

Response to question on notice from the Standing Committee on Law and Justice,

Mandatory Disease Testing Bill 2020

11 February 2021, 9:45 AM

Questions on notice:

Question 1: Does anyone on the panel know what screening for bloodborne viral diseases is done on prisoners going into custody?

Answer 1: All people entering custody are screened at reception. Screening includes risk factors for bloodborne viral diseases such as history of injecting drug use. If a person entering custody has an identified risk factor they are waitlisted to primary care for a blood draw so that testing can be undertaken. New entrants are not routinely tested.

This information was provided to me by the Population Health Unit of the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network.

Question 2: Is there a funding issue with Justice Health. Is this something you have been told anecdotally or has it been put to you by persons?

Answer 2: It is well documented that there are funding constraints across the system, especially where it concerns issues related to people who use or have used drugs. In Correctional settings, the population of people in custody has been increasingly markedly over the past ten years, with a 37% increase of people in custody between 2013 to 2018.<sup>1</sup> There has been no equivalent increase in staffing within Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Service as detailed in the Annual Reports of this service. The constraints on the system are illustrated in the table below.

Year	Total population (June) <sup>2</sup>	% increase 2013-2020 <sup>3</sup>	Number of FTE staff	% increase 2013-2020 <sup>4</sup>
2014	10,515		1180	
2020	13,630	29%	1335	13%

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<sup>1</sup> Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network 2018 Annual Report  
<https://www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au/publications/our-network-2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> BOSCAR Custody Statistics [https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_media\\_releases/media-releases-2021.aspx](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_media_releases/media-releases-2021.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network 2014 Annual Report  
<https://www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au/publications/year-in-review/2013-14-year-in-review-1>

<sup>4</sup> Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network 2014 Annual Report  
<https://www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au/publications/our-network-2020.pdf>