



Justice
Corrective Services

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MLU16/00310

3 March 2016

The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Law and Justice
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Maclaren-Jones

I refer to the Committee's inquiry on the security classification and management of inmates sentenced to life imprisonment. Following the committee's recent visit to Long Bay Correctional Complex, some additional supplementary questions were referred to Corrective Services NSW by Mr Samuel Griffith.

Responses to those additional supplementary questions are attached. On 2 March 2016, Mr Griffith also requested some additional information, which is included with the responses to the supplementary questions.

I look forward to the recommendations and findings that will come from this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Severin', written over a light blue circular stamp.

PETER SEVERIN
COMMISSIONER

Encl.

cc Minister for Corrections

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE
INQUIRY INTO SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF INMATES SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT**

Supplementary questions: Corrective Services NSW

1. What are your views on creating a new security classification category for inmates sentenced to life imprisonment?

A: A new security classification category for inmates sentenced to life imprisonment should be given consideration.

(a) How would such a security classification operate in practice, for example, how might it impact on inmate management and placement in a maximum security facility?

A: Inmates sentenced to life never progress past a secure custody environment. The inmates would remain on the new security classification category and would not be subject to reclassification. The necessary management arrangements for lifers within a secure custody environment would be subject to assessment of risks and needs.

As all inmates serving life sentences are 'serious offenders', their ongoing management would be considered by the Serious Offenders Review Council (SORC). Recommendations regarding placement within the correctional system would be considered by SORC following initial assessments and subsequent reviews (required at least on an annual basis). The final decision for placement would be made by the Commissioner, after considering the recommendations of SORC.

As a person serving a life sentence has no requirement to be prepared for community reintegration, the current security classification system is not appropriate for this cohort.

(b) What would be the advantages and disadvantages of creating such a security classification?

A: A flexible management system based on risk to the correctional system enables inmates to be placed in secure centres that offer a variety of activities, including work options. Engagement in work contributes to the cost of incarceration.

There are no identifiable disadvantages.

(c) Would there be any barriers to creating such a security classification?

A: The creation of a new security classification would require amendments to the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* and to Corrective Services NSW custodial policy and procedures.

2. In your view, should a security classification category be created for aged and infirm inmates sentenced to life imprisonment?

A: No. Corrective Services is aware of the particular issues experienced by aged and infirm inmates. Consideration is being given to the creation of designated units and areas for the care of aged and frail inmates. These would still be secure custody arrangements to enable the accommodation of life sentence inmates, as required.

Creating a separate classification for aged and frail inmates serving life sentences is not considered to add any particular value.

Additional matter

In relation to the review by the SORC of life sentences inmates which was conducted in September 2015:

The SORC responded by recommending that the lifers be reinstated to the lower classifications assigned to them before their regression. The Commissioner did not agree to these recommendations and commented that the inmates' classifications should again be reviewed in six months.