

## Corrective Services (Emerging Technologies and Security) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

**Submission No:** 10  
**Submitted by:** Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU)  
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**Submitter Comments:**

# Submission to

## Education, Employment and Training Committee

### *Corrective Services (Emerging Technologies and Security) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022*

January 2023

## Introduction

The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) thanks the Education, Employment and Training Committee (the Committee) for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Corrective Services (Emerging Technologies and Security) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022* (the Bill).

Nursing and midwifery is the largest occupational group in Queensland Health and one of the largest across the Queensland government. The QNMU is the principal health union in Queensland covering all classifications of workers that make up the nursing and midwifery workforce including registered nurses (RN), registered midwives, enrolled nurses (EN) and assistants in nursing (AIN) and students who are employed in the public, private and not-for-profit health sectors including aged care.

Our more than 67,000 members work across a variety of settings from single person operations to large health and non-health institutions, and in a full range of classifications from entry level trainees to senior management. The vast majority of nurses and midwives in Queensland are members of the QNMU. As the Queensland state branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the QNMU is the peak professional body for nurses and midwives in Queensland.

Through our submissions and other initiatives, the QNMU expresses our commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve health equity and ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives are heard. The QNMU supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the call for a First Nations Voice enshrined in our Constitution. The QNMU acknowledges the lands on which we work and meet always was, and always will be, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

The QNMU is in broad support of the Bill and will provide general comments to two of the policy objectives.

**Provide clear authority to use x-ray body scanners, closed circuit television (CCTV), body-worn cameras and other emerging technologies to maintain safety and monitor threats within the closed correctional environment.**

We strongly recommend that when body-worn cameras are worn, the audio must be turned off if the prisoner is receiving healthcare. A visual record is acceptable but there must not be sound recording. A prisoner's privacy and confidentiality must be respected when receiving healthcare.

**Enhance information sharing powers to promote prisoner health and wellbeing, support frontline service delivery and interagency collaboration.**

The QNMU requests the information sharing amendments go further to truly promote prisoner health and wellbeing. Due to the lack of health information technology (IT) infrastructure, prisoner's health records cannot be shared or accessed immediately as they are still paper based. For example, if a prisoner is transferred from a regional area to the Southeast corner of the state, their medical records do not accompany them but are sent separately which can often take several days for them to be received. Research shows that people in prison have higher rates of mental health disorders, chronic physical disease, and communicable disease than the wider Australian population, so this inability for health practitioners to have immediate access to medical records, puts the health and wellbeing of prisoners at risk and is unacceptable (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022).

Health services for people in Queensland prisons are delivered by hospital and health services (HHSs). Most HHSs use integrated electronic medical record (ieMR) which allows health practitioners to simultaneously access and update patient information. That this is not in use in prisons, is archaic. To enhance information sharing, the medical records of prisoners must be made portable through the implementation and use of digital medical records.

We ask the *Office of Prisoner Health and Wellbeing* to expediate plans for the implementation of electronic medical records in prisons. Improving the health of people whilst in prison will contribute to improving the health of the wider community upon release.

**References**

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). *Health of prisoners*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-prisoners>