

Eight Fingers and a Keyboard Short: Prisoners Locked Out of Learning

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“No,’ said the Minister for Corrections when asked whether it’s a serious disadvantage for prisoners to be typing with ‘[two thumbs instead of ten fingers](#)’ (p89) on computer tablets. With that problematic answer to the Parliament, he effectively explained how NSW has one of the highest recidivism rates in Australia at [49.1%](#),” said CJC President John Dowd AO KC.

“We welcome the Minister’s review of the so-called ‘serious security and operational flexibility’ [concerns](#) (p89) over prisoners buying educational textbooks from external suppliers. Until educational materials are available through in-cell tablets, opportunities for education [remain scarce](#),” said CJC Vice President Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans.

“The Minister confirmed that [video calls](#) (p88) are now available for computer tablets in cells, opening the door to crucial services such as domestic violence counselling and education programs. These services will be transformative,” said Mr Dowd.

“When asked if the anticipated in-tablet messaging would allow [original letters to be delivered](#) instead of photocopies, the Minister confirmed CSNSW is [reviewing](#) (p88) its policies. From the start of the penal colony, the right to receive personal letters with its scent, lipstick and a child’s drawing has been respected until now,” said Dr Chesterfield-Evans.

Community Justice Coalition

info@communityjusticecoalition.org

<http://www.communityjusticecoalition.org/>

P.O. Box 345, Broadway, NSW 2007 Australia