

Proposed amendments to the Correctional Services Act

The Northern Territory Government is introducing targeted amendments to the *Correctional Services Act 2014* to reduce staffing pressures and create a more flexible corrections workforce.

What's changing

Subject to passage through the Legislative Assembly, the Commissioner of Corrections will have the power to appoint special officers to supplement the core corrections workforce. This includes:

- Secondment of interstate Correctional Officers and Probation and Parole Officers.
- Appointment of special officers through specialist contractors.

Special officers

Interstate officers



- The Commissioner will have the power to second Correctional Officers and Probation and Parole Officers from other states and territories.
- The Commissioner will have full oversight and interstate officers must follow NT Department of Corrections policies and standards.

Special Correctional Officers and Special Probation and Parole Officers



- Special Correctional Officers (SCO) and Special Probation and Parole Officers (SPPO) will be employed by specialist contractors to supplement the core correctional workforce.
- The Commissioner must be satisfied that a special officer has the necessary qualifications, skills or experience.



Operational effects

The effect of these amendments is to enable supplementary workforces to support our operations. For example, a surge workforce of SCOs could assist with:



Prisoner transport



Hospital bedsits and medical appointments



Escort services outside correctional centres



Local Court services

SPPOs can assist with:



Electronic monitoring device fitting



Compliance activities and other support

Frequently asked questions

How do SCOs and SPPOs assist with staffing challenges?

The amendments provide additional support for the Commissioner to build a more sustainable workforce and to improve staff levels and safety.

Will these changes mean job losses for current correctional officers?

Current correctional and probation and parole officers will not lose their jobs. In fact, we need more staff and will continue to invest in DoC roles through our ongoing recruitment for correctional officers and probation and parole officers.

What safeguards are in place for special officers?

To appoint a special officer, the Commissioner must be satisfied that they have the necessary qualifications, skills or experience. SCOs and SPPOs will all undergo security vetting and background checks to comply with the Department of Corrections' policies and standards.

How will these changes impact prisoners?

The amendments reduce lockdowns and balance staff-to-prisoner ratios, improving safety and ensuring prisoners have greater access to rehabilitation, education, and employment programs.

Will public safety be affected?

Greater staffing levels and operational efficiencies will improve safety across our operations, reducing risks for staff, prisoners, and the wider community.

What happens next?

Ongoing engagement with unions, staff, and key stakeholders before implementation.



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