11.2 Religious and cultural services

Policy summary

Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) is committed to providing inmates with opportunities to practise their religion, faith and to celebrate significant cultural events while in custody.

Inmate access to these opportunities is contingent on maintaining the good order and security of correctional centres.

Inmates may apply for access to religious friendly meals, to change their religious preferences or for access to religious material.

Management of Public Correctional Centres Service Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service specification</th>
<th>Decency and respect</th>
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The current version of this document is maintained on the Custodial Operations Policy & Procedures Intranet page.
Scope

This section applies to all correctional centres and other facilities administered by or on behalf of CSNSW, and all CSNSW employees.
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2. **Inmate access to halal, kosher and vegetarian meals**
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1 Cultural and religious services

1.1 Policy

CSNSW recognises the cultural and religious diversity of the inmate population. CSNSW is also committed to ensuring inmates are able to practise their religion and to celebrate significant religious and cultural events while in custody, having due regard to the effective functioning and security of correctional centres.

CSNSW provides a range of services to support inmates from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds including access to:

- pastoral care by chaplains of major faith groups
- religious books and other religious items
- cultural and religious food (e.g., kosher and halal)
- opportunities to observe cultural and religious significant events
- pre and post-release reintegration services in the context of reducing reoffending.

2 Inmate access to halal, kosher and vegetarian meals

2.1 Policy

An inmate may request to have halal or kosher meals because of their religious affiliation. Inmate requests for halal or kosher meals must pay the difference in price between those meals and the standard meals. This amount is determined by Corrective Services Industry (CSI) and the unit cost administered to the correctional centre if changes occur. Halal and kosher meals cannot be provided from CSNSW facilities, as these require the sourcing of appropriate ingredients and specific food preparation.

Inmates who are unable to meet the additional costs associated with these meals can request vegetarian or religious friendly meals which are free of ingredients considered unacceptable in some religions.

If an inmate’s commitment to maintaining religious observances is inconsistent (i.e. voluntarily consuming prohibited food when prior dietary arrangements have been made in accordance with their religious observance), the governor has the discretion to consult the Chaplaincy Coordinator and may review the continued provision of a religious diet.

There is no special buy-up arrangement for cultural and religious events. The inmate grocery buy-up list includes a number of items that reflect the cultural diversity of the inmate population.

The CSNSW Corrections Food Services Working Party (CFSWP) is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of inmates’ meals and this includes halal and kosher meals.
### 2.2 Requests for religious dietary requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Forward the inmate request for kosher/halal meals to the Chaplain</td>
<td>Custodial Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assess the request and provide advice to the governor (this should include checking if the patient has a clinical certificate for a therapeutic diet from a Justice Health &amp; Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&amp;FMHN) clinician. Consultation with JH&amp;FMHN should occur if the inmate wishes to change a therapeutic diet for religious requirements)</td>
<td>Chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Approve / not approve request</td>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tell the inmate the outcome of the request. If the request is approved confirm the inmate is aware of the cost of the meals and that they have sufficient funds in their inmate account to pay</td>
<td>Functional Manager (FM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Forward the approved request to the Administration Manager. Record the decision in an OIMS Case Note</td>
<td>FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Check the inmate’s account to establish if there are sufficient funds to cover the cost of the meals. Forward the approved request to CSI Food Services for action</td>
<td>Administration Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3 Religious services, materials and items

#### 3.1 Policy

Chaplains are permitted, at the discretion of the Governor, to bring 300mls of sacramental wine, candles and matches into a centre to use during a religious ceremony (Refer to COPP Section 10.6 Visits by chaplains). Inmates are prohibited from handling candles for any reason.

Inmates may request a Bible, Torah or Koran and other major books of faith as approved by the Chaplaincy Coordinator. This will be provided free of charge by CSNSW Chaplains.

Hard copy bibles are approved for use by Chaplains and inmates within correctional centres. The only exception is to be where an inmate uses or abuses this to cause risk or harm, then the item will be removed from their property.
Specific approved religious items are only available from the Chaplain. The Chaplaincy Coordinator, the Manager Library Services and the Coordinator of CALD are responsible for approving all religious books that will be made available to inmates.

The Chaplain will not support requests from an inmate or their family to purchase religious books.

Inmates can access religious books from the correctional centre library and from CSNSW Chaplains (Refer to COPP section 8.4 Inmate libraries).

All donations of religious books by an external body/agency/organisation must be sent to the CSNSW Library at Brush Farm Academy, which will (if approved) distribute to correctional centres. These books must not:

- promote proselytizing
- condemn other religions or
- promote violence against any system or people.

3.2 Head wear associated with religious practice

Male inmates

Approved items of headwear associated with religious practice are available for purchase on request, but can only be worn:

- during religious ceremonies/activities which are facilitated directly by CSNSW chaplain or their approved representative, and
- in the inmate’s cell.

Female inmates

A female inmate whose designated religion is Islam is permitted to wear a hijab or headdress. They are also permitted to use the headgear they wore on reception to custody, providing it is coloured black, white or burgundy. If the hijab is not one of these colours the inmate must be provided with a replacement CSNSW hijab.

The cost for this must be deducted from the inmate’s trust account. The inmate must not be refused a replacement if they do not have the funds to immediately meet the cost. This deduction can be deferred until the inmate has sufficient funds in their account.

A female inmate, with a designated religion of Islam, must request approval from the governor to purchase a hijab if they were not wearing one on reception to custody. The Chaplain must verify the details of the request before forwarding the request to the governor for approval.

The hijab may be worn to cover the head and neck, but the face must be clearly visible. Eligible female inmates may wear the hijab at any time or place within the correctional centre, but can be asked to remove it during a pat or strip search.

The wearing of a burqa or any similar garment which covers any part of the face is not permitted.
4  Approved days of cultural and religious significance, and ceremonies

4.1  Policy

Governors may hold a cultural and/or religious event that is not listed on the CSNSW Calendar of Cultural and Religious Events. However, governors must seek approval from their Director, Custodial Operations before planning the event.

4.2  Chinese and Vietnamese festivals

Lunar New Year and the Moon Mid-Autumn festival are important cultural events for Chinese and Vietnamese people.

CSNSW has an arrangement in place with the Chinese Consulate to provide desserts to inmates to celebrate the Chinese New Year and the Moon Mid-Autumn Harvest. These desserts will only be available to those inmates who the OIMS identify were born in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan.

4.3  Passover, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and Chanukah

Jewishcare is approved by CSNSW to provide kosher food parcels to Jewish inmates, who are part of the Prison Outreach Program for Passover, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and Chanukah. CSNSW’s Co-ordinator of CALD is the point of contact for all arrangements with Jewishcare. Jewishcare must ensure the content of food parcels comply with CSNSW’s security and WHS provisions.

Jewishcare’s Prison Outreach Co-ordinator must liaise with CSNSW Court Escort and Security Unit (CESU) about the time and date for delivering the food parcels to CESU location at Silverwater. The CESU will deliver the food parcels to the Correctional Centres.

Jewishcare, through the Prison Outreach Program, also provides a range of services to Jewish inmates in custody and transition support services for reintegration into the community. CSNSW allows Jewish inmates to receive copies of the Jewish News from Jewishcare.

4.4  Ramadan

Ramadan is a significant religious event for Muslims. During Ramadan, observant Muslim inmates are permitted to fast from sunrise to sunset for a period of 5 weeks. Correctional Centres must liaise with CSI Food Services to arrange appropriate meals for observant Muslims to consume after breaking their fast. Muslim inmates mark the end of Ramadan by celebration (Eid).

CSI will provide traditional mammouls, as a gesture of good will, to Muslim inmates to mark the end of fasting.
4.5 Religious observance

Each correctional centre will provide a dedicated area where all inmates are permitted to practise their faith. Enquiries regarding prayer or other matters of religious observance should be referred to the correctional centre Chaplain.

All inmate are entitled to practice their faith whilst in custody.

Inmates may practice their faith/pray in their cell, the yard, multi-faith centre or dedicated area nominated by the Governor. Organised group prayers must be:

- Held in the multi-faith centre or dedicated area nominated by the Governor
- In the presence of a Chaplain
  All sermons must be delivered in English and by a Chaplain

4.6 Food

Cultural and religious events may be catered at the discretion of the Governor.

Governors have the authority to celebrate a cultural or religious event (for example a sporting event or a BBQ etc.) (refer to COPP section 8.15 Inmate barbeques).

Community organisations and foreign consulates can apply to CSNSW for approval to provide food parcels to inmates to meet their specific cultural and religious needs.

Chabad may offer kosher meals to Jewish inmates during Passover. These meals are provided by an external approved kitchen (e.g., Katzy’s) by Corrective Services. Arrangements for these meals are made in consultation between the Chabad, CSI, Chaplaincy Services, CSNSW Co-ordinator CALD and Katzy’s.

The CSNSW Co-ordinator of CALD is the contact person for these arrangements and can be contacted at this email address: CorrectionsStrategyPolicyUnit@justice.nsw.gov.au

The content of the food parcels must comply with WHS provisions and CSNSW safety and security standards. These parcels will be distributed to correctional centres by CSI transport or Court Escort and Security Unit.

5 Changes to an inmate’s religious preference

5.1 Policy

An inmate may request to:

- check or update their religious status or
- convert to another religion.

All inmate requests to change their identified religion on their CSNSW records must be assessed before a determination is made.
A determination does not need to be made if an inmate has not stated a religious preference on their reception to custody. In these circumstances an inmate may provide details of their preference to allow the OIMS *Personal Information* screen to be updated.

### 5.2 Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Update the OIMS <em>Personal Information</em> screen if the request is to provide information about the inmate’s existing religious preference</td>
<td>Custodial officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forward the request to the Chaplain for advice if the inmate wishes to change their religious preference</td>
<td>Custodial officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Verify inmate’s religious affiliation and reasons for the requested change of religious preference by:</td>
<td>Chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- checking OIMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- interviewing inmate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Submit advice and recommendations to governor for consideration</td>
<td>Authorised Chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Make a decision on the application after taking into consideration:</td>
<td>Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the advice &amp; recommendations of the Chaplain and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- any security or safety concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tell the inmate the outcome of their request</td>
<td>Functional Manager (FM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If the change of religious preference has been approved</td>
<td>FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrange for the OIMS <em>Personal Information</em> screen to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>updated with the new information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Document the governor’s decision in an OIMS <em>Case Note</em>.</td>
<td>FM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6    Forms and annexures
No forms and annexures

7    Related COPP

6.5 Infectious and communicable diseases
8.4 Inmate libraries
9.1 Inmate application and requests
10.6 Visits by chaplains
8.15 Inmate barbeques

8    Related documents

Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999
Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD)
Food Act 2003 (NSW)
Food Regulation 2015 (NSW)
Multicultural NSW Legislation Amendment Act 2014

9    Definitions

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>Cultural and linguistic diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFSWP</td>
<td>Corrections Food Services Working Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>A religious representative who is accredited and supervised by the CSNSW Chaplaincy Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPP</td>
<td>Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>Corrective Services Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSNSW</td>
<td>Corrective Services NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAMEC</td>
<td>Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Functional Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammoul</td>
<td>A short bread cookie stuffed with either date or nuts consumed by people from Middle-Eastern backgrounds when celebrating a religious event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIMS</td>
<td>Offender Integrated Management System</td>
</tr>
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10 Document information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business centre:</th>
<th>Custodial Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approver:</td>
<td>Kevin Corcoran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of effect:</td>
<td>16 December 2017</td>
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