

**Submission
No 35**

**INQUIRY INTO THE CLOSURE OR DOWNSIZING OF
CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW FACILITIES**

Organisation: The Law Society of New South Wales

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THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Our Ref: 657705

7 November 2012

The Director
Select Committee on the closure or downsizing of Corrective Services NSW Facilities
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Director,

Inquiry into the closure or downsizing of Corrective Services NSW facilities

The Law Society's Criminal Law Committee (Committee) has some brief comments to make in relation to the inquiry into the closure or downsizing of Corrective Services NSW facilities.

Since 1998 there has been significant growth in the prison population in New South Wales¹. While there has been a plateau in the prison population since July 2009, prison expansion costs are becoming unsustainable. The Committee is of the view that a justice reinvestment approach to offending is a more effective way to reduce crime than imprisonment. Justice reinvestment redirects money spent on prisons to community-based initiatives which aim to address the underlying causes of crime. Justice reinvestment has been successfully implemented in a number of states in the USA and has resulted in a decrease in prison population and recidivism. The impact of job losses from the closure of correctional centres could be minimised by the redeployment of staff to assist with justice reinvestment programs.

The Committee notes the importance of having correctional centres available in regional areas so that inmates can stay connected with their families and communities. The closure of regional correctional centres is likely to have an adverse impact on an inmate's ability to reintegrate into the community on release.

Yours sincerely,

Justin Dowd
President

¹ Between January 1998 and July 2009 the total NSW prison population increased by 65%, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Issue Paper No 80, September 2012.