



# FACT SHEET

## Mobile phone jamming

### Lithgow Correctional Centre

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#### **Why is Corrective Services NSW using mobile phone jamming technology at Lithgow Correctional Centre?**

It is a crime for a NSW correctional centre inmate to possess a mobile phone. Visitors are also prohibited from bringing mobile phones into a centre.

Contraband mobile phones pose a threat to correctional centre security and community safety, as they can be used by inmates to facilitate crimes in the community.

Mobile phone possession by inmates is a growing problem internationally. Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) uses a combination of measures to stop mobile phones entering and circulating within correctional centres.

Physical security at correctional centres includes x-ray, full body scanners and other scanning equipment. Specialist search teams, including trained mobile phone sniffer dogs, conduct frequent searches of visitors, vehicles and items entering correctional centres, as well as inmates' cells and common areas. These measures are supported by strong intelligence gathering about potential mobile phone smuggling.

Mobile phone jamming technology has enhanced these measures. Effective mobile phone jamming makes inmates' efforts to obtain and use contraband phones worthless because the phones themselves are not able to connect to the mobile network.

Following a trial of the jamming technology at Lithgow Correctional Centre, CSNSW has been granted an exemption from the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to use, operate, possess or supply mobile phone jamming devices at the centre. Refer to the [\*Radiocommunications \(Exemption – Corrective Services NSW\) Determination 2021\*](#).

#### **Will CSNSW's jamming of mobile phones affect my mobile phone service?**

CSNSW and its engineers have worked hard to select equipment that will only jam signals within the confines of Lithgow Correctional Centre. The five year trial has shown that mobile phone networks outside the correctional complex (for example, the Great Western Highway) have not been affected by the equipment.

CSNSW has displayed signs at Lithgow Correctional Centre to notify visitors that a mobile phone jamming device is being used in the centre.

Mobile phones are not permitted inside the correctional centre. However, while on the correctional complex (for example, the carpark), in the unlikely event you need to call Triple Zero (000) using your mobile phone and are unable to get a connection, see correctional centre staff at the main visitors' entrance for assistance.

## **How will the phone jamming be monitored to ensure my mobile phone is unaffected?**

CSNSW will continue to work closely with mobile network carriers and the ACMA to ensure that the mobile phone jamming technology does not affect mobile phone services outside of the correctional complex.

All parties agree that the jamming technology must not affect the public's mobile phone service.

There are comprehensive arrangements in place to ensure that the use of the jamming technology is appropriately monitored and assessed.

## **Carrier Liaison Agreement between Corrective Services NSW and the Carriers**

On 27 March 2019, CSNSW and the Carriers entered into the Carrier Liaison Agreement for the Use of Public Mobile Telecommunications Service (PMTS) Jamming Devices at Lithgow Correctional Centre.

The Carriers party to the Agreement are:

- Telstra Corporation Limited
- Optus Mobile Pty Limited
- TPG Telecom Limited
- Vodafone Network Pty Limited
- NBN Co Limited

The objective of this Agreement is to provide an agreed basis upon which CSNSW will liaise with the Carriers in respect of CSNSW's control of the unauthorised use of PMTS devices at Lithgow Correctional Centre through the use of PMTS jamming devices.

The Agreement establishes and formalises liaison arrangements for operational understandings and protocols during the operation and use of a PMTS jamming devices at the correctional centre, including the management of customer complaints.

## **What should I do if my mobile phone does not work while the jamming device is being used by CSNSW?**

There may be many reasons for your mobile phone or wireless access service device not working. In the first instance, you should contact your service provider. Your provider is best placed to determine the reason your service is not working.

In the unlikely event that a fault is determined to be caused by the jammer, your mobile phone service provider should contact CSNSW. CSNSW will then investigate and act to resolve any issues.

## **Are there any health risks associated with the use of the mobile phone jammer?**

No. All the jamming equipment must comply with the electromagnetic radiation requirements at Part 3 of the *Radiocommunications Licence Conditions (Apparatus Licence) Determination 2015*.

This means that staff and inmates at the centre and people working in buildings near the jamming equipment can be assured that the radio frequency exposure levels will be at a safe level.

## **Will any other devices be affected by the use of the jammer?**

No. The equipment is designed to jam mobile phone signals only. Other wireless devices such as two-way radios, pagers, television reception and alarm systems should not be affected.

## **When will CSNSW start using the mobile phone jamming technology?**

A trial has been in place since 24 September 2013. An exemption to use and operate the mobile phone jamming devices at Lithgow Correctional Centre commenced on 1 November 2018. That exemption has been repealed by a new instrument, which commenced on 29 November 2021 for a period of five years.

**Enquiries: 1800 526 637 (1800 JAMMER)**

**29 November 2021**