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FORENSIC WORKING GROUP

Senator SIEWERT: We have had discussion before about the services that can and cannot be provided into prisons. I am sure that you know the statistics as well as I do, including the numbers of Aboriginal prisoners that have either hearing loss or hearing impairment. And we know that addressing hearing loss can have a significant impact in terms of addressing recidivism and things like that. Has there been any progress in being able to work with the justice systems of the various states to get hearing tests, and then being able to work with that group of people?

Ms Rundle: I can just give you a few examples. We do work closely with people in prison, in a general sense, who are participants of the scheme

Senator SIEWERT: They are already participants though, aren't they?

Ms Rundle: That is correct.

Senator SIEWERT: You cannot take them on board, once they are in the justice system, when their hearing loss is identified—if there were screening tests, for example.

Ms Rundle: Yes. So I think it is a really good question. And no, I do not think there would be a lot that we would actually do at the moment—for people that we do not know about; to be able to know who they are, and whether they have a hearing loss. I am sorry, but I think it is really good question

Ms Glanville: I hope I am right with this; I will clarify it on the record if I am not, but I think there is a new forensic working group being established across jurisdictions that we will be part of. That is in the back of my mind as something very recent—I only know this because I think I will be attending. I think it is being established because this mainstream interface is seen as a critical one for us, and we are keen to enhance the sort of collaboration and the pathways, and what will actually work, and what we can offer and what remains a responsibility of corrections systems or whatever across the country.

Senator SIEWERT: I have a couple of follow-up questions there. Are you talking about forensic across the board—because there are a number of other issues—or are you talking specifically about hearing?

Ms Glanville: No; I am talking about it generally. But if you are receiving questions in the hearing space, we could certainly insert those into the discussion.

Senator SIEWERT: I am very strongly interested, and quite excited, to hear whether it is correct that that working group is starting up.

Ms Glanville: I think I am right; it has not started, but I think I am right.

Senator SIEWERT: That would be very good. But I would very much like to hear specific confirmation of that. I know that there are a whole lot of comorbidity issues involved when we are working in this space, but hearing would be very good.

Ms Glanville: Yes. We will come back to you in writing and confirm that, and—if I am right—we will endeavour to raise those issues.

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has been invited to attend a special meeting of the National Forensic Disability Working Group which will include representatives from the Department of Social Services and the Attorney-General's Department to discuss the interface between the criminal justice system and the National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Forensic Disability Working Group is a working group of the Corrective Services Administrators Council. This meeting is a further workshop requested by Corrective Services Administrators Council to provide further operational detail regarding the opportunities for participants who are also under a corrective order to interact with the NDIA.