided with the Cooma CC information booklet, employment request form and a linen/ amenities pack that includes a laundry bag and laundry instructions.³⁷ The on-site laundry services operate well with little property loss. Laundry services at Cooma CC were identified in the *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW* report as needing attention.³⁸ The ICS was pleased that steps had been taken to address this.

An inmate is responsible for preparing all new inmate custodial files and is present during the admission process. The inmate also had access to prisoner transport lists, and inmate valuables, albeit contained in a locked clear plastic bag. Valuables were stored in an unlocked room accessible by inmates and officers. It is not appropriate for an inmate to have access to the personal property or information of another inmate. This concerning lack of privacy and security risk was immediately raised with the Manager of Security.

On leaving admissions inmates are seen briefly by the health centre staff, provided their evening meal and taken to their cell and locked in for the evening. There appeared to be limited assessment of cell placement, with inmates placed according to whether they should share or not. There is no access to showers or clothing entitlements until the following day, after new inmates attend the centre induction session.

The centre induction session is delivered by a Services and Programs Officer (SAPO) to new inmates on the morning following admission. In this session the SAPO goes through information contained in the Cooma Booklet, employment opportunities at Cooma CC and the HIPU. The induction lacked structure and inmates were spoken to as if they had read the centre booklet and were aware of centre procedures. Essential information such as visits and phone calls were not addressed. Some of the information provided was not accurate. In particular, how inmates can contact their family to advise them of their transfer to Cooma CC and make arrangements for visits.

Group inductions are problematic. Inmates are a diverse group from differing backgrounds and with individual requirements. A group session is not conducive to the inmate being comfortable to ask questions. Inmate inductions should be conducted with each inmate separately and their immediate needs addressed by the SAPO.

Recommendation: CSNSW review the reception and induction process at Cooma Correctional Centre.

³⁷ See Clause 6.2 and section 23 Reception transfer checklist, Corrective Services NSW, Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures 1.1 Reception Procedures Version 1.5, 16 December 2017.

³⁸ Recommendation 21, *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW*, June 2017; NSW Inspector of Custodial Services.

Clothing and Bedding

Cooma CC was one of the correctional facilities inspected in 2015 as part of the *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW* report. The report made several recommendations around correctional centres maintaining adequate supplies of warm jackets, thermal underwear and warm bedding for inmates.³⁹

New admissions are taken to the clothing store the day after they arrive at Cooma CC. Each inmate is asked what clothing they need. Despite having supplies of warm jackets and clothing, they are not routinely provided to inmates unless inmates know they can request warm clothing.

The inspection found Cooma CC to have an adequate stock of clothing, including warm socks and jackets, and shoes for inmates. However, no formal recording of clothing items issued was observed. It is unclear whether any stock management controls are employed at the centre as recommended in the *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW* report.⁴⁰

Mattress stocks were a mix of covered, uncovered and torn mattresses. New admissions were observed being given old damaged mattresses with torn coverings when there were several covered mattresses available in good condition. The CSNSW Environment and Sustainability Policy (January 2018) commits the agency to a model of sustainable management of correctional centres with particular emphasis on recycling and sustainable practices. Many of the uncovered mattresses in the store room were capable of being reused if sanitised and recovered with new flame retardant covering. Mattresses should be repaired or replaced.



Clothing stores



Mattress stores – Area 1

Recommendation: CSNSW ensures Cooma Correctional Centre is maintaining stock management and quality controls to ensure they meet inmate demand for clothing and bedding.

³⁹ Recommendations 5, 6 & 15, *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW*, June 2017; NSW Inspector of Custodial Services.

⁴⁰ Recommendations 19 *Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW*, June 2017; NSW Inspector of Custodial Services.

Classification and Placement

In accordance with the Regulation, every inmate managed in a correctional centre in New South Wales (NSW) must receive a classification to determine their security rating and centre placement.⁴¹ Clause 11 further directs that each inmate must be classified as soon as practicable after being received into a correctional centre.⁴² Thereafter an inmate's classification is reviewed annually.

The Classification and Placement Team (CPT) at Cooma CC is comprised of the Custodial Classification Manager, who is a senior correctional officer and the classification and placement officer who is responsible for monitoring, listing and producing documentation for annual classification reviews. The majority of inmates at Cooma CC are classified as C1 or C2. In 2019 fourteen inmates were eligible to be considered for progression to a C3 classification and movement to minimum security. Twelve were granted a C3 classification. Two were unsuccessful for failure to address offending behaviour, custodial behaviour and dismissal from community projects.⁴³

In addition, the CPT considers applications for early classification review, and change of placement (COP). The inspection team observed an early classification review. The CPT gave consideration to the suitability and risk of the inmate and determined to recommend a change to the inmate's classification. The recommendation requires ratification of the Manager of Security at Cooma CC and final approval from the CSNSW deputy manager classification and placement who approves, varies or declines the recommendations of the CPT.

Additional work is generated for the Cooma CC CPT from a steady flow of applications for change of placement. In 2019, 148 applications were processed at Cooma CC. Inmates who completed the HIPU made up just under a quarter of applications (24%; n=35) in 2019. Other reasons for change of placement included, the need for special management (36%, n=54), behaviour (11%; n=16) and mental health (8%; n=12). For further detail see Figure 1.⁴⁴ This may indicate an issue with classification and placement decisions and that these inmates were unsuitable for placement at Cooma CC.

Classification training was identified as an area of need at Cooma CC. Although practical support is provided to Cooma CC from Goulburn and South Coast Correctional Centre classification staff, more structured training should be provided.

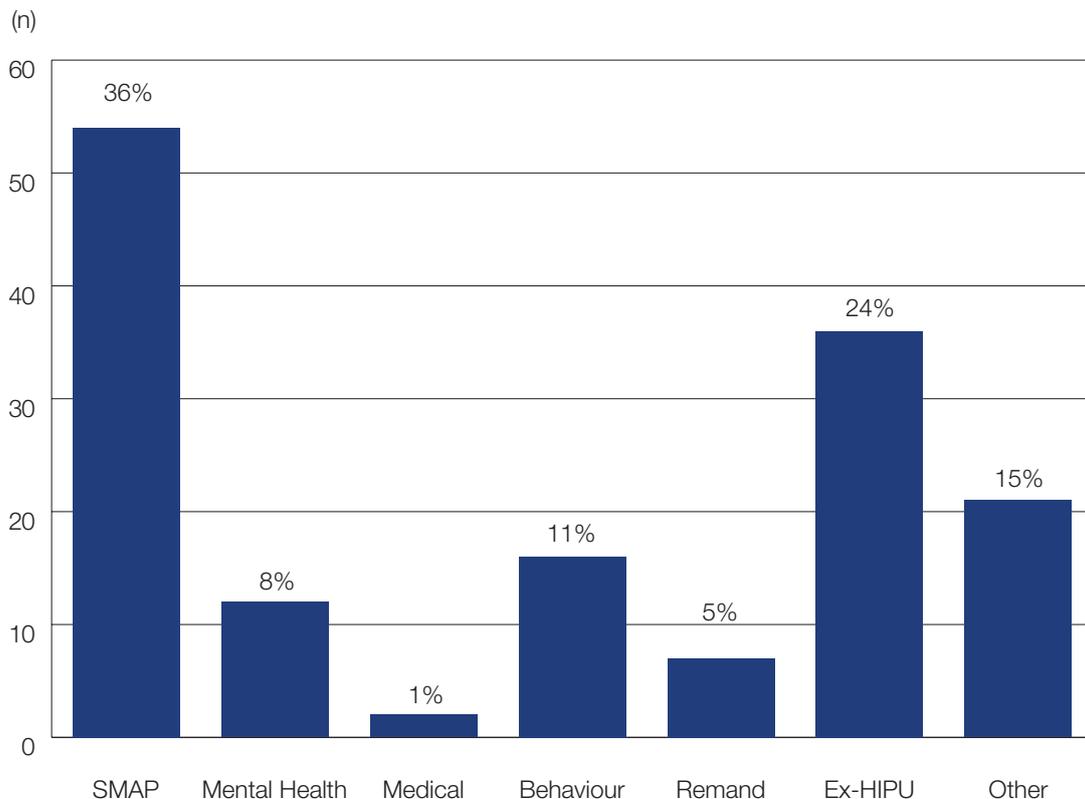
41 Clause 11 Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulations 2014.

42 See also CSNSW Policy for inmate classification and placement, Version 1.0, 25 October 2019.

43 Information provided by Cooma Correctional Centre, data provided email dated 7 July 2020.

44 Data provided by Cooma Correctional Centre. Document titled 'Cooma Correctional Centre Change of Placements and wait times for escort January 2019 to March 2020'.

Figure 1 Cooma Correctional Centre Change of Placements. Period January 2019 to December 2019



SMAP – inmate sign back on SMAP; Mental Health – MH issues identified; Medical – medical treatment unable to be provided at Cooma Correctional Centre; Behaviour – inmates regressed in classification or inappropriate for Cooma Correctional Centre; Remand – inmates reclassified on remand for further charges; Ex HIPU - inmates who have completed HIPU; Other – e.g. compassionate reasons, program participation e.g. IDAPT

Recommendation: CSNSW reviews the adequacy of training of all Classification and Placement staff.

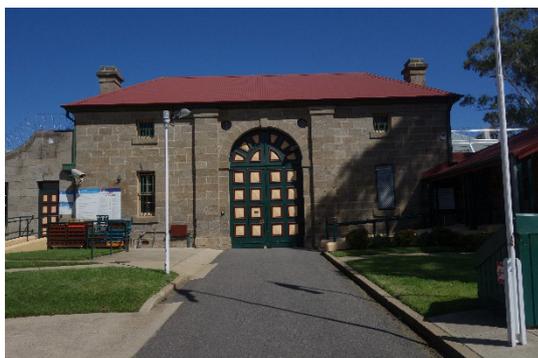
Transport and Escorts

The CSNSW inmate transport vehicle arrives weekly at Cooma CC with new inmates and collects inmates being transferred from Cooma CC.⁴⁵ Cooma is located 400 kilometres from Sydney and is the most southern correctional centre in NSW. This means it is often the last pick up/drop off centre on the transport run. The transport vehicle commences its run collecting inmates from Sydney metropolitan correctional centres and stops for lunch and a comfort stop at Goulburn Correctional Centre (Goulburn CC). A transport vehicle then travels on to Cooma CC to drop off and collect inmates before returning to Goulburn CC, or on to Mannus Correctional Centre.

Unlike other correctional centres with a secure perimeter, transport vehicles do not drive into the gatehouse. They are required to park outside and inmates walk through a smaller gate within the main gate structure. This is because the gatehouse dates back to the late 1800s and was not designed to accommodate a modern transport vehicle. This requires the additional security measure of an armed transport officer. Apart

⁴⁵ An additional transport run operates fortnightly from Sydney to Mannus Correctional Centre and if required will include a stop at Cooma CC, Information provided by CSNSW 28 October 2020.

from the security issue this arrangement presents, it is important that when inmates are being moved between custodial facilities that they are not within public view.⁴⁶ It would be preferable to use a vehicle that can enter the secure perimeter. However, CSNSW advise that smaller vehicles either do not have sufficient capacity to transport the number of inmates required to be transferred in and out of Cooma CC each week, or the suspension capability for regional roads to prevent injuries to inmates. This is why larger, more robust vehicles are used. CSNSW should consider the construction of a secure entry for transport vehicles to address security and privacy issues.



Cooma Correctional Centre –Main Gate



Transport vehicle outside main gate

The inspection team observed the transport vehicle arriving with new inmates and departing with 10 inmates who were being transferred from Cooma CC to other correctional centres. Five had completed the HIPU program, one was deemed unsuitable for placement at Cooma CC, one had behaviour related issues and three were being transferred due to safety concerns. A number of inmates had been accommodated for several weeks in the segregation unit, on a separation order. Correctional staff ensured that inmate property and medical forms were secure and placed in the storage area of the vehicle before departure. Inmates were checked and secured in the vehicle with food and water for the trip.

Irrespective of their final destination, all inmates leaving Cooma CC must transit through Goulburn CC. This arrangement presents operational problems for Cooma CC in being able to transfer inmates from the centre. This is because an inmate cannot leave Cooma CC unless there is a bed available for them at Goulburn CC. In turn, an inmate cannot leave Goulburn CC unless there is a bed available for them at the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre (MRRRC) or Parklea Correctional Centre (Parklea CC). As a consequence, bottlenecks emerge at Cooma CC and Goulburn CC often resulting in inmates spending lengthy periods in separation and long delays in reaching their new gaol. Recent operational changes at both centres appear to have compounded this issue. Since the introduction of the two HIPUs at Cooma CC the inmate profile has changed and the turnover of inmates through the centre has increased. Inmates are transferred to Cooma CC to participate in the 16 week HIPU program, and on completion, are transferred out of the centre. At the same time, Goulburn CC has reduced available cell space for in-transit special management inmates to three cells, therefore accommodating a maximum of six inmates.

The inspection team attended Goulburn CC to observe where the inmates in transit from Cooma CC were held. The inmates are kept in their cells for 23 hours a day. They have daily access to a communal shower and are offered one hour exercise in their accommodation unit when other inmates are locked in their cells. Inmates can be housed at Goulburn CC in these conditions for days or sometimes weeks if space is unavailable on the next transport from Goulburn CC to Metropolitan Sydney, or if there are limited beds available in Sydney. At the time of inspection, a number of inmates were en route to the South Coast Correctional Centre. Despite the distance between those centres being approximately three and a half

⁴⁶ See also Mandela Rule 73 1. 'When prisoners are being removed to or from an institution, they shall be exposed to public view as little as possible, and proper safeguards shall be adopted to protect them from insult, curiosity and publicity in any form.'

hours, it was possible that the journey would take at least several days if not weeks as the transport from Cooma CC only operates on Wednesdays, and inmates must transit through Goulburn CC, then through the MRRC before finally reaching the South Coast Correctional Centre.

The consequential impact of transfers through Goulburn CC is significant for Cooma CC and the affected inmates. It results in the HIPU not operating at full capacity as inmates who have completed the HIPU must be transferred out of Cooma CC to provide accommodation for incoming participants. This impacts the operational planning around programs and employment at the centre. The inspection team was also told of increasing unrest among inmates who have completed the HIPU and are sitting idle in the centre while waiting transfer to another correctional centre. Inmate movement through Goulburn CC also impacts on inmates' health and their ability to keep medical specialist appointments in Sydney. It was explained that medical appointments are difficult to book when transfers are unable to guarantee the inmate will be able to attend his appointment on the scheduled date.

Transport wait times were becoming lengthy. The inspection team were advised that in the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, 31 escorts were facilitated by Cooma CC to move inmates to other centres and free up space for incoming inmates. Of those a quarter (n=8; 25.8%) of the inmates had been waiting over three weeks and several (n=6; 19.3%) were held over 30 days, with the longest being 42 days. Those moved were primarily inmates requiring special management accommodated in segregation cells (n=16; 51.6%) and inmates whose mental health status (n=10; 32.25%) made them unsuitable for placement at Cooma CC. See Table 3 for details.⁴⁷

A review of inmate movements to and from Cooma CC is required to ensure the timely and efficient transfer of inmates. More frequent transports could reduce transport wait times and enable the use of smaller vehicles. The review should also consider the need to transfer inmates to Goulburn CC, MRRC or Parklea CC when they are en route to another correctional centre.⁴⁸

Table 3: Escorts facilitated by Cooma Correctional Centre. Period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

| Reason for escort | Number | % |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| SMAP | 16 | 51.6 |
| Mental Health/ MHSU | 10 | 32.2 |
| Behaviour | 4 | 12.9 |
| Medical | 1 | 3.2 |
| Total | 31 | 100 |

Recommendation: CSNSW construct a secure vehicle entry at Cooma Correctional Centre.

Recommendation: CSNSW review inmate movements at Cooma Correctional Centre and explore timely and efficient transfer of inmates to their goal of classification.

⁴⁷ Information provided June 2020. Document titled 'Change of Placements and wait times for escort - Jan 2019 - Mar 2020'.

⁴⁸ CSNSW informs the escort schedule has recently been reviewed with consideration to Prison Bed Capacity Adjustment Program (PBCAP) adjustments. Information received 28 October 2020.

Care and Wellbeing

Accommodation and Infrastructure

Many inmates who arrive at Cooma CC are progressing in classification from a modern high security facility to the medium security 1800s facility. Many others are minimum security inmates.

The accommodation in Area 1 is part of the original gaol built in the 1870's with some building additions which occurred in the 1950s. The accommodation wing has approximately 175 inmates of medium and minimum security classifications. Although the majority of cells have double bunks there are also 42 single cells and two camera cells. All cells have a toilet and hand basin but inmates must use a communal shower block. Many cells built in the 1800s lack natural light. Some cells had broken windows with cardboard used to try to keep the cell warm. The windows should be repaired as part of the regular maintenance of the centre.

Consideration should be given to reducing the number of inmates who are accommodated in cells built in the 1870s as they do not conform to contemporary correctional standards. The number of inmates who are required to share a cell built in the 1800s should also be reviewed as the cells were not designed to accommodate two people. Since the inspection CSNSW have considered reducing the number of cells being used to accommodate two people as part of the Prison Bed Capacity Adjustment Program. CSNSW has advised that it will continue to accommodate two people in a cell at Cooma CC to enable inmates to access the HIPU program.⁴⁹ Given only 25 inmates accommodated in Area 1 at Cooma CC participate in the HIPU at any one time, the Inspector recommends a further review.

The accommodation block opens onto a small outdoor concrete yard with an undercover gym area. Area 1 has a health centre, laundry, kitchen, a HIPU facility used for programs and education, a library, a metalwork workshop, and a textiles workshop.

Area 2 sits on 300 acres and is located approximately 500 metres from Area 1. It was originally created as a minimum security area for Cooma CC. It was later repurposed for use as a Community Offender Support Program Centre⁵⁰ which operated for approximately three to four years and then returned to use as a minimum security area. Area 2 consists of a square shaped prefabricated structure that opens onto a central grassed area with a partially covered outdoor gymnasium. Area 2 has 25 accommodation rooms each accommodating two people. There are ventilation issues in some rooms which should also be addressed through regular maintenance.

There is also a kitchen, communal bathroom facilities, a laundry and two communal rooms for cooking, eating and activities. Area 2 has a HIPU facility used for programs, education and psychological services. There are a few large sheds on the property which store equipment and overflow items for the CSNSW Museum, and a dog rehoming facility (a joint venture with RSPCA).

⁴⁹ Information received from CSNSW dated 28 October 2020.

⁵⁰ Community Offender Support Program Centres are non-custodial centres that house offenders on parole (including court based parole) or a community based sentence. Offenders can participate in programs aimed at reducing re-offending and receive assistance in their resettlement process.



Area 1 – Cells



Area 2 - Cells and exercise area

Recommendation: CSNSW reduces the number of inmates who are accommodated in cells built in the 1870s.

Recommendation: CSNSW ensures regular maintenance audits are undertaken, at Cooma Correctional Centre.

Health Care

The health centre is located in Area 1 and services all inmates from both Areas 1 and 2. There are two consultation rooms and a dental room.

The health centre operates seven days per week. It is staffed between 7.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday with a Nursing Unit Manager (NUM) and two registered nurses. There is also one registered nurse between 8.00am and 4.30pm week days, and one registered nurse from 08.00am to 12.00pm midday on weekends. There is also a health centre clerk that provides support four days per week. The nursing staff conduct primary health assessments, including chronic disease screening, Opioid Substitution Therapy and medication administration. The Nursing Unit Manager reviews waitlists weekly to ensure that patients are seen in a timely manner.⁵¹

A General Practitioner (GP) visits the centre each Thursday between 9.00am and 3.00pm. The GP wait list is triaged by the primary health nurse and as at October 2020 there were 31 inmates on the waitlist.⁵² The GP who visits the centre is from the local community. A GP from Goulburn is able to visit the centre if the local GP is unavailable. A GP telehealth service is also able to be accessed.

The telehealth facility also enables population health, drug and alcohol and mental health consultations to occur. A dentist attends the centre every two to three months for two to three consecutive days.

The introduction of electronic patient records in late 2019 has allowed the NUM to perform timely reviews of all scheduled transfers to Cooma CC to ensure inmates with acute or chronic health needs are not received at the centre. On average one inmate per month is assessed as not being suitable for placement at Cooma CC for health reasons, such as being insulin dependent diabetic, having unstable mental health, or chronic

⁵¹ Information provided by JH&FMHN 23 October 2020.

⁵² Information provided by JH&FMHN 23 October 2020.

and complex clinical conditions.⁵³ The health centre at Cooma CC is not equipped to provide these types of health services.

Health promotion is delivered through the programs 'Closing The Gap' (Aboriginal Health) and Hepatitis C in Prison Elimination Program (HIPE) and the provision of vaccinations for flu, Hepatitis B and Tetanus.

The health centre has a good relationship with the local Cooma Hospital, where inmates are generally taken in the event of any emergency. In 2019, 156 medical appointments were attended outside the centre.

The absence of stand-alone health services in Area 2 is not ideal. Inmates are escorted each morning and afternoon to the Area 1 health centre for medication and consultations. There was overwhelming support from health and custodial staff for a satellite health centre in Area 2. JH&FMHN advise that 15 to 20 inmates per day from Area 2 visit the health centre in Area 1. The number of Area 2 inmates visiting the health centre each day should decrease as inmates on opioid substitution therapy transfer from daily Methadone to Buprenorphine long acting injections and as more inmates are able to receive monthly medication packs.

JH&FMHN conducted an evaluation of Area 2 for a satellite health centre and assessed it as not meeting the requirements and standard required to establish a satellite health centre. JH&FMHN also had significant concerns around leaving the Area 1 health centre unattended for up to two hours per day.⁵⁴ The Inspector shares those concerns. The creation of a satellite clinic in Area 2 should enhance service delivery to Area 2 inmates without compromising the level of service to Area 1 inmates. This may require additional resources.

Four months post inspection it was disappointing to hear of lengthy wait times of three or more months, and in one case 220 days, for inmates wanting to access mental health and drug and alcohol services. A mental health nurse practitioner provides a fortnightly telehealth service. As at October 2020 there were 29 patients on the Mental Health nurse practitioner telehealth wait list for routine follow up appointments. Custodial Mental Health also provide a telehealth service and there were 40 patients waiting. JH&FMHN advise that urgent patients are triaged by the primary health nurse and are reviewed by the mental health nurse or psychiatrist via the telehealth service. Delays were also being experienced in accessing the recently introduced opioid treatment program (OTP) - suboxone injection program.⁵⁵ Drug and Alcohol provide a telehealth service with the Drug and Alcohol Clinical Nurse Specialist from Goulburn CC providing a fortnightly clinical visit. As at October 2020 there were 49 patients on the wait list but none were considered as urgent patients. The ICS welcomes health initiatives such as telehealth services and the OTP. However such initiatives must be adequately resourced and managed to have the intended health impact on the inmate population.

Recommendation: CSNSW and JH&FMHN explore the establishment of a satellite health clinic in Area 2.

53 Information provided by JH&FMHN 23 October 2020.

54 Information provided by JH&FMHN 23 October 2020.

55 Official Visitor half yearly report to the Inspector of Custodial Services July 2020.

Psychology Services

The psychology services were operating well. The services are delivered as part of the psychology services cluster model, which operates out of Queanbeyan and covers regional Community Corrections and Cooma CC.

The psychology team consists of three psychologists of which two are full-time and one is two days per week. Together they service Cooma CC six days per week. Health centre staff and the psychologists at the centre work well together. It was evident that there is a healthy exchange of information with both professions working in the best interests of inmates. In addition, a psychologist assists with the HIPU and co-facilitates the Real Understanding of Self Help (RUSH) program two days a week.⁵⁶

There is no waitlist for psychology services at Cooma CC with approximately 70% of inmates accessing the services. The majority of inmates (60%) receive ongoing counselling for anxiety and depression.

Communication between psychology services and management is good, as is the support provided by custodial officers and staff at Cooma CC. Psychology services work collaboratively with health and case management staff to ensure the best outcomes for inmates.

The greatest challenge for psychology services is access to adequate interview room space. Psychologists have administration facilities in both Areas 1 and 2 but no private interview space. It is essential for psychology services to have access to a private and confidential counselling space for inmates.

Recommendation: CSNSW review the adequacy of facilities for psychology services at Cooma Correctional Centre.

Food

CSI provides all meals to inmates at Cooma CC. Prepared meals are delivered to the centre and stored in the Area 1 kitchen. The kitchen arranges distribution of meals to all inmates in Areas 1 and 2.

The inspection team observed the distribution of lunch and dinner to inmates in Area 1. Breakfast was cereal and toast, lunch was a bread roll and piece of fruit. Dinner was a hot meal. Alternative meals are provided to inmates with special dietary and religious requirements.

Area 2 receives daily supplies of CSI meals from Area 1 which are prepared in the Area 2 kitchen and provided to inmates. Area 2 inmates also have access to kitchen facilities to cook their own food purchased through inmate buy ups.

Spiritual and Pastoral Care

Maintaining faith is encouraged and supported by management and staff at Cooma CC. All religious denominations are acknowledged and associated services provided to inmates. The multi-purpose area is a religious friendly room for inmates and religious leaders such as the Christian chaplain, Imam and Rabbi who regularly visit the centre. Muslim inmates conduct weekly prayer meetings and approved religious items are provided to inmates.

At the time of inspection, Cooma CC had an inmate of the Druid faith. A space was provided for the inmate to grow a garden wall and connect with nature's cycle, which is central to Druid beliefs.

⁵⁶ RUSH is a group session, dialectical behaviour therapy skills program.

Out of Cell Hours and Activities

Maintaining standard operational hours and time out of cell has been problematic at Cooma CC. The time out of cell state average is 7.2 hours for secure custodial areas and 10.4 hours for open security custodial areas (ROGS data 2018/19).⁵⁷ Cooma CC has an average daily time out of cells of 5.73 hours for Area 1 and 11.97 for Area 2. A review of a three month period showed there were 26 days with lock-ins⁵⁸, resulting in limited out of cell hours on those days.⁵⁹ A little less than half (n=11) were attributable to medical transfers out of the centre. The remaining lock-ins were attributable to staff leave and operational meetings.

Cooma CC did not have a casual officer pool at the time of inspection. This creates problems when they need to fill vacancies caused by sick leave and other leave. If one staff member is absent, the centre will generally implement a varied operational routine. This means Area 1 will only let half of the inmate population out at any one time. This can result in some inmates having only three hours out of their cell in a 24 hour period. During lock-ins priority is given to keeping essential services such as the kitchen, laundry, and textiles operational with workers able to attend work. All inmates receive full pay despite reduced working hours, which is fair, but programs and education are not delivered. Regularly having days where inmates have only three hours out of cell is unacceptable. This is particularly so when cells are small, often shared, lack natural light and do not have shower facilities. Recruitment for a casual pool was underway at the time of inspection. This will hopefully go some way to address the issue. However, CSNSW need to closely monitor the situation and work to increase out of cell hours at Cooma CC.

Despite its constrained physical layout Cooma CC provides a number of activities for inmates. The main activity for inmates in both Areas 1 and 2 is the outdoor gym. Cooma CC also rosters daily activities for inmates including table tennis, soccer, racquetball, basketball and cricket, movies, board games, guitar and music. An additional outdoor exercise space was recently opened in Area 1 for minimum security inmates. The new exercise space allows for 20 inmates per day to participate in outdoor activity. There are also plans to establish an oval in Area 2 which would provide an additional exercise space for inmates.

Inmates have access to a library in both Areas 1 and 2 which appeared to be well stocked with various reading resources. Inmate workers help to maintain the libraries. All inmates in Area 1 have access to the library whilst in the exercise yard and it appeared to be well used with several inmates reading books and newspapers. However, because the Area 1 library is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 3pm, library access is at times difficult for textile workers who generally cease work at 2.30pm. The Area 2 library is accessible at any time for use by inmates.

57 See Corrective Services Data Tables <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2020/justice/corrective-services>

58 A lock-in is where inmates are kept in their cells for operational purposes until such time as it is safe to unlock their cell and allow them time out of their cell.

59 ICS analyses of Restricted Movement Incident Report data from 25 February 2020 to 17 May 2020 provided by Cooma CC to ICS.



Library - Area 1



Library – Area 2

Recommendation: CSNSW increases the average time out of cells in Area 1.

Recommendation: CSNSW explore a weekend library or out of hours lending service for inmates in Area 1.

Cultural Activities

At the time of inspection Cooma CC had 31 Aboriginal inmates (n=31; 15%). The Regional Aboriginal Programs Officer (Southern District) visits Cooma CC every few months providing support to the Aboriginal inmate delegate on the Inmate Development Committee (IDC) and Aboriginal inmates generally. They also coordinate and oversee annual National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) celebrations at the centre.

The centre conducts an Aboriginal Art program and is scheduled to commence an Aboriginal Cultural Program and Aboriginal Agricultural Program in 2020.⁶⁰ Aboriginal inmates would also benefit from regular connection through the Aboriginal Community Mentor Program⁶¹, with visiting Elders for spiritual and cultural support.

Recommendation: CSNSW establishes a visiting Elder program to Cooma Correctional Centre.

Communication

Maintaining Family Contact

Area 1 has a designated visits space and one Audio Visual Link (AVL) studio. Cooma CC offers weekend visits on Saturday and Sundays for family and friends of inmates. Visits must be registered by Thursday afternoon to enable a weekend visit to occur. Area 1 inmates are required to wear visit overalls.

Visits in Area 2 are held in the multi-purpose space. Inmates are allowed to wear prison clothing to visits rather than visit overalls but are still strip searched prior to visits.

⁶⁰ Advice from Cooma CC is that the programs are currently on hold due to COVID 19.

⁶¹ The Aboriginal Community Mentor Program supports inmates by linking them with their Aboriginal culture and connecting them to the Aboriginal community. The program also encourages inmates to engage in yarning sessions with the Elder. Information provided by CSNSW 28 October 2020.

Due to the distance from Sydney, a little over half of the inmate population receive visits. Many utilise the AVL facility. It was pleasing to see that the AVL studio also regularly accommodates international conference calls for inmates whose families reside outside of Australia.

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSNSW ceased all centre visits from families and friends to inmates. To accommodate social visits and encourage continued connectivity with family and friends CSNSW introduced the use of tablets for inmates.⁶² The continued use of tablets would potentially address issues of poor telephone reception in Area 2 and could be considered as an option to increase contact with family and friends for Area 1 inmates.



Visits – Area 1



Visits – Area 2

Phone access

There appeared to be good access to telephones during time out of cells. There are phones in the yard area, in the accommodation unit and in the textiles workshop. Area 1 Inmates are able to make calls between 8.30am and 3.30pm; however this is generally when families are at school and work.

Area 2 phones require attention as there is poor telephone reception and little privacy. Inmates should have access to telephones which afford private conversations. A sound barrier/ privacy screen would, to some extent, address those issues. CSNSW has acknowledged the need for a sound barrier and will arrange for one to be installed at the centre.⁶³ Regular maintenance of the phones is also essential so as to facilitate regular contact with families.

Access to Legal Representatives

Inmates are able to telephone, receive visits and hold AVL conferences with legal representatives. Due to the location of the centre, telephone and AVL were the most favoured source of communication used by inmates and their legal representatives. The centre has two AVL suites of which one is a courtroom AVL studio which facilitates inmate court appearances. The other AVL studio facilitates interviews between inmates and their legal representatives.

⁶² Commissioner's Instruction 2020/15, 'Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Interim Measure – Temporary inmate use of tablets with SIM cards in correctional centre visiting sections for social visits' 27 March 2020.

⁶³ Information received from CSNSW 28 October 2020.



Phone – Area 2

Recommendation: CSNSW install a sound barrier/ privacy screen to inmate phones in Area 2.

Recommendation: CSNSW continues the use of tablets at Cooma Correctional Centre to facilitate family contact.

Complaints

Inmates are able to raise issues of concern through the Inmate Development Committee (IDC) and with the Official Visitor. The IDC meets monthly with management and was functioning well. It consists of five inmate representatives from Areas 1 and 2, including an Aboriginal inmate delegate.

The Official Visitor attends fortnightly at Cooma CC. Inmates knew of and understood the role of the Official Visitor. During COVID-19, additional services were put in place by the ICS, with the cooperation of CSNSW, for inmates to contact the Official Visitor co-ordinator via phone and by mail. Inmates are also able to call the NSW Ombudsman via the Common Auto Dial List (CADL).

Rehabilitation

Case Management

CSNSW is currently implementing 'Intervention Pathways', a new decision making model for case management units across the state. The project aims to increase intervention for higher risk offenders through increasing efficiency in identifying those offenders and the criminogenic programs appropriate to their needs. The model involves the allocation of a Custody-Triage Risk Assessment Scale (TRAS) score and comprehensive case plans. TRAS is an actuarial risk assessment tool that is automated from information in the CSNSW Offender Integrated Management System (OIMS). It is employed by CSNSW to assess inmates' risk of reoffending and return to custody within two years after release. TRAS scores are generated from a scale of 1 – 5 and are determined from an inmate's personal and offender profile.⁶⁴ Case plans will identify and monitor the delivery of programs and the appropriate amount of intervention required to minimise the return to custody of the inmate. The model will also focus on short sentenced offenders with rolling EQUIPS programs and flexibility in delivery. This will allow inmates immediate participation in programs with limited capacity for idle time.⁶⁵

The Case Management Unit (CMU) at Cooma CC is a professional and efficient team with one senior case management officer and two case management officers. Each has an individual caseload of up to 50 inmates. Their role is to develop individualised case plans and assist inmates to engage in programs and meet the goals listed in their plan. At the time of inspection 13 inmates were awaiting case plans of which several were new intakes.

Case plans produced at Cooma CC are comprehensive and focus on all aspects of inmate needs and development in order to discourage reoffending. The CMU prioritise inmates based on their TRAS score. It is considered an effective tool in assisting the CMU to develop timely case plans. In conjunction with TRAS, CMU officers use the Planning for Adjustment, Responsivity, Reintegration, Criminogenic Needs and Communication (PARRCC) assessment tool to identify inmate needs and assess the extent of intervention required.⁶⁶ CMU staff also consult with health staff, psychology services, offender services & programs and custodial staff to develop individualised case plans.

The CMU believes good case planning should supplement formal criminogenic programs with community based programs, distance education and vocational training programs. To develop and implement even more comprehensive case plans Cooma CC would benefit from engaging with more external service providers such as financial planning, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous.

The new CSNSW Intervention Pathways Model being implemented across the state may leave some offenders ineligible for custody-based criminogenic programs⁶⁷ offered in the HIPU at Cooma CC. Case Management officers will be required to work with those inmates to identify alternative purposeful day activities. In addition to work, distance education and vocational training, language learning, coping skills/ resilience, music and art therapy are possible offerings for those inmates. Those programs would also be of benefit to waitlisted HIPU inmates who are generally sitting idle for two to three weeks prior to commencement of their HIPU program.

64 A Score of 1 being low, 3 being medium risk and 5 high risk of return to custody; CSNSW Custody TRAS Fact Sheet.

65 Information received from CSNSW 19 May 2020.

66 PARRCC is an OIMS based assessment tool consisting of 30 face-to-face questions that assess inmates' functional needs. CNSW informed ICS the PARRCC assessment has been revised as part of Intervention Pathways and is anticipated will be operational in the second half of 2020.

67 Criminogenic programs are those that address an individual's needs around underlying issues that relate to the likelihood of them reoffending.

CMU officers hold regular meetings with inmates to ensure they are progressing with their plans and formally review case plans every six months. The CMU staff also report working collaboratively with Cooma community corrections to ensure the safe return of inmates to the community.

Recommendation: CSNSW increase purposeful day activities at Cooma Correctional Centre for inmates who are no longer eligible for custody-based criminogenic programs.

Programs

There are two HIPUs at Cooma CC, one in Area 1 and the other in Area 2. Each HIPU has an intake of 25 inmates. The HIPUs are designed to provide programs to inmates with sentences of two years or less and receive inmates from around the State. Both HIPU programs run for 16 weeks and include a two week induction. Inmates undertake the suite of EQUIPS Programs over the 16 week period. Programs are scheduled for four or five days each week. Centre data indicates that between 7 January 2019 to 20 December 2019 137 inmates participated in the HIPUs.

The Manager of Services and Programs (MOSP) is responsible for planning and co-ordinating the day-to-day provision of services and programs to inmates at Cooma CC. The MOSP oversees the programs staff of eight SAPOs and two senior SAPOs. Programs offered at Cooma CC in the 12 months from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 are listed in Table 4.⁶⁸

Table 4: Offender Programs delivered at Cooma Correctional Centre from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

| Program | Participants ⁶⁹ |
|--|----------------------------|
| OSP: Ngarra Nura Referral Package | 2 |
| Addictions support group | 268 |
| Alcoholics anonymous | 314 |
| CALM - Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it | 4 |
| CALM: Male Australian Adaptation | 45 |
| Domestic Abuse program | 7 |
| EQUIPS Addiction | 352 |
| EQUIPS Aggression | 226 |
| EQUIPS Domestic Abuse | 102 |
| EQUIPS Foundation | 391 |
| Getting SMART | 172 |
| Health Survival Tips | 860 |
| Managing Emotions (Men's version) | 179 |
| RUSH | 199 |
| SMART Recovery Maintenance Groups | 386 |
| TRIP | 11 |
| VOTP - Maintenance (custody) | 2 |

⁶⁸ Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

⁶⁹ Total participants does not equal the number of inmates participating in the HIPUs. An inmate participating in the HIPU may participate in multiple programs.

Inmates participating in the Area 2 HIPU must have a C2 classification and, as they are accommodated in a low security environment, must be the subject of an order issued under section 6.2 of the Act.⁷⁰ The 6.2 process at Cooma CC is efficient. Having two HIPUs and an efficient 6.2 process provides the necessary flexibility to move inmates between the two HIPUs and operate at full capacity. HIPU inmates attend programs between three and five days per week depending on their program requirements and are paid a weekly allowance. At the time of inspection, inmates were unable to participate in paid employment or education while they were completing the HIPU. This has changed and HIPU participants are now able to participate in work on days when they are not undertaking programs as well as before they commence the HIPU and after completion of the HIPU program.

Additional challenges for the HIPUs were identified. They are as follows:

- **Classification and placement** - Selection of inmates for the HIPU is performed by CSNSW Classification and Placement. Some inmates arrive at Cooma CC unaware they are enrolled in the 16 week HIPU program. If the inmate refuses to participate they must be transferred out of Cooma CC.
- **HIPU numbers and completion rates** – Centre data for 7 HIPU intakes (n= 137)⁷¹, over a period of 12 months, indicates a completion rate of 58 % (n= 79 inmates).⁷² Just under a half of the HIPU intake population (42%, n=58) either failed to start or failed to complete the 16 week program. Of that group just under a third (31%, n=18) were attributable to insufficient time to complete or release from custody. The second highest group who failed to complete were due to safety issues (22%, n=13) followed by non-attendance and refusal to participate in the HIPU (17%, n=10). See Table 5 for details. The increasing number of inmates released prior to completion of the HIPU program causes disruption to the operations of the HIPU and needs to be addressed by CSNSW Classification & Placement.

Table 5: Cooma Correctional Centre HIPU Non Starter/ Non Completions for cohorts 8 to 14; period 7 January 2019 to 20 December 2019

| Reason for non-start/ non completion | Number | % |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Insufficient time/Release from custody | 18 | 31 |
| Request protection | 13 | 22 |
| Non-attendance/ refuse to participate | 10 | 17 |
| Change of Placement (compassionate, security issues, unsuitable) | 8 | 14 |
| Medically unsuitable | 5 | 9 |
| Court attendance | 4 | 7 |
| Total Non-Starter/ Non Completions | 58 | 100 |

70 A section 6.2 on centre order is an order, in accordance with Section 6 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, directing an inmate to carry out work in or outside the centre, as the Governor considers suitable. Commonly referred to as a section 6.2 'on complex' and 'off complex' orders.

71 HIPU cohorts 8 to 14 period 7 commenced January 2019 and completed 20 December 2019.

72 Data provided by Cooma CC document (Cooma HIPU Candidates (5)).

- **HIPU eligibility** - To increase HIPU completion rates Cooma CC inmates with more than two years to their earliest release date, and who do not meet the HIPU selection criteria, are taking part in the HIPU. The expansion in program eligibility to consider inmates serving sentences greater than two years has helped HIPU numbers at Cooma CC. It is also serving as a pilot for potential rollout by CSNSW Offender Services and Programs to all HIPUs.⁷³ However, requiring long term sentenced inmates who have progressed to minimum security and applied for their C3 to progress to work release to complete a HIPU program, to increase HIPU completion rates is not a good use of resources.
- **Inmate movements on completion of HIPU** – Moving inmates out of Cooma CC on completion of the HIPU is difficult. HIPU participants are required to travel to Goulburn CC which has a maximum of six beds available. As discussed earlier, delays in inmate movements has a consequential effect on spaces for new HIPU inmates and on the general operation of programs at Cooma CC. Data provided by the centre indicates that of 35 HIPU inmates waiting transfer out of Cooma CC in the 12 months from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, 20 inmates waited over 30 days and five inmates waited over 80 days. Of those five inmates, two had waited 89 days, one 95 days, one 105 days and the longest 162 days.⁷⁴

Recommendation: CSNSW review the operation of the HIPU at Cooma Correctional Centre.

Employment

Cooma CC provides employment opportunities for the majority of inmates in Area 1. Inmates can work in the textiles workshop, kitchen and laundry as well as general maintenance, administrative and other duties around the centre. CSNSW data indicates as at 26 January 2020 60 inmates were employed in general service positions throughout the centre. The majority are employed in the accommodation units (n=25, 12.2%), followed by building and grounds maintenance (n=11, 5.4%). Other areas are the museum (n=4, 2%), administration (n=2, 1%), buy-ups (n=2, 1%), education (n=2, 1%), and the store (n=1, 5%). There are also several community projects (n=8, 3.9%) allowing inmates supervised work opportunities.⁷⁵

The textiles workshop employs up to 45 inmates, with 38 inmates employed at the time of inspection. Cooma CC produces inmate clothing for the state. It also produces clothing for the local medical facility and an abattoir, as well as wildlife orphan pouches for Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Due to recent bushfires the call for wildlife pouches was high and inmates worked hard to meet the demand. On Saturdays some inmates produce clothes for still born babies in support of a related charity.

⁷³ Advice from CSNSW Offender Services & Programs of their intention to review the HIPU and consider the expansion of program eligibility to inmates serving sentences of greater than 2 years (meeting ICS and CSNSW OS&P 17 April 2020).

⁷⁴ Information provided by Cooma CC June 2020. Document titled 'Change of Placements and wait times for escort - Jan 2019 - Mar 2020'.

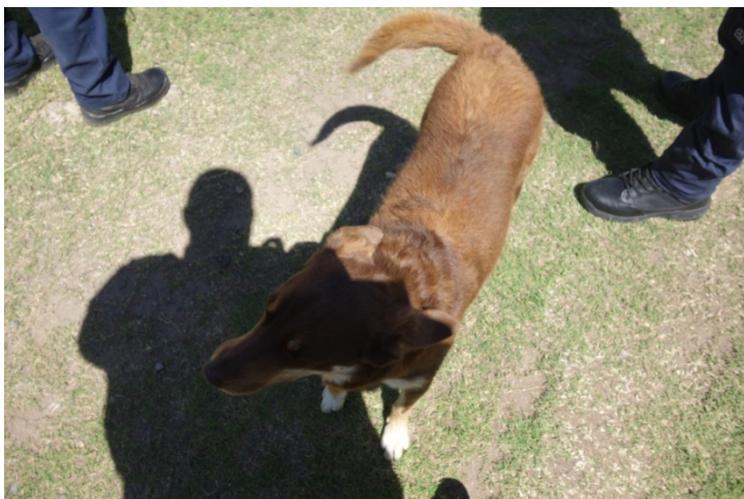
⁷⁵ Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (GRES) dated 5 February 2020.



Textiles – Area 1

There are 11 positions in the kitchen and laundry, of which two inmates are employed in the Area 2 satellite kitchen. The laundry provides services for the centre as well as servicing four external contracts. The kitchen and laundry operates seven days a week for six hours per day.

Community project work is performed by Area 2 inmates who have a C2 classification and have received a 6.2 off site order.⁷⁶ At the time of inspection there were eight inmates working on supervised community projects. The centre has community partnerships with the Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Snowy Landcare, RSPCA and WIRES. The work inmates perform around the caring of animals at the centre is particularly important. In 2019 Cooma CC and inmates eased the pressure on drought-stricken farmers by feeding and housing orphaned lambs until they were healthy enough to return to the land. Cooma CC also has a well-established relationship with the regional RSPCA. The dog re-homing program has been operating for several years with inmates in Area 2 caring for and training dogs. The program, funded by the RSPCA, has recently been expanded to include a much larger facility in one of the centre's freestanding sheds in Area 2. The shed has been renovated to include purpose built kennels that will accommodate many more dogs. The lambing program and dog re-homing have been beneficial to both the community and inmates. The centre's cooperation and inmates' willingness to care for dogs in need of protection and housing during the 2019/2020 bushfires is commendable.



RSPCA Dog for re-homing

⁷⁶ In 2019, 109 C2 classification inmates were granted 6.2 permits (on/ off complex). Information provided by Cooma CC 7 July 2020.

Inmates were generally pleased with employment practices at the centre. However concern was expressed around the recently introduced practice of punishing non-workers. The issue was raised by staff and inmates throughout the inspection, who questioned the practice and had concerns around its impact on mental health and well-being.

Inmates who are dismissed from work and some inmates who refuse to work are placed in a small holding cell referred to as the non-workers yard for six hours per day for 10 working days. This outdoor holding cell is open to the weather and has a screened toilet and basin. Inmates are allowed food, clothes and reading material. In addition to placement in the holding cell the inmate does not receive their weekly unemployment allowance. There is no formal recording of the process or punishment. The dismissal from work or refusal to work is recorded as a 'Code 97' in the offender information management system which automatically triggers a cessation of the inmate's unemployment allowance.

On the first day of inspection five inmates were observed in the non-workers holding cell. The practice was implemented to deter inmates from refusing to work and is favoured over treating the refusal as a correctional centre offence. When the practice was queried the inspection team was advised that not all inmates who refuse to work are placed in the holding cell. Some are allowed to spend their day in the larger exercise yard where they can access the gym and participate in other activities. This arbitrary practice is unfair and the conditions of the holding cell are degrading. The use of the holding cell as a non-workers yard should cease. The ICS has raised this issue previously and is mindful of CSNSW intentions to review the CSI Policy manual to ensure there is clarity in relation to dismissal categories and decision making consistency.⁷⁷ CSNSW is currently reviewing their CSI policy manuals and inmate wages systems.⁷⁸

Recommendation: CSNSW ceases the practice of placing inmates in the non-worker holding cell at Cooma Correctional Centre.

⁷⁷ Response from CSNSW to recommendation 12 *Programs, Employment and Education Inspection*, ICS February 2020. See also discussion at page 84 *Women on Remand Report*, ICS February 2020.

⁷⁸ Information received from CSNSW 2020.

Education and Training

Inmates should have access to education to address their learning needs and vocational training to assist employment opportunities upon release. The Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia identify that prisoners should 'have access to nationally recognised education programs'. These should be 'matched to prisoner's educational level and learning needs, and aligned with vocational training that assists them to gain employment post release.'⁷⁹ CSNSW provides educational opportunities to inmates, utilising a needs based model. A core skills assessment is conducted of all inmates to determine reading and numeracy capability.⁸⁰ This is generally performed soon after an inmate is received into the custody of CSNSW.

The Education Services Coordinator (ESC) oversees foundation skills and vocational training course delivery at Cooma CC. Table 6 details the educational and training courses offered at Cooma CC between 1 February 2019 to 31 January 2020 together with enrolment, participant and completion rates. In the 12 month period 20 courses were offered of which there were 415 participants but only 16 completions. VTP - Cleaning Operations had the highest completion rate (n=7).⁸¹

Table 6: Education and Training at Cooma CC and enrolment, participant and completion rates for the period 1 February 2019 to 31 January 2020⁸²

| Program | Enrolments | Participants | Completions |
|---------------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Barber hygiene | 15 | 9 | 0 |
| CSI Workplace Health & Safety | 95 | 95 | 0 |
| Core Skills Assessment - LLN | 88 | 84 | 0 |
| Distance Education-Cert I-IV | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Distance Education-High Ed | 11 | 11 | 2 |
| Driver Knowledge Test | 37 | 37 | 0 |
| FSP Level 1-Dig Lit | 11 | 8 | 0 |
| FSP Level 2-LLN | 11 | 8 | 0 |
| Traineeship/Apprenticeship | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| VTP - Business | 33 | 29 | 0 |
| VTP - Chemical Handling Certification | 13 | 12 | 0 |
| VTP - Cleaning Operations | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| VTP - Clothing and Production | 11 | 10 | 0 |
| VTP - Logistics | 19 | 19 | 6 |
| VTP - Painting | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| WPT - First Aid | 12 | 11 | 0 |
| WPT - Food Safety | 46 | 41 | 0 |

79 Guiding Principle 5.1.11 Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia; Revised 2018.

80 The Vocational Indicator (VI) is the standardised Core Skills Assessment (CSA) tool used to determine an inmate's reading and numeracy level in accordance with the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and was developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).⁴²

81 It is unclear from the data as to when inmates commenced and whether their participation is still occurring.

82 Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.

| Program | Enrolments | Participants | Completions |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| WPT - Skidsteer | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| WPT - Test and Tag | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| WPT – Tractor driving | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 445 | 415 | 16 |

Inmates are also able to obtain qualifications that are relevant to their place of work in the centre. However, the courses offered for industry skill sets at Cooma CC fell short of complete qualifications with certificate II being the highest attainment. This issue was also canvassed in the 2020 ICS Programs, Employment and Education Report.⁸³ ICS is advised that the only full qualification certificate in a VET course available at Cooma CC is the Laundry traineeship. One inmate completed a traineeship in January 2020. Not having a full skill set makes it difficult for inmates to secure employment on release. The NSW Premier's priority is to reduce recidivism by five percent by 2023.⁸⁴ Research has shown that VET training increases opportunities for inmates to attain gainful employment upon release from corrections and reduces their likelihood of reoffending.⁸⁵

There are several inmates at Cooma CC who engage in self-directed tertiary learning. At the time of inspection six students were enrolled with the University of Southern Queensland. Historically, Cooma CC has supported inmates in tertiary education and continues to provide ongoing support to those inmates who wish to pursue further education.

Recommendation: CSNSW increase education and training opportunities for inmates and increase completions in vocational training courses and qualification skill sets.

Preparation for release

As Area 2 is a minimum security centre, many inmates are released to parole from Cooma CC. Cooma CC provides opportunities for Area 2 inmates, with a C3 classification, to participate in work release.⁸⁶ At the time of the inspection there were six work release opportunities with local businesses in the Cooma district. However, due to the risk of COVID-19 work release was suspended in 2020. There is a will from both management and local business to increase work release opportunities. The barrier, as explained to the inspection team, is the limited transport opportunities available to inmates in Cooma. In most cases inmates are driven and collected by custodial staff or a staff member of the employing business. Inmates have suggested bicycles but have been advised there are safety concerns and risk of injury to be considered.

Community Corrections have an office in Area 2 of Cooma CC and work collaboratively with the CMU and SAPOs to prepare inmates for release. Interstate travel permits are arranged for inmates who need to travel through the Australian Capital Territory to Sydney or other parts of NSW.

⁸³ ICS, Programs, Employment and Education Inspection, February 2020.

⁸⁴ Premier's Priorities ; <https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/reducing-recidivism-prison-population>.

⁸⁵ Jesse Cable, Andrew Day, Sharon Casey, David Bright, Jo Wodak, Margaret Giles, Eileen Baldry, Australian prison vocational education and training and returns to custody among male and female ex-prisoners: A cross-jurisdictional study; Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology 2019, Vol. 52(1) 129–147.

⁸⁶ In 2019 Cooma CC records six inmates with C3 classifications. Data provided by NSW Corrective Services Research and Evaluation Services (CRES) dated 5 February 2020.



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