



Anthony Roberts
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Counter Terrorism

MEDIA RELEASE

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COVID SPARKS DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN NSW PRISONS

A COVID-induced digital revolution is allowing inmates to attend programs, court hearings and connect with family, making Corrective Services NSW a world leader in its response to the pandemic.

The pandemic fast-tracked plans to equip inmates with digital technology, enabling them to continue therapeutic programs and stay connected to their families during lockdown.

Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections Anthony Roberts said CSNSW has set the global benchmark responding to the threat of COVID and introducing technology.

“Corrective Services NSW’s response to this pandemic has been gold standard, particularly its ability to implement digital solutions and ensure offenders are managed safely and effectively,” Mr Roberts said.

“The roll-out of video visits state-wide was achieved in weeks, rather than years, and has facilitated more than 200,000 visits since March last year.”

Video technology has enabled inmates to see their homes and pets and connect with overseas or frail relatives. It has also allowed inmates to remotely attend about 1,800 defended local court hearings, in addition to 80,000 video court hearings and 120,000 professional visits.

In addition to the state-wide roll-out of video visits, CSNSW is trialling in-cell tablet technology at two Sydney prisons. These highly secure in-cell tablets have been purpose-built for prison use, run on a secure network and have restricted access.

All social video visits and in-cell tablet communications are strictly monitored by staff.

CSNSW Commissioner Peter Severin said the introduction of in-cell tablet technology enables inmates to access programs, educational material, approved news websites and make phone calls to loved ones until 10pm.

“These tablets encourage inmates to become more self-sufficient and use the time in their cells more meaningfully,” Mr Severin said.

“Our staff have done a terrific job during the pandemic implementing these new technologies and adapting the way they go about their work.”

The NSW Government has also invested more than \$15 million to purchase and install body-scanning technology at maximum-security prisons across the state.