
MEDIA RELEASE

John Robertson MLC

Minister for Corrective Services
Minister for Public Sector Reform
Special Minister of State



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Criminal brothers will never again share a prison cell

Siblings who have committed crimes in company will be banned from sharing a cell together in any NSW prison unless an exemption is granted by the Commissioner, announced the Minister for Corrective Services John Robertson today.

The changes follow recent revelations that gang rapist brothers Mohammed and Bilal Skaf had been sharing a cell at Goulburn Correctional Centre.

“On discovering that brothers Bilal and Mohammed Skaf had been sharing a cell at Goulburn Gaol, I immediately called for a review of the placement of siblings in prison,” Mr Robertson said.

“The Commissioner and I have taken the decision to ban siblings who have committed their crimes in company from ever being able to share a cell.

“The only exception to this will be where an exemption is granted by the Commissioner in extreme circumstances.

“Commissioner Woodham has previously made it clear that Bilal and Mohammed Skaf will never again be placed in the same gaol, let alone the same cell.”

Commissioner for Corrective Services Ron Woodham said the new policy on the placement of siblings in custody takes a tough line, but still allows for appropriate management of at-risk inmates.

“Notorious criminal brothers like the Skafs will not be placed in a shared cell ever again without my direct approval – and I’m not a man that will grant exemptions lightly,” said Commissioner Woodham.

“However, in recognition of the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, there are circumstances where the Department takes family into account when placing Aboriginal inmates within the prison system.”

Mr Robertson said an example of where an exemption may be granted would be where an inmate is at risk of self harm or suicide and the Commissioner deems it in the best interests of safety and security in the gaol to place them together at that time.

“The placement of prisoners in correctional centres is currently conducted based on security classification, gender, behavioural issues, mental and physical health requirements and other factors,” said Mr Robertson. “Family will now be added to that list.”

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