

NSW Healthy Prisons Framework for Action

Making prison an opportunity for getting healthy and
staying healthy on release

Together for

Healthier Tomorrows



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Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Health

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. Our Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (Justice Health NSW) services are located on many Aboriginal nations across NSW, and we pay our respects to all traditional custodians of these areas.

Justice Health NSW is deeply committed to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for our Aboriginal patients, in line with our vision to return healthier patients to their communities.

Justice Health NSW employs dedicated staff who are committed to improving engagement for Aboriginal patients and providing a culturally safe and sensitive environment for both our staff and patients. The over-representation of Aboriginal people in the custodial and forensic mental health environments highlights the need for us all to focus our efforts on improving health outcomes for our Aboriginal patients.

We are dedicated to growing our dynamic workforce, supporting and developing our Aboriginal staff in a culturally responsive and safe workplace. Together we are striving to instil a working knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and cultural needs into the everyday business of Justice Health NSW and for all employees. This work will create a culturally safe environment.

Our commitment to building respect and relationships is an important foundation to achieving meaningful gains and the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health outcomes. It is an opportunity for us all to reflect on how important the work we do as healthcare professionals impacts on our Aboriginal patients and their communities. With the continued growth in numbers of patients in our care, we must continue to pursue high quality healthcare.

This is an exciting time for Justice Health NSW to show leadership, exceed targets by breaking down boundaries; and set new benchmarks. We look forward to you joining us on our journey as we strive to closing the gap on health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Wendy Hoey
Chief Executive
2/12/2022

Professor Denis King OAM
Board Chair
2/12/22



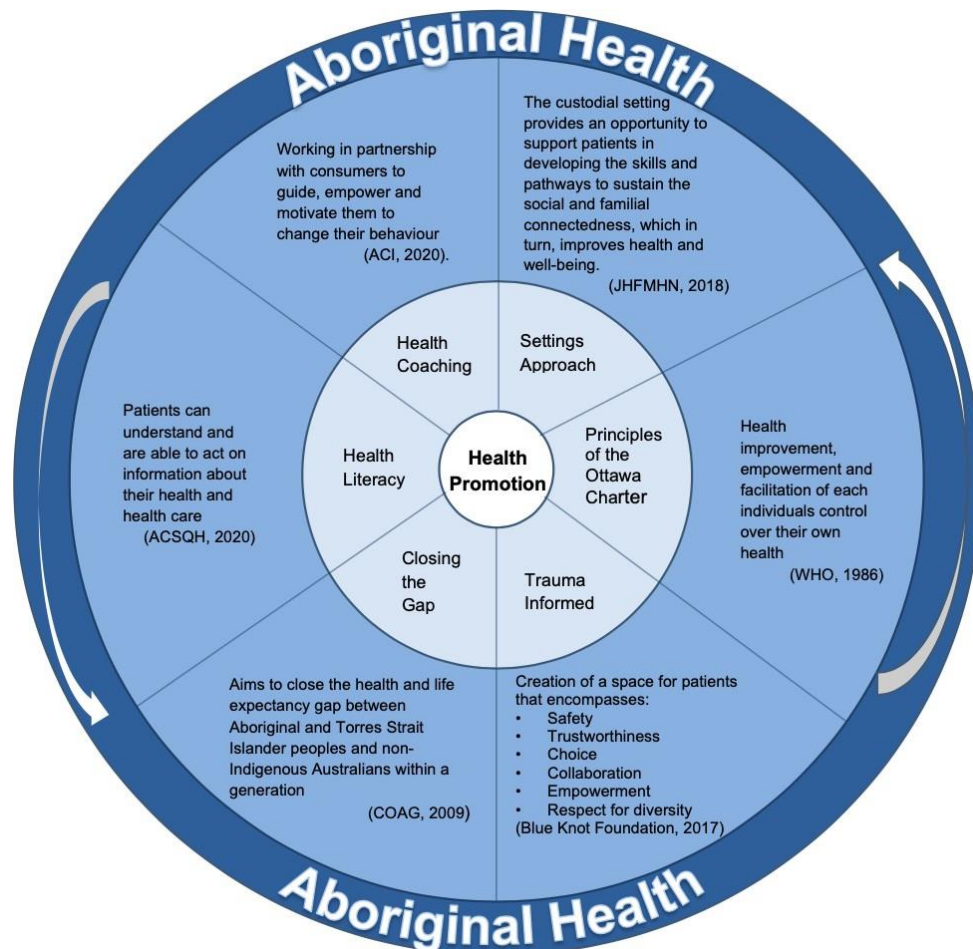
Terminology

As this project focuses on a setting approach to health promotion and Population Health, and the physical environment and systems that influence health, for the purposes of this report the terms inmates/ custodial population/ people in custody are used as well as “patients”

Aboriginal Health Impact Statement

The Framework will have a primary focus on Aboriginal health promotion. The process of co-design and development of an action plan (recommendation 3 of the Framework) will feature development of an Aboriginal Health Impact statement, the design of Aboriginal specific interventions when indicated and consideration of cultural appropriateness across the Framework and action plan.

Due to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in custody, this Framework needs to be underpinned by elements of tailored Aboriginal Health promotion. In line with the Australian Government National Agreement on Closing the Gap in Partnership (2020) it is important that health promotion practices follow the principles of this agreement: to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensure that both Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal people in custody are engaged and involved in the design and delivery of Health Promotion services that affect them in order to close the gap.



Reference: Justice Health NSW Guide for Health Promotion and Wellbeing in Prisons 2021

Executive Summary

This document was created prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, new strategies have been developed including:

- [Justice Health NSW 10 year strategic plan 2023-2032 – Together for Healthier Tomorrows](#)
- Corrective Services NSW Strategic Plan: Towards 2030
- [Future Health: Guiding the next decade of health care in NSW 2022-2032 \(NSW Health\)](#)
- [NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2022-2032](#)
- [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030.](#)

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the implementation of this Framework, there has been considerable progress towards the three focus areas.

This Framework has been informed by a rapid review of the published literature, international case studies and consultations with a sample of stakeholders representing the interests of;

- Adults in custody from five correctional centres
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (Justice Health NSW)
- Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW)
- Ministry of Health (MoH); and
- Local Health Districts (LHDs)

Justice Health NSW's Population Health Unit received a small amount of additional funding in May and June 2018 to fund a temporary project officer for six weeks to undertake the first phase of rapid review and consultation for the NSW Healthy Prisons project. The purpose of phase one was to scope a NSW Healthy Prisons Framework that built on existing health promotion partnerships and advanced the NSW MoH health promotion and chronic disease prevention priorities articulated through the *Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)* strategy and the state-wide campaign, *Make Healthy Normal (MHN)*. The proposed Framework is intended to be used to;

- Inform and generate discussion
- Catalyse stakeholder engagement
- Inform what Healthy Prisons in NSW could look like and how the Framework for action might be implemented.

This approach is also underpinned by direction one of NSW Health's *Future Health* outcome 3 - *people are healthy and well*, and Justice Health NSW's vision: *To transform lives by delivering healthier tomorrows through excellence in patient centred care across community, inpatient and custodial settings.*

The proposed Framework advocates a whole of system approach, building on achievements to date. It recognises that many risk factors are inter-related and can best be tackled through comprehensive, integrated programs. Similarly, a 'healthy prison' is one which is safe, secure, reforming and health promoting, and grounded in the concept of decency and respect for human rights.

It also proposes that the quantity and quality of service should be at least equivalent to services offered in the outside community. Learning from examples of international best

practice and stakeholder insights, there are **three guiding principles** which underpin and inform the Healthy Prisons Framework for NSW;

- Policies, partnerships, and programs between lead agencies to promote health and wellbeing.
- Environments that actively support and improve the health of inmates and staff.
- Health promotion and health literacy interventions which address the health needs of custodial populations, particularly Aboriginal people in custody.

Focusing on three areas

The consultation process identified key areas for future intervention, program development and support which will build on the existing health promotion work across NSW prisons. The initial focus areas for action would include:

- Food systems and choices: healthy food systems that support healthier food choices.
- Physical activity: increasing access, options and incentives for physical activity in and out of cell.
- Health Literacy: improve health literacy and developing health information (digital and non-digital) resources that are tailored to the custodial setting.

Next steps

The NSW Healthy Prisons Framework will act as a platform for action, to further engage stakeholders and guide future strategies between partnering agencies that have a crucial role in returning healthier patients and inmates to their communities. It is anticipated this process would lead to the formal consolidation of strategic partnerships and a governance structure that would oversee implementation of the agreed Framework for health promoting prisons in NSW.

Recommendations

The conclusion of the first phase of the Healthy Prisons Project and the considerable consultation involved generated a number of recommendations to move the concept and process forward. The recommendations are as follows;

- That Justice Health NSW and CSNSW as executive stakeholders endorse and commit to the NSW Healthy Prisons Framework as a platform for action
- That an inter-agency partnership is established to oversee and endorse the priority activities and project (actions) of the NSW Healthy Prisons Framework. Membership could include:
 - Justice Health NSW
 - CSNSW
 - Cancer Institute NSW
 - Heart Foundation
 - MoH Centre for Population Health
- That a strategic planning co-design workshop is conducted with key stakeholders to develop a three year plan for action (including evaluation) reflecting the three key focus areas

- Improve healthy food systems and support strategies to make informed choices about food
- Increase access, options and incentives for physical activity in and out of cell.
- Improve health literacy via an integrated systems approach and develop health information resources that are tailored to the custodial setting and populations.
- That the details generated at the co-design workshop become the road map for the first wave of implementation.

Introduction

Health promoting prisons are based on the premise that prisons are able to make a major contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in our society¹. This aligns with the vision of Justice Health NSW to provide healthier tomorrows for our patients. Improved health and wellbeing also underpins CSNSW's goal to preserve community safety and provide people in custody with education and programs to support their successful reintegration into society.

The purpose of the Healthy Prisons project (phase one) is to scope a framework for NSW Healthy Prisons that builds on existing health promotion partnerships and catalyses the support of stakeholders for future strategies. It is also an opportunity to understand how the MoH health promotion priorities articulated through the *Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)* strategy and the state-wide campaign to *Make Healthy Normal (MHN)* can be applied to the custodial setting.

The value of a partnership approach to creating healthy prisons is clear and well evidenced in NSW. The strategy, interventions and resources developed for successful implementation of:

- the Smoke Free Correctional Centres Policy (2015),
- the extensive work to combat blood-borne viruses and harm reduction in NSW prisons,
- the collaboration between the Australian Red Cross, Corrective Services NSW and Justice Health NSW to pilot the Community First Aid Program,
- the pilot of the Aboriginal Knockout Health Challenge at Wellington,
- the collaboration with the Heart Foundation to develop an intervention for heart disease for women in custody are all testimonials to the value of collaboration and partnership.

However, it is recognised that to build on these successes, a formal framework for promoting health in NSW prisons should be developed and endorsed by Justice Health NSW and CSNSW. This Framework describes what healthy prisons in NSW could look like and captures the guiding principles that seek to enable inmates' to improve their health and well-being through reasoned choices and access to health enhancing opportunities.

A Framework for NSW Healthy Prisons will focus on enhancing systems, environments and resources that will provide people in prison and the custodial workforce with opportunities to improve their health and reduce their risk factors. It will build on the excellent clinical and non-clinical health promoting work that is already being conducted in

“If we had a healthier custodial population we would have lower recidivism.”

CSNSW Policy Unit staff member

“Prison can be about self-empowerment. I'd like the inmates to think: “this is an opportunity to distribute my disordered life”.

Justice Health NSW Medical Officer

¹ Scottish Prisons Services, The Health Promotion Prison – a framework for promoting health in the Scottish prison service (2002)

NSW prisons and sets out guidelines and principles for putting ideas into action.

Based on examples of international best practice and consultation with a range of stakeholders, the proposed Framework outlines three guiding principles for developing cross sector and inter-related health promotion interventions and activities within the custodial setting.

The guiding principles (below) provide context and direction on how to optimally approach a NSW Healthy Prisons Framework and achieve successful outcomes tailored to the custodial setting. It is important to note, that these principles are based on alignment with the Justice Health NSW vision to return healthier patients to their communities and CSNSW goal to support inmate's successful reintegration into society. The principles are also drawn from previous program successes that have tackled communicable and non-communicable diseases.

The Settings Approach to Health Promotion

The World Health Organization (WHO) (1998) defines a setting for health as: “*The place or social context in which people engage in daily activities in which environmental, organisational and personal factors interact to affect health and wellbeing*”. The settings approach to health promotion theory and practice has its roots in the Ottawa Charter (WHO 1986) which introduced the concept of “supportive environments for health” and the idea that health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday lives. The settings approach focuses health promotion interventions on the broader determinants of health rather than just addressing individual and population behavioural risk factors, and is underpinned by key values such as empowerment, public participation, equity and partnership.

Key features of a setting approach include:

- Developing personal competencies
- Implementing policies effectively
- Re-shaping environments
- Building partnerships for sustainable change; and
- Facilitating ownership of change throughout the setting.

There are links between the factors that influence health issues such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease and behaviours such as physical activity, healthy eating and smoking. Programs that aim to tackle such issues at an individual patient level are limited in their effectiveness. A settings approach provides a more integrated and cohesive way to address multiple health issues and their determinants. See

<https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/enhanced-wellbeing/healthy-settings>



Guiding principles

The guiding principles of the NSW Healthy Prisons Framework are:

1. Develop joint partnerships, policies and programs between lead agencies to promote health and wellbeing in prisons
2. Promote environments that actively spot health for inmates and staff
3. Provide health promotion and health literacy interventions which address the health needs of custodial populations.

Key focus areas for action

Food Systems Choices

Enhance healthy food systems and support for making informed Buy-Ups choices



Physical activity

Increase access, options and incentives for physical activity in and out of cell.



Health literacy

Improve health literacy via an integrated systems approach and develop accessible health information (digital and non-digital) resources that are tailored to the custodial setting. Ensure the cultural and health literacy needs of Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse people in custody.



Health Promoting Prisons: what we can learn from international best practice

Draw on the international examples of best practice, including:

- Scottish Prison Services – the [Health Promoting Prison](#) and [A Framework for improving the health of Scotland’s Prisons Volume 1](#).
- [Health in Prisons – a WHO guide to the essentials in prison health](#)
- [Prisons and Health – WHO](#)
- [The WHO Prisons Health Framework – A Framework for assessment of prisons health system performance](#)
- UK publications including Baybutt M, Chelal K *Health promoting prisons: theory to practice* (2015); Woodall, J *Critical examination of the health promoting prison two decades on* (2016)
- Baybutt M, Acin E et al *Promoting health in prisons: a settings approach*. Chpt 21 Prisons and Health.
- US publications including Ross MW, Harzke AJ *Towards healthy prisons: the TECH model and its applications*. International Journal of Prisoner Health, Vol.8 NO 1 2012, pp16 -26.
- Health Promotion in NSW Prisons and Juvenile Justice Centres, The scope for health promotion within the correctional environment in NSW Final Report November 2005, Justice Health NSW unpublished.

“The real systemic changes that will make a difference to health outcomes in prisons are controlled by CSNSW. They hold the keys to the food system, exercise facilities and access to programs and services.”

Justice Health NSW Population Health staff member

The international case studies and publications (referred to above) from Scotland and the United States of America provide clear guidelines and rationale for approaching the development of a Healthy Prisons Framework. At the core of building healthy prisons are cross sector partnerships that develop shared understandings about why and how the custodial setting can promote health. These include:

- a. Prison can be a prime setting to tackle health inequalities and lifestyle risk factors and make a major contribution to improving the health of some of the most disadvantaged and excluded people in our society
- b. The custodial settings provides an opportunity to support inmates in developing the skills and pathways to sustain the social and familial “connectedness”, which in turn, improves health and wellbeing and changes lives for the better ²
- c. Health promoting prisons need to be underpinned by principles which empower prisoners to make informed choices that will improve lives and health prospects

² Scot PHN, SHPMG, SPS. Better health, better lives for prisoners: a framework for improving the health of Scotland’s prisoners Volume 1 (2012).

- d. Policies and programs which build health literacy and provide access to physical activity facilities and healthy food choices are key components of a Healthy Prisons Framework.

Recommendations for further research

- That a systematic review of the recent (published and unpublished) literature on health promoting prisons be conducted in consultation with opinion leaders and practitioners in the field to advise and inform the development of a NSW Healthy Prisons Framework.
- Facilitated dialogue with key health promoting prisons stakeholders including the Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Public Health Network and SHPMG about the process, implementation and outcomes of the various healthy prisons strategies 2002 – present. Consider invitation to speak at the next Corrective Services and Justice Health NSW conference.

“Boredom should be an opportunity, not a punishment. If you can reduce boredom you will reduce recidivism.”

Justice Health NSW, GP Primary Care

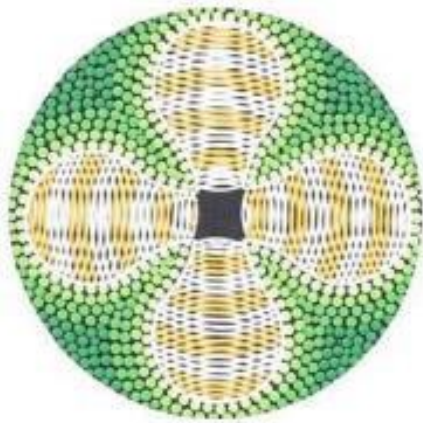
Complex risk factors in the custodial population

In NSW over half of adults are overweight or obese, increasing their risk of heart disease, cancer, and stroke and type 2 diabetes. The NSW Government has developed major policy and strategy responses to counter this. The MoH *HEAL* Strategy (2013-2018) is a whole of government framework with a target of reducing rates of overweight and obesity in NSW adults by 2025. A new MoH *HEAL* strategy (2022-2032) builds on the successes of the first strategy to support implementation of National Obesity Strategy (2022-2032) and NSW Future Health Framework (2022-2032) and aims to halt the rise and reverse the trend of obesity in adults by 2030.

Under the umbrella of the *HEAL* Program, future preventative health planning and initiatives in NSW reflects the NSW Future Health Strategy, the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030 and the National Obesity Strategy. Early in 2017, Justice Health NSW Primary Care conducted and evaluated Healthy Weight/Healthy Lifestyle information days at ten correctional centres. Body Mass Index (BMI) data indicated alarming rates of overweight patients and obesity. The Chief Executive requested possible measures to address this. Additionally, the 2015 Network Patient Health Survey³ indicated that almost 60% of participants were overweight or obese. This is compounded by the disproportionately high number of other risk factors for chronic disease found in the custodial population. These include smoking, history of alcohol abuse, physical inactivity, poor nutrition and mental health disorders.

³ Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. Network Patient Health Survey, 2015. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network: Sydney.

The same 2015 survey identifies that Aboriginal people accounted for 21.8% of NSW's prison population despite constituting only 2.5% of the general population. Aboriginal people in custody present with a unique and complex health profile and, as such, it provides a sobering justification of Justice Health NSW's focus on Aboriginal health.⁴ The challenge is to offer health promotion interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates that are culturally appropriate and foster engagement.



“We need to make Aboriginal health everyone’s business in prison and avoid tokenism.”

Justice Health NSW Aboriginal Culture and Strategy Unit

⁴ Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. Network Patient Health Survey – Aboriginal People’s Health Report (2015)

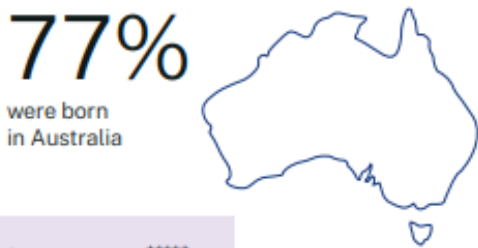
Our patients: Adult custodial patient profile

Adult custodial Patient profile

Gender split*



Country of birth**



Age**

18-24	12%	45-54	15%
25-34	34%	55 and over	10%
35-44	29%		

Substance use****

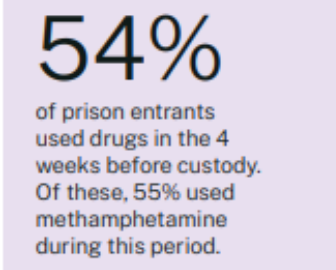


Mental health*****



Top 5 health conditions***

1. Asthma
2. Opioid dependence
3. Depression
4. Hypertension
5. Hepatitis C



Allergy*****



Highest schooling completed*****

Year 7	7%	Year 10	32%
Year 8	9%	Year 11	8%
Year 9	12%	Year 12	31%



* NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Custody Data Table June 2022 (25 October 2022)
 ** Australian Bureau of Statistics, Prisoners in Australia 2021 (25 October 2022)
 *** Justice Health NSW JHeHS Reporting Portal - Health Conditions, Allergies and Adverse Drug Reactions 2021-22
 **** 2021 Network Patients' Experience and Perceptions Study (PEaPS)
 ***** Network People in NSW Public Prisons: Health Status and Service utilisation study, 2020

Healthy Eating Active Living in NSW Prisons

In initial discussions with MoH, it was agreed that a subtle re-branding of Make Healthy Normal to *Make Healthy Possible* in prisons would be a significant step towards identifying sustainable (and scalable) strategies to tackle the contributing factors for overweight and obesity in the custodial population. Since initial discussions this has been re-branded as Healthy Eating Active Living (from 2021 onwards) which is underpinned by the same principle.

Health promotion **activities** and **interventions** which support the Healthy Eating Active Living in Prisons approach and align with the MoH priorities include:

- Support smoking cessation inside and on release.
- Work with CSNSW regarding choices on the buy-ups and food menus.
- Metabolic monitoring and interventions to mitigate the effects of psychotropic medication on weight.
- Health literacy programs and resources – inmate tablets, inmate TV channels, green machines, videos, adapted material specific for prisons, Buy-Up demonstrations, recipes, vegetable gardens, health and wellbeing portal for staff and inmates.
- Brief health promotion interventions – capacity building (staff) around health and risk factor coaching approach.
- Increasing exercise opportunities and access to health information, particularly digital content.
- Rolling out adapted Healthy Eating and Active Living challenges supported by standardised prison specific resources and approach.
- Continuing the Aboriginal Knockout Challenges and trialling a Park Run for Prisons.
- Strategy for young people in custody – food available, health literacy, exercise, metabolic monitoring.
- Strategies for staff.
- Heart Foundation resources for prisons – women and heart disease DVD.

A further summary of feedback from the stakeholder interviews and focus groups outlining recommended health promotion products and resources tailored to the custodial setting appears in Table 3 on page 21.

Recommendation:

That Justice Health NSW works with the MoH Centre for Population Health to review the Healthy Eating Active Living graphics and calls to action so it can be used in the custodial setting with inmates (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) via the Health Centre and orientation packs.

“Think about the opportunities like rapid build incentive schemes for staff to train as fitness instructors, referees etc. We need to engage staff with special interest to become role models and mentors.”

Strategy and Operations staff member, CSNSW

Partnerships for Healthy Prisons – commitment and governance

Following endorsement of the NSW Healthy Prisons Framework by Justice Health NSW and CSNSW executive stakeholders and commitment to it as a platform for action, a governance process and structure should be established to oversee and guide this body of work. This would involve:

- Establishing an interagency Healthy Prisons Consortium including identification of key stakeholders.
- Defining the purpose and scope of the governance structure, and Terms of Reference.
- Defining accountabilities and performance indicators specific to the Healthy Prisons key focus areas.

“We need a formal agreement between CSNSW and Justice Health NSW management services in order to influence systemic change and subsequent health outcomes.”

Strategy and Operations staff member, CSNSW

Opportunities and challenges

The value of a partnership approach between Justice Health NSW and CSNSW along with other key stakeholders to creating healthy prisons is clear and well evidenced in NSW.

Strengths of the partnership include:

- Smoke Free Correctional Centres Policy and Project (2015), which won the 2016 iCARE award.
- Extensive work to combat blood-borne viruses particularly Hepatitis C and the HIPE (Hepatitis in Prisons Elimination Project) which won the Keeping People Healthy Category of the NSW Health Awards 2017.
- Harm Reduction in NSW Prisons Project.
- The Australian Red Cross, Corrective Services NSW and Justice Health NSW pilot of the Community First Aid program.
- The Aboriginal Knockout Health Challenge at Wellington Correctional Centre which was nominated as a finalist in the 2017 NSW Health Awards.
- Collaboration with the Heart Foundation and CSNSW to develop an intervention for heart disease for women which has resulted in a film for and by women in custody and written resources illustrated by women.

The potential benefits and positive impact of improved health literacy and wellbeing for custodial populations are enormous, particularly when they are viewed as resources for living. There is immense potential for Justice Health NSW and CSNSW to collaborate further for ongoing and sustainable health promotion and improved health outcomes within a

Healthy Prison Framework. There are always ongoing challenges regarding capacity and funding, but many strategies and interventions can be achieved by an integrated policy, strategic and systems planning approach.

However, it is recognised that to build on these successes, a formal framework for promoting health in NSW prisons should be developed and endorsed by Justice Health NSW and CSNSW and overseen by a governance structure. This Framework describes what healthy prisons in NSW could look like and captures the guiding principles that seek to enable inmates' to improve their health and well-being through reasoned choices and access to health enhancing opportunities.

Developing this Framework for discussion

Phase one of the NSW Healthy Prisons project was to scope a framework for building on existing health promotion partnerships and advancing the MoH health promotion and prevention priorities articulated through the *HEAL* strategy and the state-wide campaign to *MHN*. The proposed framework is intended to be used as a platform for action to catalyse stakeholder engagement, encourage debate about what Healthy Prisons in NSW could look like and progress implementation of healthy prisons in NSW.

The discussion paper has been informed by a rapid review of the published literature, policy case studies and consultations with a sample of stakeholders representing the interests of inmates, Justice Health NSW, Corrective Services NSW, MoH and local health districts. It reflects the NSW Health policy context and preventive health priorities.

“Nurses are the best placed resource for doing health promotion interventions with their patients. They see it as part of their role and just need support so they can do it more often and more efficiently.”

**Nursing Unit Manager,
Women’s Correctional Centre**

Methodology: stakeholder consultations

Stakeholder interviews

The one-on-one consultation process comprised a targeted approach to delve into insights and perspectives about services and systems that influence health improvements for inmates. Over 32 stakeholders were interviewed using a semi-structured question guide. Informants were asked to identify opportunities for health promotion interventions that could address the risk factors that lead to chronic diseases including physical inactivity, overweight/obesity, mental health problems and poor eating habits. They were also asked to consider what a Healthy Prison looked like and how a framework for action could be implemented. A further fifteen stakeholders attended the Health Promotion Leadership Group (HPLG) on 12 June 2018 and provided feedback on the Healthy Prisons concept and the process for implementing a framework in NSW. An additional opportunity to canvas the opinions of the Nursing Unit Managers was invited during their teleconference on 21 June 2018.

Table 1: Stakeholder representation included in consultation process

Stakeholder representation	Number
Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network	
Operations and Nursing	10
Primary Health	2
Food Services	2
Custodial Mental Health	1
Medical Executive and Corporate	3
Health Promotion Leadership Group (Service Directors)	15 +
NUM teleconference	8 +
Corrective Services NSW	
Offender and Services Programs	3
Education	1
Policy	
Corrections Strategy and Policy	1
State-wide Services	1
Food Services	1
Operations	2
Other stakeholder organisations	
Health Promotion Local Health Districts	3
MoH Population Health	1
Primary Health Networks (PHN)	1
Total no of stakeholders interviewed	55 +

Inmate focus groups

Five focus groups were held in three female prisons and two male prisons. These were organised through the Nursing Unit Managers at the Health Centres, and in most cases they worked with CSNSW staff to select inmates to participate in the groups.

The three female focus groups were held at Mary Wade, Wellington and Emu Plains Correctional Centres. These focus groups were organised primarily for the Healthy Hearts for Women in Custody project, however the process and findings from the group were directly relevant for the Healthy Prisons Project, and have been included to inform this discussion paper. The process was facilitated by two staff and consisted of a short presentation about women and heart disease which became the platform for discussing risk factors, making healthier changes while in custody, barriers/opportunities to healthy eating, managing weight and physical activity. The session in Emu Plains and Wellington was recorded for the purpose of the educational DVD for female inmates.

Table 2: Summary of inmate focus groups

Focus Group	No.	Notes
Wellington women's correctional centre	12	Women and heart disease focus
Emu Plains women's correctional centre	14	Women and heart disease focus
Mary Wade women's correctional centre	12	Women and heart disease focus
MSPC 2 male correctional centre	8	Healthy Prisons focus
Goulburn male correctional centre	6	Healthy Prisons focus

The two male focus groups were held in Goulburn and MSPC2 Correctional Centres.

The process was facilitated by two staff and the purpose was to understand more about the male experience of prison and what impact it has on their health and wellbeing. Questions centred on the journey of prison and what has happened to their bodies (and mind) while in custody. Some of the men drew body maps or recorded their thoughts and feedback on post it notes and paper throughout the discussions.

“We are a captured audience for health messages. That’s for sure!”

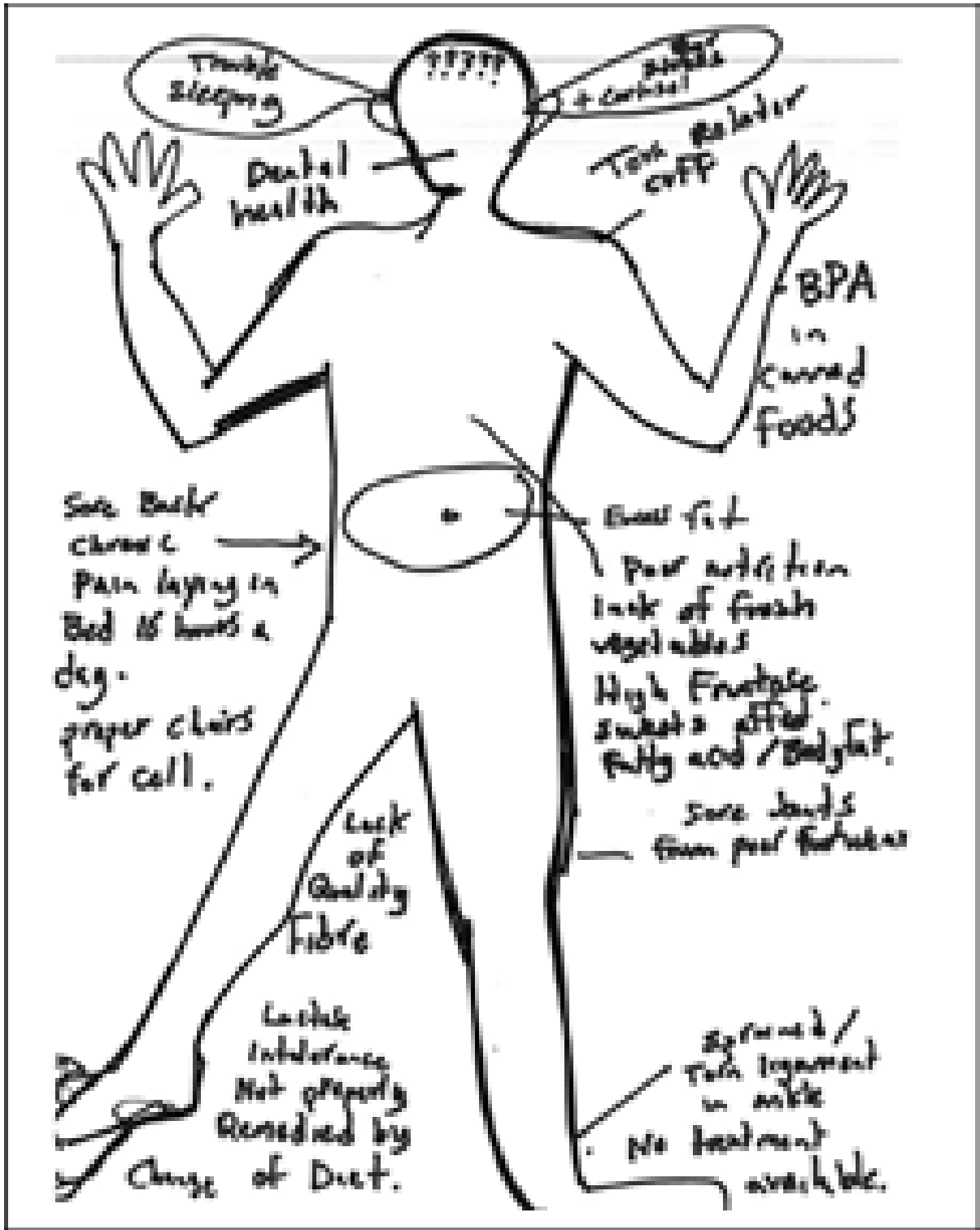
Inmate, MSPC2 Long Bay

“Start by being nice to yourself. It’s OK to be who you are and it’s worthwhile changing and looking after your health.”

Inmate, Emu Plains

“In custody, it’s about survival. There is not real scope to think about getting healthy.”

Inmate, MSPC2 Long Bay



Describe the impact that prison has had on your body and mind (Inmate, Goulburn CC).

Consultation Highlights: Thematic Summaries

Governance structures between lead agencies who can make healthy possible in NSW prisons:

- There was unanimous agreement that a framework for NSW Healthy Prisons needed to be a formalised policy partnership between Corrective Services NSW and Justice Health NSW that had a governance structure for accountability and leadership.
- Additional partnerships could be formed with key non-government organisations (NGOs) and MoH to support specific topic- based interventions that are tailored to the custodial setting for both inmates and staff.
- Efforts are required to standardise health promotion interventions, health literacy programs and clinical services that also have a focus on managing risk factors for chronic disease.
- There was wide support for health readiness programs and integrated care models that were aligned with CSNSW preparation for release programs.
- The Framework should reflect a whole-of-prison approach which draws together the impact of a healthier custodial population on lower rates of recidivism.
- The Framework should address the disproportional over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women in custody and collaborative ways to make Aboriginal health everyone's business across the systems.

"We could do more in the reception screening and assessment to capture more physical risk factors, then we have some baseline figures to take as well."

Justice Health NSW, Nursing Unit Manager

"We need to understand if health promoting prisons will reduce reoffending. How can we show the relationship between health, wellbeing and lowering recidivism?"

CSNSW, Policy team staff member

"We could learn a lot from the self-sustainable food growing systems that are happening in Italian prisons."

CSNSW, Offender Services staff member

Environments in each prison that actively support access to health promoting behaviours

- Food services and the Buy Up system dominated the discussions. Most of the stakeholders attributed excessive weight gain in prisons to the 'unhealthy' products that were high in sugar and fats and more affordable than the 'healthy' choices. Informants also acknowledged the role that psychotropic drugs played in weight gain and the lack of reasonable options for sustained exercise.

- Further insights to the food available in prison included portion control, highly processed food and the number of white bread slices allocated per day was excessive (up to seven slices). Some informants reported that 'healthy' Buy Up food choices were not only limited and expensive, but there was little understanding about the implications of products with high fat and sugar content.

“My observation is that the female inmates tend to buy higher ‘junk foods’. Whereas I see some of the men trying to vary their food orders towards the healthier choices. I don’t know exactly why that is, but it would be worth finding out.”

Justice Health NSW, Nursing Unit Manager

- It was also noted that the Buy Up list has evolved to highlight the healthier choices and the CSI team are open to feedback about improving selections and increasing inmate knowledge about their purchases. The products are reviewed annually and inmates are able to suggest new products.

“Buy-Up products have come a long way and there have been some positive changes in introducing some healthier choices on the list with symbols. We need to do more education about the food choices. Information is power! Let them (inmates) know what they are eating.”

CSNSW CSI staff member

“The food itself is not so much of the problem. It’s the portions and the psychotropic medications that are the contributors to overweight and obesity in prisons. I routinely weigh my patients.”

Senior Manager Medical services

- It was difficult to ascertain which prisons offered facilities for exercise and physical activity, and if they did, how well they were being utilised. There were several case examples of prisons with basic gym equipment, walking track and sport/oval access. Some of these had programs in place to support correct use of gym equipment, boot camp style classes, yoga classes etc. that were led by either trained inmates or correctional service staff.

“We need to do some serious redesigning for our aging prison population. What can we do to promote healthy aging processes while serving a long-term sentence?”

Senior Manager Mental Health Services

- Restricted out of cell time was a consistent issue raised by the majority of informants for discussion. Out of cell time is extremely limited in some prisons and has severe implications for attending programs, accessing tracks and equipment for exercise and on sleep and mental health.
- Many of the informants discussed the importance of collaboration and increasing efforts to work across silos particularly in relation to food services and health literacy around food choices available in prison. The potential role of a nutritionist working across prison food services and programs was noted by several informants.

“Healthy literacy needs urgent attention in prisons. But clinical staff are time poor and flat out doing core business.”

Justice Health NSW, GP Primary Care

“Inmates should at least have access to the same health literacy support programs that people in the general community have. But it’s not the responsibility of CSNSW education to provide these services.”

CSNSW Education

- Other food factors raised by some stakeholders included the heavy use of supplementing CSI meals (sometimes entirely) with Buy Up products such as tuna, 5 minute noodles and bread. Access to fresh fruit and vegetables was extremely limited and there was a call to have the restrictions reviewed against perceptions of home brewing. Some prisons were exploring vegetable gardens and growing supplies to supplement inmate diets.
- Waiting lists to see Health Centre staff for non-urgent health concerns were raised as a concern by both staff and inmates. Staff discussed being time poor and unable to dedicate a reasonable amount of a consultation time to brief health promotion interventions that targeted risk factors such as overweight/obesity, inactivity, relationship to food, alcohol and stress. This varied from clinic to clinic and some felt there were more opportunities with type 1 diabetics who visited the Health Centre up to three times a day for injections. Women tended to ask questions about their weight gain in prison and often requested Metformin to suppress their appetite. Access to scales is limited except inside the Health Centre. Where possible, Health Centre staff would intervene and weigh patients, ask about healthy eating and provide standard resources obtained from the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council or similar NGOs who produce educational material about managing weight, healthy eating and related risk factor management. Many informants saw great benefit in having access to a health promotion officer/coach who could work with clinical staff to provide additional risk factor management interventions.

“Healthy prisons need to be seen as a resource to live the rest of your life...”

CSNSW Operations

- It was also noted that inmates did not have access to many of the support programs and resources that people in the community have when they decide to take steps to managing their risk factors. For example Get Healthy coaching services (telephone-based), Weight Watchers support groups, simple tools to track and monitor weight (scales, tape measures) and access to short courses to improve health literacy and make informed choices.
- Get Healthy at Work initiatives that included walking tracks and Prison Park Run (based on recent success in the UK) were noted as areas of interest by several staff members.



Prevention, health literacy and other health promotion interventions which address health needs within each prison

- Most informants commented that the Justice Health NSW operated from the medical model and priorities were driven by the need for urgent treatments and harm minimisation from blood borne viruses. Less focus was available for sustainable health promotion interventions and chronic disease prevention.

“We need a nutritionist to work across the Justice Health NSW system and CSNSW to support the interventions to prevent and treat chronic diseases within prisons.”

Operations Primary Care

“We need to focus on wellness in prisons, rather than only treating sickness. A holistic approach has to be sold and show where it will add value to the current approach (which focuses on containment and criminogenic factors).”

Director CSNSW

- The majority of stakeholders interviewed discussed the importance of the existing calendar events for health topic expos. These on-site events reached out to hundreds of inmates each year to raise awareness about a specific health topic and provide educational resources. While these events are successful in engaging large numbers of inmates in screening and conversation, some informants wondered about what happens after the event and whether the Health Centre staff can manage the self-referrals that happen as result of awareness and interest being raised.
- As a result of the women’s focus groups on heart health and reflecting on previous Expo style health events they had run at their correctional centre, one NUM decided it was time to offer a different approach to ‘catching’ women who weren’t coming to the Health Centre. A monthly wellness clinic was being considered to provide more general opportunities to do health promotion, screening and brief interventions about risk factors.

“Peer education is one of the best means of health promotion interventions.”

Justice Health NSW, Nursing Unit Manager

- There was unanimous support for increasing inmate access to digital health content through the inmate tablets, TV channel, and green machine.
- Many of the stakeholders recommended that all staff members need to be made aware of their potential roles in promoting prisoners’ health and should be trained and supported in these roles.

- Some informants gave examples of the potential for using prisoners as effective peer educators and that models have been demonstrated in many countries and can be of great value to enhancing the health promotion workforce in the custodial setting.
- Stakeholders put forward suggestions and ideas for health promotion topics and content which are summarised in Table 3 below.

“My message to the ministers would be short and clear about returning healthier patients to their communities: STOP THE FLOW”

Justice Health NSW, GP Primary Care

Table 3: Recommended health promotion resources tailored to the custodial setting

TOPICS	Digital content for inmate tablets, TV, health portal and screens	Brochures and posters for use in Health Centres and Expos	Other collateral and suggested events
Making healthy Buy Up choices	Filmed explanation and demonstration about the different Buy Up products. 'Everyday foods' verses 'sometime foods'. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.	Visual brochures that describe the healthy Buy Up products compared to 'unhealthy' products.	Incentive scheme for making healthy Buy Up products more affordable.
Healthy recipes using Buy Up products and CSI food	Filmed demonstration of and by inmates preparing healthy meals from Buy Up products.	Visual brochures with recipe ideas and steps.	Recipe competitions.
Growing your own veggie garden 'inside'	Filmed demonstration of prison gardens and what's possible. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.	Brochures and charts about planting and growing vegetables in prison.	Document the gardens photographically. Develop a 'tool kit' for growing vegetable gardens in prisons.
Keeping active inside	Filmed demonstration of and by inmates doing a range of physical activity routines that are possible in and out of cell.	Wall charts and brochures with visual prompts. Exercise diary. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.	Prison Park Run event, Knock Out challenges, Water bottles for exercises 'Biggest loser' style competitions.
Weight watchers	A filmed guide to starting a 'weight watchers' style peer led support group.	Exercise/food/weight diary or personal record card with motivational tips and ideas for cutting back. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.	
Wellness clinics	Broadcast message in centres to promote wellness clinics.	Posters advertising clinic times. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages. Basic screening facilities to record weight, girth, BP.	Offer a wellness clinic once a month to engage inmates in conversations about way to reduce risk factors and stay healthy while inside.
Sleeping better	Filmed demonstration of and by inmates discussing ways to improve sleeping patterns in prison.	Brochure of sleeping tips and suggestions. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.	
Improving health literacy in prisons	Short educational modules for staff that explains what health literacy is and ways to apply principles in the custodial setting.	Support materials about health literacy for staff to learn from and apply in practice.	Collaborate with HETI.
Brief health promotion interventions in prison	Short educational modules for staff that explains what a 10 minutes motivational/ coaching intervention looks and sounds like during a consultation.	Support reading materials for staff about brief motivational/coaching interventions that might be useful in the prison setting.	Usual collateral to follow-up a brief intervention with a brochure or card for the inmate wanting more information. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.
Specific health promotion issues/ topics for Expo events		Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages. Utilise Buy Up resources. Utilise Exercise options resources	Annual calendar for Expo events that focus on specific issues and risk factor management.

Key Focus Areas in Action: Next Steps

Principle 1

Develop joint policies and partnership programs between lead agencies to promote health and wellbeing in prisons.

Key Focus Area	Recommended Actions
Develop Healthy Prisons NSW leadership interagency consortium and memorandum of understanding (MOU)	Healthy Prisons NSW leadership interagency consortium and MOU would consist cross sector membership drawn from Justice Health NSW, CSNSW and external health related stakeholders.
Support prison food systems and informed choices for Buy Ups	Food prison systems and Buy Ups could be influenced through the Food Services standing committee and joint working party.
Develop incentive schemes for in and out-of-cell time for exercise participation	Joint policy development and trials.
Ensure Healthy Prisons delivers culturally appropriate prevention programs for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and CALD inmates	Embed 'Make Aboriginal health everyone's business' into job descriptions across Justice Health NSW and CSNSW. Employ higher ratio of Aboriginal health workers in NSW prisons.
Develop a joint policy for increasing health literacy in NSW prisons	Establish a working group to develop a strategic plan for improving health literacy levels in NSW prisons.
Develop risk factor data collection systems to track health improvements throughout the custodial journey	Research project to trial risk factor data collection from reception assessment to release.

Principle 2

Promote supportive environments in prisons that actively support health for inmates and staff.

Key Focus Area	Suggested Actions
<p>Increase access to health checks and brief health promotion interventions (e.g. wellness clinics, opportunistic screening and brief motivational interviewing/coaching)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial the development and implementation of wellness clinics in 4 prisons and evaluate. • Develop educational modules and support materials for brief health promotion interventions adapted to the custodial setting.
<p>Increase access to health literacy programs and activities that support competent choices for better health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop short educational modules for staff that explains what health literacy is and ways to apply principles in the custodial setting. • Provide access to programs for inmates preparing for release to increase their health literacy skills. Link to parenting support and health literacy programs for families of offenders
<p>Increase access and incentive for exercise and movement options (e.g.: Audit prison exercise facilities and re-design opportunities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with LHDs and CSNSW to conduct an audit of existing exercise facilities in prisons and scope for re- design options. • Propose a trial incentive scheme for increasing out of cell time for participation in exercise • Trial the Prison Park Run concept in one male and one female prison and evaluate
<p>Increase access to facilities that promote healthy eating and cooking (e.g., vegetable gardens, kitchens)</p>	<p>Collaborate with CSNSW Service and Programs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and pilot a healthy cooking skills course linked to Buy Ups • Map the number of prisons that have already developed vegetable gardens and document photographically, record case studies. • Develop a vegetable gardens in prison 'tool kit' which can be easily adapted prison by prison.

Principle 3

Provide health promotion and health literacy interventions which address the health needs of custodial populations.

Key Focus Area	Suggested Actions
<p>Increase the range of tailored resources that can be used by clinic staff to support brief interventions and health expos (e.g., brochures, posters, water bottles, paper tape measures, health diaries)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop short educational modules for staff that explain what a 10-minute motivational/coaching intervention looks and sounds like during a consultation • Develop support materials about health literacy for staff to learn from and apply in practice • Develop collateral to follow up a brief intervention with a brochure or card for the inmate wanting more information. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.
<p>Focus on producing digital health content for inmate tablets, TV and screens that build health literacy skills and promote informed choices (e.g., Choosing Buy Ups , cooking with Buy Ups, exercise tips in-cell & Out-of-cell, better sleep habits, tracking healthy mind/healthy body in prisons).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With and by inmates, film explanation and demonstration about the different Buy-Ups products. ‘Everyday foods’ verses ‘sometime foods’. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages. • Film demonstration of and by inmates preparing health meals from Buy Up products. • Develop visual brochures that describe the healthy Buy Up products compared to ‘unhealthy’ products. • Develop and film a guide to starting a ‘weight watchers’ style peer led support group in prison. • Film a demonstration of and by inmates doing a range of physical activity routines that are possible in and out of cell. Accompanying wall poster for cell with illustrations. Link to <i>HEAL</i> messages.
<p>Pilot creative health programs such as Body Mapping with inmates to increase personal skills for self-care and adopting healthy habits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with CSNSW and Aboriginal health college/ Aboriginal Community Health Centre La Perouse, develop and trial a Body Mapping program in 2-3 prisons with male and female inmates. Revise and evaluate.
<p>Promote and support a peer led health buddy system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research models of best practice in peer led health buddy systems in prisons and investigate ways to increase the approach in NSW prisons. • Link to Body Mapping and exercise buddies.

Recommendations

The conclusion of the first phase of the Healthy Prisons Project and the considerable consultation involved generated a number of recommendations to move the concept and process forward.

The recommendations are as follows;

1	That Justice Health NSW and CSNSW executive stakeholders endorse and commit to the NSW Healthy Prisons Framework as a platform for action.
2	That an inter-agency partnership to oversee and endorse the priority activities and projects (actions) of the NSW Healthy Prisons Framework is established. Membership could include; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justice Health NSW• CSNSW• Cancer Institute NSW• Heart Foundation• MoH Centre for Population Health.
3	That a strategic planning co-design workshop is conducted with key stakeholders to develop a three year plan for action (including evaluation) reflecting the three key focus areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve healthy food systems and support strategies to make informed choices about food.• Increase access, options and incentives for physical activity in and out of cell.• Improve health literacy via an integrated systems approach and develop health information resources that are tailored to the custodial setting and populations.
4	That the details generated at the co-design workshop become the road map for the first wave of Healthy Prisons interventions.