



Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senate Committee

**Re: Senate Inquiry into *Value of a justice reinvestment approach to criminal justice in Australia***

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Value of a justice reinvestment approach to criminal justice in Australia*.

The Justice and Forensic Mental Health Network (J&FMHN) is the service responsible for the delivery of healthcare to adults and young people in custody in New South Wales (NSW). J&FMHN forms a vital component of the public health system through its support of a highly vulnerable patient population whose health needs are commonly greater and more complex than those of the wider community. The enclosed graphs help demonstrate the significant health issues of those in contact with the justice system in NSW.

To respond to this high burden of disease, J&FMHN provides a range of specialist services across community, court, correctional and inpatient settings including; primary health, population health, drug & alcohol, mental health, women's health, dental & oral health, Aboriginal health and haemodialysis. In addition to these specialist services, J&FMHN also plays a key role in diverting patients with mental illness away from the courts and into community based health services, as well as supporting continuity of care for individuals transitioning to the community post release.

While J&FMHN is supportive of community based initiatives and investment that supports at-risk individuals and diversion from custody, it is important that this does not occur at the expense of custodial health services that will continue to fulfil a vital healthcare function for those who do enter custody, including the treatment of health issues that impact on an individual's offending behaviour, such as illicit drug use. For many, entry into the criminal justice or forensic mental health system represents an important opportunity to address their individual health needs, and in many cases brings them into contact with health care services for the very first time. For this reason, it is critically important that investment in these services is maintained.

Any consideration of a justice reinvestment approach must also take into account the increased demand that would flow to community-based health services and the requisite investment required to deliver appropriate services locally.

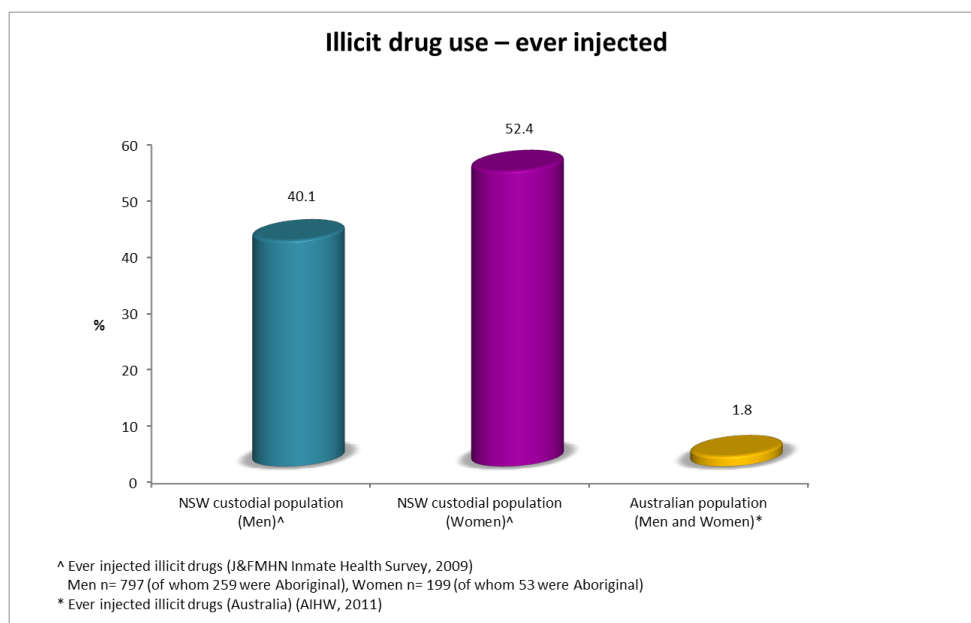
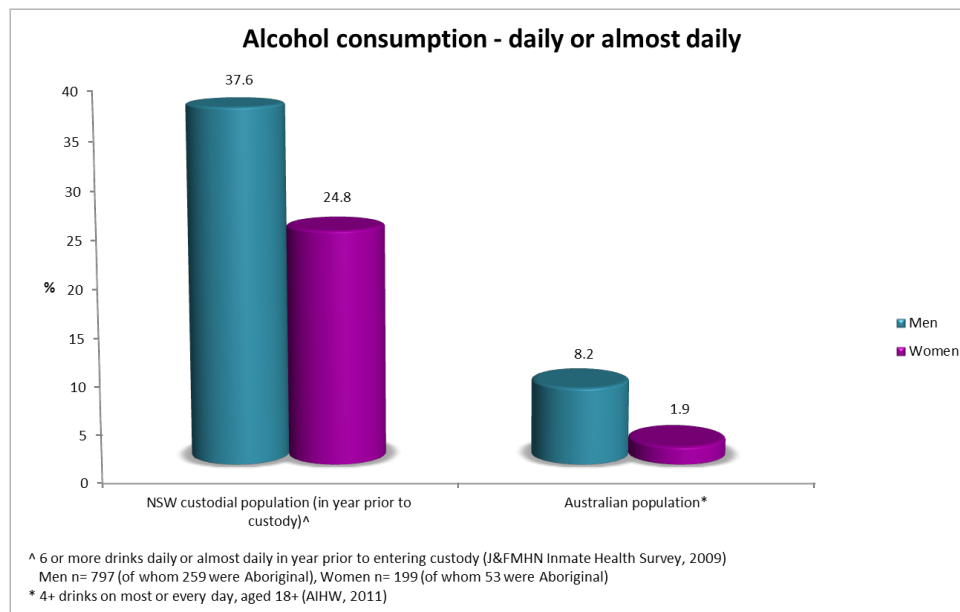
Thank you once again for the opportunity to comment on this inquiry. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Sharon Jacobs, A/Executive Director, Strategic Development & Performance,

Yours sincerely

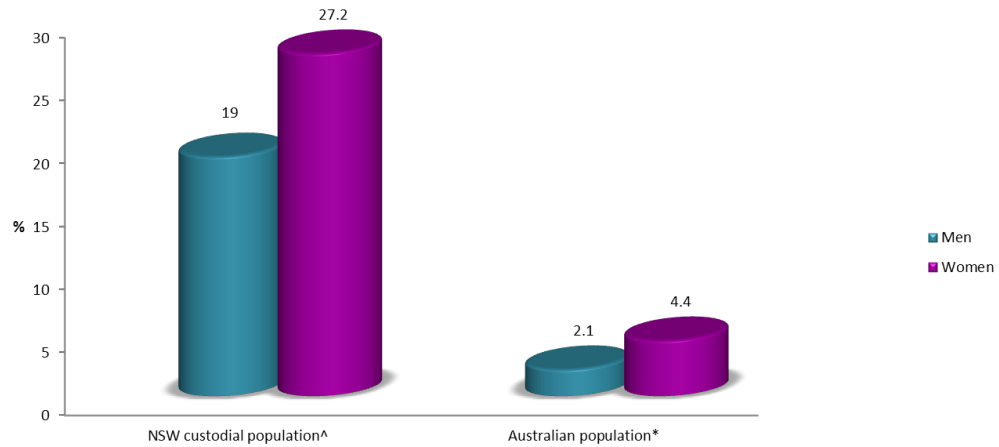
Professor Karin Lines  
**A/Chief Executive**

5 March 2013

## NSW Adult Inmate Health Profile

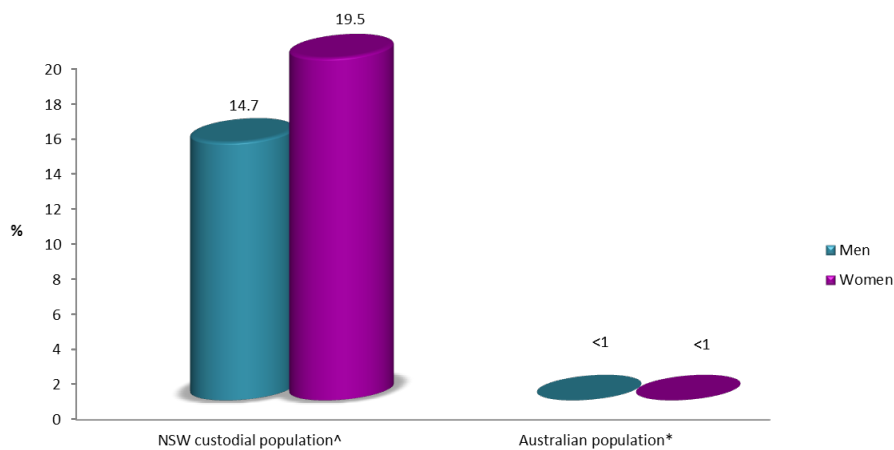


### Ever attempted suicide



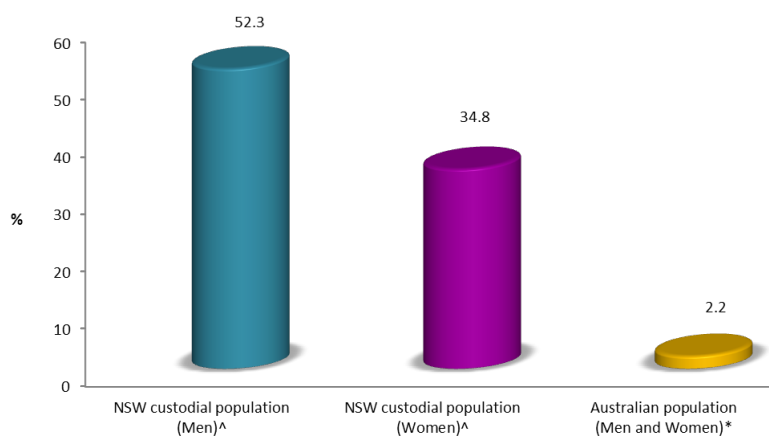
^ Ever attempted suicide (J&FMHN Inmate Health Survey, 2009)  
Men n= 797 (of whom 259 were Aboriginal), women n= 199 (of whom 53 were Aboriginal)  
\* Australian adults who have ever attempted suicide (Johnston et al, 2009)

### Mental Health - inpatient admission

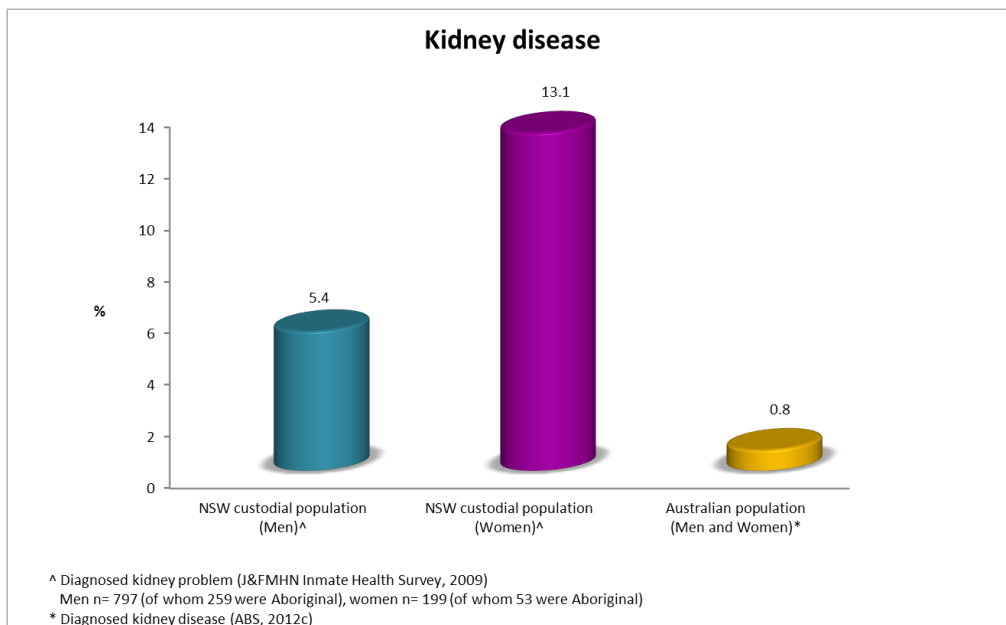
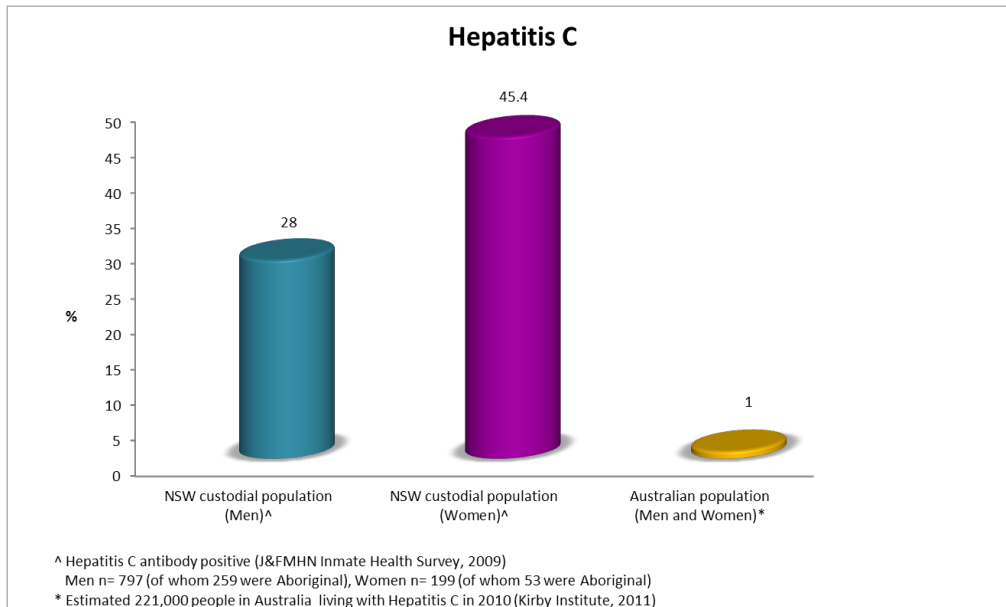


^ Ever admitted to a psychiatric unit or ward (J&FMHN Inmate Health Survey, 2009)  
Men n= 797 (of whom 259 were Aboriginal), women n= 199 (of whom 53 were Aboriginal)  
\* Admitted to specialist mental health care or general hospital unit with a psychiatric diagnosis (Sara, 2012)

### Acquired brain injury



^ Ever had a brain injury (J&FMHN Inmate Health Survey, 2009)  
Men n= 797 (of whom 259 were Aboriginal), women n= 199 (of whom 53 were Aboriginal)  
\* Acquired brain injury with some activity limitations or participation restrictions (AIHW, 2007)



## References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (2012c) Australian Health Survey: First Results, 2011-12. ABS cat no. 4365.0.55.001. Canberra: ABS.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] (2011) 2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey report. Drug statistics series no. 25. Cat no. PHE145. Canberra: AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] (2007) Disability in Australia: acquired brain injury. Bulletin no. 55. Canberra: AIHW.
- Johnston, A. K., Pirkis, J.E. and Burgess, P. M. (2009) 'Suicidal thoughts and behaviours among Australian adults: findings from the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing', Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, vol. 43: 635-643
- Justice & Forensic Mental Health Network (J&FMHN) (2009) Inmate Health Survey. NSW J&FMHN.
- Kirby Institute. (2011) HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2011. Sydney: The Kirby Institute, University of NSW.
- Sara, G. (2012) Personal Communication 29 November 2012, Director InforMH, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, Sydney: NSW Health.