



Cost of Inaction - Prisoner Domestic Violence Online Counselling

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"Today we launch a paper 'Counting the Cost of Inaction: Failure to Deliver Prisoner Domestic Violence Counselling' estimating that over 500 women and children could have been spared the traumatic effects of domestic violence if the NSW Government had accepted the free offer of online counselling for prisoners in their cells. Additionally \$110 million dollars could have been saved over the past twelve months," stated CJC President, the Hon John Dowd AO QC.

"While access to counselling programs is vital to prisoner rehabilitation, the NSW Auditor General recently found that 75% of prisoners are unable to gain entry. Online services delivered to prisoners in cells where they spend 18 hours in isolation would solve the problem of access. Such online services could provide trusted counsellors through external providers; would allow stability of service providers throughout the sentence and after release and would empower former perpetrators in self-management. These services are relatively cheap and research indicates that they can be as effective and sometimes more effective than face-to-face counselling," stated Mr. Dowd.

"This service should be available to all prisoners providing them with the social skills to deal with the disturbances of family and partner relationships after imprisonment. The financial cost of opening up these services is minimal considering the social impact it could have reducing domestic violence recidivism by up to 30%," said former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia the Hon Elizabeth Evatt AC.

Comments: John Dowd
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