



## **Prison staff prevent contraband drugs being stitched up**

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Vigilant correctional officers have been praised for their seamless efforts after finding contraband drugs hidden inside shoulder pads, suit linings and shoe soles sent to inmates for legal appearances.

There have been around a dozen such incidents in the past six months including at the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre where staff seized opioid buprenorphine with a potential prison value of around \$300,000, hidden inside sneakers sent to an inmate.

Governor Majid Marashian said officers from the Security Operations Group and intelligence team located 290 strips (9.6g) of the drug after noticing the soles were suspiciously glued on.

“The team did an outstanding job to identify that there was something off with these shoes before they ended up in the wrong hands,” Mr Marashian said.

“The attentive officers placed the sneakers through an X-ray machine, which confirmed their suspicions that contraband was stuffed between the sole and upper part of the shoes.”

Bupe as it's more commonly called is used as a heroin replacement and is currently estimated to be worth between \$400 and up to \$1,000 per strip in a maximum-security centre.

All inmates are provided with prison-issued clothing and shoes however offenders can be sent private clothing for approved purposes including court appearances, external leave and prior to release.

Corrective Services NSW Commissioner Peter Severin said approved private clothing is carefully searched by staff before being given to inmates.

“I congratulate all officers on their commitment to prevent contraband getting into our prisons. Every illegal item stopped ensures a safer and more secure correctional environment for both staff and inmates,” Mr Severin said.

Other contraband finds in clothing sent to inmates include:

- **John Morony Correctional Centre, September**

Intelligence officers noticed the stitching of a suit jacket had been altered. Upon closer inspection, 150 bupe strips and 67g of tobacco were found hidden in the shoulder pads. In a separate incident, 98 bupe strips were discovered inside the waistband seams of a pair of trousers.

- **Parklea Correctional Centre, September**

Three packages containing 28g of ‘brown vegetable matter’ possibly tobacco, 5g of ‘green vegetable matter’ possibly cannabis and 140 bupe strips were found inside the lining of a suit jacket.

- **Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre, Silverwater, August**

Around 5g of bupe was sewn into the seams of the back pockets of a pair of trousers.



- **Long Bay Correctional Complex, June**

Thirty-five bupe strips were found in the seams of the crotch section of a pair of trousers.

- **Shortland Correctional Centre, Cessnock, April**

Security Operations Group officers were screening incoming property when a K9 gave a positive indication to a pair of shoes in an express mail package. A package with 80 bupe strips was found sewn into the tongues of a pair of sneakers.

NSW Police are notified about such incidents and inmates can face internal charges.

**CSNSW media inquiries: 0419 258 290 – calls only, no SMS**