

Corrections Victoria's response to COVID-19

Justice Health Unit webinar series

Larissa Strong

Acting Commissioner
Corrections Victoria

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Justice
and Community
Safety

Introduction

Corrections Victoria is a business unit of the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

We oversee the management of correctional facilities across Victoria, and supervision of offenders on community-based and post-sentence orders.



Data as at 29 January 2020

We work in partnership with health, clinical, education, training and other key service providers to provide a safe and humane corrections system to support rehabilitation.

Response to COVID-19

We quickly adapted to ensure safe and secure correctional facilities during COVID-19.

 <p>Routine and regular testing</p> <p>9,568 COVID-19 swabs of prisoners completed</p> <p>28 COVID-19 cases among prisoners</p> <p>0 Prisoner to prisoner transmission</p>	 <p>Quarantine and Isolation arrangements established</p> <p>Since 28 March 2020, all prisoners entering custody are required to complete a 14-day protective quarantine period.</p>	 <p>Enhanced use of technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced use of Audio-Visual Link for court• Remote delivery of health and mental health services• Remote service provision• Virtual personal and professional visits	 <p>Infection prevention and control measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal protective equipment and training• Specialised cleaning and disinfection• COVIDSafe plans and outbreak prevention and management plans
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The physical and mental health needs of prisoners remain a priority throughout the response.

 <p>Introduced proactive well-being and distress interventions for Protective Quarantine</p>	 <p>Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers providing supports</p>	 <p>Prisoners with health vulnerabilities supported appropriately</p>	 <p>Day of release transport service implemented to support safe reintegration</p>	 <p>Transitional supported accommodation for those at risk of homelessness</p>
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What worked

Health-led and dynamic responses, supported by clear accountability, strong leadership and effective communications

Integrated health-led response

- Internal and external expert health advice tailored to individual facilities
- Multi-disciplinary, integrated response (health, legal and operations)

Strong leadership and effective communications

- Strong leadership at all levels
- Consistent and reinforced communications about IPC measures
- Easy to understand IPC messages

Dedicated COVID-19 Taskforce

- Dynamically implement, and improve operational and health responses in
- Worked closely with in-prison teams to support implementation of IPC measures

Governance and processes in place to respond quickly to risks

- Clear decision-making processes and sole accountability in the Commissioner
- Use of virtual emergency management coordination centre

Focus on maintaining services and programs for prisoners

Victorian Human Rights Charter

- Established framework to support decision-making and active consideration of human rights and safeguards to minimise impact

COVID safe services and programs for prisoners

- Continuity of services and programs for prisoners
- COVID safe format – e.g. remote delivery; outdoor in-person; mask wearing; smaller groups; physical distancing

Looking forward

Immediate

- Continue to maintain a high level of preparedness to ensure we're responsive to ongoing outbreaks in the community
- Support staff and prisoners to maintain vigilance with infection prevention and control measures
- Vaccination of our prison population and staff
- Further short-term improvements to COVID safe service provision

Longer-term

- Understanding and responding to ongoing impacts on the broader criminal justice system (including police and courts)
- Long-term adaptations to service provision
- Long-term lessons for infection prevention for influenza and other infectious diseases in our facilities

Thank you



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