

**INQUIRY INTO CORRECTIONAL SERVICES  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2006**

**Organisation:** Hunter New England Area Health Service

**Name:** Mr Robert Batey

**Position:** Area Director  
Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services

**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 28/07/2006

---

**Subject:**

**Summary**

Ref: RGB/vj

26 June 2006

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No 3  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Fazio

Re: Inquiry into the Correctional Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2006

Thank you for the opportunity of making a submission to the Inquiry into the Correctional Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I make my submission as a practising medical clinician who has spent some time over the last four years providing medical clinics in two of the jails in NSW, one in Cessnock and one in Muswellbrook. I have a specific interest in Hepatitis C and in the major societal problem of drug and alcohol abuse and dependence.

As you will be aware many individuals within the Corrections system are there because of offences committed while under the influence of drugs and this adds weight to my feelings in relation to this Inquiry and the Bill itself.

Having worked in prisons I have met a range of individuals, some of whom have committed serious incitable offences and it is evident that many of these have been committed whilst individuals have been under the influence of drugs. I do not, in any way, wish to suggest that their drug use should be an excuse for them avoiding appropriate punishment but I do believe we are living in a society which has failed many members and has led them to need to use medications to make life bearable.

With all of that said, I believe that it is important to argue against the suggestion that inmates serving sentences for serious incitable offences or who are awaiting sentencing for such offences, should be prevented from accessing medical services of any type simply because they are in the Corrections system.

I have no problems with the second object of the Bill which would require individuals to pay for charges for storage as I believe this is an appropriate response to those who have committed incitable offences.

My key concern is that being placed in prison should not lead to any additional punishment or restriction of rights for any individual. The simple reality of being placed in prison should be punishment enough and it should be the task of the prison system to work to support and rehabilitate those individuals who have been placed within the system rather than adding additional punishments to their suffering.

Contd/.....

Hunter New England Area Health Service  
ABN 24 500 842 605  
Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services - Management Unit

I am aware from serving within the prison system that whilst NSW Justice Health is a very forward thinking and innovating service, it is still not able to provide the level of health care that is experienced and expected by ordinary citizens in NSW who have not fallen foul of the law. It is imperative that we do not regard these people as less than human or as belonging to another class and I believe that prisoners should have the right to provide reproductive material for storage should they so desire and storage should be paid for by those individuals. I do not believe there is any solid research evidence I can quote to justify this position, I merely indicate that it is not appropriate to add to the punishments of an individual who has been placed in prison by denying them rights to medical services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Batey', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Robert Batey**  
Area Director  
Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services