



## **Important inmate-family links maintained during CV-19**

**Friday 15 May 2020**

Corrective Services NSW has facilitated more than 16,000 video visits between inmates and their families after face-to-face contact was suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Prison staff have been working hard to utilise existing audio-visual studios normally used for court appearances, as well as tablet technology and mobile-signal boosters for prisons in remote areas.

Corrective Services NSW Commissioner Peter Severin said it was a mammoth effort by staff to put in place the technology, security and booking arrangements for the video visits trial, which commenced on 11 April.

“I want to thank our officers who have worked hard to ensure this technology was not only available but that it worked,” Mr Severin said.

“Corrections staff have shown great professionalism in adapting to the rapidly evolving situation and their work on the frontline should be acknowledged and applauded.”

As of 15 May 2020, we have no confirmed cases of the virus within CSNSW staff or inmates at any of our correctional facilities.

CSNSW Deputy Commissioner Luke Grant said it was important for inmates to maintain family links – just like the rest of the community.

“Inmates need to keep up phone calls and contact with their loved ones as it can assist with their reintegration into the community upon release, and strong support from families can also lessen their chances of reoffending,” Mr Grant said.

“It’s equally important for children, siblings, parents and partners of inmates to be able to talk to and see their loved ones, especially at this challenging time.”

CSNSW has implemented a number of measures to prevent the virus entering our system, including quarantining fresh custodies for 14 days, screening all staff and inmates on entry to our prisons and increasing cleaning at all facilities.

Inmates continue to have access to services and programs and our staff are working hard to ensure daily routines are maintained.

When it’s considered safe to do so, CSNSW will reinstate face-to-face visits and is looking at how they can be reintroduced safely, while maintaining social distance.

CSNSW is exploring the option of continuing to use the AVL technology for family visits, so that we can minimise the number of people entering our facilities.

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