

Meeting Minutes – Meeting No. 19

Clarence Correctional Centre Community Consultative Committee

Tuesday 21 September 2021 – 3.30pm – 5.15pm

Location Online via Microsoft Teams

Chairperson: Margaret Harvie.

Community representatives: Jason Connell, Julie Perkins, Tania Williams, Sharron Lee Todd, Carol Pachos.

Local Government representative: Allira Newton representing Clarence Valley Council. Allira is acting in the role while it is being recruited (following Dan Griffin’s resignation).

NorthernPathways representatives: Glen Scholes (Serco), John Myers (John Laing), Bree Hiatt (Serco).

In attendance: Notetaker – Kate Koutsamanis, PlanCom Consulting.

Apologies: Geoffrey Jones, Sharon Monaghan.

Item no.	Description	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome, apologies and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julie Perkins provided a welcome and Acknowledgement of Country, paid respect to elders past, present and emerging on the Bundjalung, Gumaynggirr and Yaegl lands and all the lands in which committee members are dialling in from. All members introduced themselves, including new attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carol Pachos – local resident of Grafton, community minded with a long family history of involvement in the Grafton community. Involved in the health sector and a number of community organisation including the Chamber of Commerce, Steering Committee for the Clarence Valley Industry Training Hub, and the Clarence Round table. Allira Newton– works in the Community development team at Council. Acting in Dan’s role while it is being recruited. <p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharon Monaghan is a new committee member. Sharon is an apology today due to the current health/COVID situation in the community. Sharon is part of the Monaghan family of the Baryulgil community in the Clarence Valley. The family is well known in the area of health in the Valley. Sharon is a long-term federal public servant advising the National Indigenous Agency and has an extensive background in Aboriginal Affairs more broadly. 	
2.	<p>Declarations of pecuniary and other interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new declarations Tania Williams (TW) is a TAFE NSW employee. TAFE NSW has entered into a contract for the provision of vocational education and training 	

	<p>to the Centre. Tania is not directly part of the group that is contracted to the Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julie Perkins (JP) is the Chairperson of the Gurehlgam Corporation, an organisation that provides services for Aboriginal people. 	
3.	<p>Correspondence to the Clarence Correctional Centre (CCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new correspondence noted. 	
4.	<p>Action items from the last meeting and discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Impact Study has been submitted to the DPIE and Clarence Valley Council. This is also now on the DPIE website as per the link provided with the meeting agenda and below https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-8368-PA-12%2120210719T065051.381%20GMT The report deals with two issues raised by the community and these are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact on resources at Grafton Base Hospital by serving the correctional centre. There has been no increase in the number of inmates using the hospital, it is same as for the old Grafton Correctional Centre. Serco reported that liaison and coordination with the hospital is very good. Potential impact on police resources as result of the Centre being in this location. Overall, the concerns raised by the community have not materialised into impacts. Enterprise Agreement Progress – Serco are engaged in discussions with the union to support a new enterprise agreement. An offer put to the union was declined. Serco regardless went ahead and increased staff salaries resulting in 11 % increase. Discussions will continue to come to an agreement on suitable benefits going forward. 	
5.	<p>What we are hearing from the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharon Todd – due to COVID stay at home, not much community interaction is happening. She was not aware of any new concerns raised by the community, other than the impact on her and others of the sound of the bells travelling far beyond the facility. Glen Scholes – Serco are checking decibel levels and talking to the relevant community members and neighbours. We are exploring what we can do to address the concerns raised about the noise. Jason Connell – no new issues to raise. Julie Perkins – Has heard comments in the community about residents being sent to correctional centres away from their local area. Asked a question about how offenders are classified and chosen to be relocated to Kempsey or Sydney. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glen Scholes – Generally, local people stay here. We try to keep local people in the local area. If the person needs to complete High Intensity Program Units (HIPU) they are required to be relocated to the State centres where the HIPU programs are run. Once they complete HIPU we can bring them back to their local area. • Julie Perkins – What is being done in terms of drug and alcohol programs? • Bree Hiatt and John Myers - We are doing a lot of work in town to support the community in this area. We participate in the Clarence Valley Domestic and Family Violence Committee, and bring information and learnings from the community into the centre. We are abreast of what is happening in the community and how we can support them. It will be an ongoing partnership with the community, to be a front end of domestic violence awareness and delivering innovating programs within the Correctional Centre. • Tania Williams – I was reflecting on how valuable the tour of the centre was for the committee and personally. We were shown great examples of activities and energy of the inmates. I continued over the coming weeks to share my experience and observations about the good stuff going on at the Correctional Centre with the community. • John Myers – pleased the tour demonstrated what corrections is all about in 2021. It is about giving something back and helping people to get out of the correctional system and stay out. • Carol Pachos – It is quiet at the moment due to COVID. I have feedback in regard to health. We had a patient brought to us who informed us he had been contacted and notified as being a COVID contact while in the correctional system. The process and system for following up and closing this out wasn't clear. It was difficult for us to follow up with him. <i>Glen Scholes will give an overview of the management of the COVID in the operations update.</i> • Allira Newton – no issues to raise. 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Centre Operations Update The presentation provided has been made available to the CCC</p> <p>COVID-19 update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are significant COVID outbreaks in Sydney Correctional Centres and these centres are in lockdown. Vigorous testing programs including rapid testing is in place to manage the outbreak and 	

	<p>transfers. No one is coming out of centres with COVID. Transfers must isolate for 21 days, and return three negative test results before they can be transferred to Clarence. Kariong is being used as a holding centre for seven days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We haven't had a COVID contraction in Clarence. If there is a case in Clarence, they won't be kept in the centre. <p>Health and safety measures are in place and they will continue to be updated based on advice from NSW Health, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upon arrival, there will be rapid antigen testing • screening questions and temperature checks for all staff coming onsite • staff are briefed regularly on COVID safety measures • all staff are wearing goggles when dealing with inmates and wearing masks • full protective clothing/gowns are worn where staff are welcoming new inmates • we are offering vaccinations to all inmates • over half the staff are now vaccinated, vaccination will be mandatory for staff. <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Pachos – asked how long have the measures been in place? Glen Scholes – it has been a gradual uptake. Protocols have evolved over time as we received the relevant advice from NSW Health. We will continue to share information with staff and inmates to bring them along on the journey. • Sharon Todd – asked whether visitation to the centre will resume at 70% or 80% vaccination rates? Glen Scholes – confirmed no visitors at present. Advice has not yet been received from NSW Health. It is likely to be some time until visitation starts again. <p>Community engagement / events/ activities</p> <p>Bree Hiatt provided an update on achievements and positive community outcomes delivered in the first year of operations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiatives to support positive outcomes for First Nations inmates, further details at video link: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=365184028376678> • working with South Grafton High School to provide an Academic Program for First Nation female students • partnering with the NSW Government to upskill school leavers, participating in an 8 month rotation traineeship in infrastructure project management • inclusion is being celebrated at CCC • programs to grow awareness of mental health inside NSW correctional centres by supporting the Blue Tree Project. Blue Tree 	<p>Action: Bree to send video link to Allira at Council for sharing.</p>
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	<p>Tania Williams– raised the additional issue of enormous delays and gaps in supplies of building materials affecting the construction industry. A transport industry representative advised the Clarence Roundtable the border closures and testing requirements are having significant adverse impacts on the industry and supply chains.</p> <p>Julie Perkins - And sadly in my community many people work in the community sector and have very short term contracts so are unable to get loans for housing. It is vital to keep First Nations people in jobs at SERCO to provide secure jobs to allow them the opportunity for a loan to buy a home.</p> <p>Any complaints or matters raised</p> <p>John Myers updated the committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During July there was one stakeholder concern raised. Neighbours of the centre were concerned about the PA system volume. The amplifiers have been turned down across the Centre to address these concerns. NorthernPathways formally replied to the complainant and advised that the services of an independent professional Acoustic Engineer will be engaged to measure the noise impacts against the legislation and local council requirements. • In August NorthernPathways answered an enquiry from Mr Chris Gulaptis MP Member for Clarence regarding staff use of Avenue Road and turning left out of the centre. While access was restricted during construction there is no current restriction for staff in use of this road. NorthernPathways formally replied to Mr Gulaptis indicating that the post approval Traffic Management Plan states that we encourage staff to turn right instead of left on Avenue Road and communications prior to the opening of the highway was issued in relation to this matter. 	
7.	<p>Aboriginal Legal Services - progress update</p> <p><i>Background from previous meeting: The ALS is not readily available to indigenous inmates at Clarence as it has been previously through field officers (since the closure of the Grafton office).</i></p> <p>The lack of this personal interaction for indigenous inmates which is supposed to be different to the usual legal aid is disappointing to the Community Consultative Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further update at this meeting and due to COVID no visitors are allowed anyway. • Margaret, responding to a question from Serco asked the group if this item should remain on the agenda for each meeting or be postponed to be looked at again when visitation commences. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie Perkins – believes that it is an important issue for the committee. Advised the committee that Gurehlgam had received funding to run a justice forum and the meeting of this forum will be before June 2022. • Tanya Williams –Indicated that it is a front of mind issue for the consultative committee. Her preference is to keep it as a holding agenda so it is clear to the community that this is important to the committee. • It was agreed that while it will be difficult to progress action during COVID, the item is to remain on the agenda for each meeting. Julie can provide an update on the Justice Forum as part of this item at future meetings. 	
8.	<p>Final Questions / comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharron Todd – Are workers in the state system wanting to transfer to the Serco run system? Glen Scholes – Not really, traditional prison officers have a different culture and approach. It is a stretch for some correctional officers to transfer from the old system to our system. The state system is paid well and they accrue many benefits. Serco is looking to target recruitment of people who have a lot of care for what they are doing and for the people they are working with. • Carol Pachos– The Health Sector is preparing for COVID to move into the community with planning, preparations, vaccinations, recovery for businesses, COVID in the workplaces and team mate sick leave. The expectation is that by mid-Nov/Dec, COVID will spread through our community. I am sure you are being advised about how to prepare for this. Glen Scholes – we are planning and preparing for it. • Julie Perkins - 500 people have had their first shots, when will they have their second shots? Glen Scholes - We have both Pfizer and Astra Zeneca. We are doing 60 or 70 vaccinations per day. Most will be vaccinated by end October 2021. • Julie Perkins– are inmates making storybooks? - great for literacy and reflection. Glen Scholes - Yes they are and sending them home. They have access to their phones in the evenings and are able to read their storybooks to their children. 	
9.	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee agreed to Tuesday afternoons for future meetings • Next meeting Tuesday 7 December – 3:30pm, online via Microsoft teams. 	
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