



Response to the follow-up review “Access to funerals and other compassionate leave”

Department of Corrective Services

14 February 2017

The Department of Corrective Services acknowledges the follow-up review of access to funerals and other compassionate leave.

The Department has reviewed the report and noted a level of acceptance against the 5 recommendations.

The recommendations will be considered as part of the Department's strategic reforms, as outlined in the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, *Creating Value through Performance*. Recommendations will be assessed against this plan to ensure priorities are considered against departmental priorities that are focused on security, safety and rehabilitation.

Appendix A contains a number of notes for your attention.

Response to Recommendations

1 Acknowledge Aboriginal kinship and extended familial relationships as significant relationships when considering access to compassionate leave and provide guidance as to what is needed as evidence of a relationship.

Response:

The Department is reviewing all operational policies (ie Rules, Policy Directives, Operational Instructions, etc) to:

- reduce the complexity and number of instruments that govern operations;
- remove inconsistencies; and
- ensure instruments comply with the Prisons Act 1981, Prisons Regulations 1982 and the Sentencing Administration Act 1983 required.

The guidance for leave requests, including compassionate leave, will be included in this review. The Department acknowledges the importance of kinship and cultural ties and as such will consult with the Aboriginal Advice Team on the most culturally appropriate approach.

Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle

2 Incorporate management and delivery of compassionate leave in the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Response:

The Department's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2016 –2018 commits it to delivering a range of initiatives targeted at improving outcomes for Aboriginal people in the care of the Department. It is a three year document, registered with Reconciliation Australia. During the implementation of the RAP the Department is identifying areas for improvement and new initiatives for the next RAP. Whilst it will guide the review and development of operational policy it will not be responsible for the management and delivery of compassionate leave.

Level of Acceptance: Not Supported

3 Conduct a robust analysis of the average, median and mode costs of compassionate leave to inform the development of appropriate cost limitations.

Response:

A robust analysis of costs of compassionate leave would need to include all costs incurred to facilitate the prisoner's placement at a funeral. Manual records are now maintained for Department escorts. Modeling costs and the development of cost limitations will be considered,

Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle

4 Develop an internal quoting method to estimate the cost of providing compassionate leave to determine whether each application exceeds cost limitations.

Response:

The development of an internal quoting method to provide the cost of providing compassionate leave is a complex task, which would require changes to systems to allow for the recording of all data sufficiently. This will be considered in conjunction with recommendation 3.

Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle

5 Accurately record and monitor the cost of compassionate leave.

Response:

The Department supports the recommendation and now manually records the cost of compassionate leave conducted by the Department and will give consideration to the most appropriate recording method that encompasses all compassionate leave provision.

Level of Acceptance: Supported