

Better Prisons: Benchmarking Fact sheet

Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) committed to the NSW Government that it would undertake a benchmarking program to ensure all correctional centres provide value for money and enhanced service delivery. The program is part of a series of reforms called Better Prisons.

Benchmarking will maintain safety and security while improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks include two major components:

Performance targets that outline what centres need to achieve to become the best they can be; and

Resources, including staffing, required for a centre to perform efficiently and effectively.

They were set by looking at our centres' operations, comparing them with one another and establishing which are performing well and which need to come up to standard. The management structures of NSW public, NSW private and interstate public prisons were also reviewed to identify improvements to our structure.

Factors such as a centre's role, function, size and security classification will influence its final resource benchmark.

Performance targets

Performance targets will be consistent across the correctional system. They will be focused on outcomes in four key areas, supported by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Safety & Security (KPIs include cell searches and contraband detection);

Rehabilitation and Reintegration (KPIs include inmate participation in programs, education and training);

Decency & Respect (KPIs include time out of cells and purposeful activity); and

Professionalism & Accountability (KPIs include staff training).

Each prison will report monthly on its success in meeting targets.

Reducing reoffending

Reducing reoffending is a NSW Government priority. Benchmarking will support this by introducing targets for inmate time out of cells and participation in programs, education, training and employment.

Rollout timeframe

Benchmarking is being rolled out in phases to prisons between 2016 and 2019.

Final benchmarks have been approved for 25 correctional centres and consultation has taken place or is under way at nine more.

The last round of benchmarking consultation will begin at the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre on July 26 2018.

Consultation

Local experience and expertise is critical to benchmarking's success.

When benchmarking comes to a centre, all staff and the PSA take part in a three-month consultation process.

The centre's Governor and Local Board of Management (LBOM) lead the process, and a benchmarking implementation team and human resources staff provide support.

Staff are asked whether their centre's draft benchmarks reflect local needs and how innovation can be used to improve service delivery and maintain safety and security.

The centre then finalises its benchmark proposal and implementation plan for the CSNSW Commissioner's approval.

Transition and Implementation

Centres will have 12 months to fully transition to benchmark operations.

Operating under full benchmark operations means activities including the following have been completed at the centre;

- New management team in place
- Implementation of cyclic rostering
- Staff recruitment and training
- Review post duties and Local Operating Procedures (LOPs)
- Operating under the new KPI requirements and service standards

During the transition, a committee will be set up at each centre to monitor the centre's progress against their individualised transition plan. Staff are encouraged to participate in this local committee which will meet at least monthly.

The central benchmarking team will continue to work with local staff and management to review benchmarking progress and obtain their feedback during the transition.

New management model

Benchmarking introduces a new management model to improve efficiency and enhance service delivery.

Dedicated functional manager roles are created at Senior Assistant Superintendent rank. These managers will be responsible for specific centre functions of accommodation, security and the structured day, and specialist support roles in intelligence and case management.

These will be filled by one ongoing occupant per role. These roles are integral to meeting performance targets and supporting Senior Correctional Officers who will be responsible for supervising small teams.

New training packages support this model, providing greater leadership opportunities.

Small centres will have a modified version of this management model that reflects their size.

Centre staffing impacts

The impact on prisons has varied. Some centres have had an increase in staff numbers and others have been asked to make reductions where it does not compromise safety, security or service delivery.

Risk assessments for staff safety and centre security are an ongoing part of the benchmarking process.

A small proportion of staff overall will find their roles affected. These include Assistant Superintendents as that rank will no longer be used in benchmarked correctional centres.

However, an anticipated overall growth in CSNSW jobs driven by a major prison building program and reoffending reforms, will provide alternative placement opportunities for most affected staff.

Staff placement

CSNSW is seeking to retain experienced and skilled staff as our organisation grows.

As part of their benchmarking proposal, centres will create a local staff placement strategy to cater for any staff members whose roles are affected. This plan should prioritise these staff for placement in other suitable roles at the same centre or location, including any new jobs created by increases in bed capacity, reducing reoffending programs and other initiatives.

If an affected staff member is unable to be placed at the same centre or site, roles at other preferred locations will be examined.

However, for those who are unable to be placed after all efforts have been exhausted, it is anticipated there will be some voluntary redundancies offered.

Further information and assistance

Further information on benchmarking is available via the benchmarking Frequently Asked Questions document, the Commissioner's video, or the Commissioner's Update on the intranet.

For a response to a further question, you can email CSNSWreform@justice.nsw.gov.au.

For human resources support, email CSNSWHR.support@justice.nsw.gov.au.

Free and confidential assistance can be accessed by calling the Employee Assistance Program on 1300 360 364.