

Introduction & Safety Information For Group Tour Organisers



RATIONALE

The following information is provided to assist Group organisers in considering the risks associated with undertaking a tour of Maitland Gaol. **The information presented is not a full risk assessment.**

The group organiser/institution will have the best knowledge of the participants as to age, disability needs and the level of supervision that they can provide. Therefore a group considering a tour of Maitland Gaol should complete its own risk assessment if considered appropriate and base this on some of the information provided in this document.

Maitland City Council or Maitland Gaol will not provide full risk assessments for individual groups/institutions, however whatever assistance is required for these groups and institutions to undertake their own assessments will be provided by Maitland Gaol where possible.

The information presented in this document is based on the requirements for school excursions, but is equally applicable to other groups.

INTRODUCTION AND SAFETY INFORMATION

To provide general safety information, the requirements of the Department of Education and Training have been used as a model. Should this information not be sufficient for the specific needs, please contact the Maitland Gaol office for further specific assistance.

The Department of Education and Training has guidelines, including Risk Assessments, to be completed by staff.

Responses to these guidelines are as follows:

VENUE INFORMATION:

• *Public Liability cover*

Maitland Gaol is a business unit of Maitland City Council that holds Public Liability cover through Statewide Mutual Liability Scheme for an amount of \$200,000,000, renewable on 30 June annually. Copies of the present Certificate of Currency, if required, are available from the Maitland Gaol office.

• *Accreditation of the venue and its staff for the task/activity*

Maitland Gaol is a State Heritage Register listed site, managed by Maitland City Council as Crown Land Manager under the provisions of the Crowns Lands Act 2016 and Development Approval LD 00-862 as a tourism facility. It is a member of local and regional tourism organisations and ascribes to all codes of conduct included in those memberships. Additionally, Maitland City Council as the employer requires adherence to codes of conduct for its staff. All staff working at Maitland Gaol and employed by Maitland City Council in close contact with children are "Working with Children" checked and approved when employed.

• *Access and special requirements e.g. for students with special needs*

Maitland Gaol is generally accessible for people with mobility difficulties and different routes around the site can be taken to ensure most people are able to access most buildings. Wheelchair bound and walking frame-assisted visitors will need some assistance. Most buildings have ramps but these may not, in all cases, be at appropriate inclines. Additionally, to enter a very few areas, some steps may need to be negotiated. Visitors in wheelchairs or with frames will also not be able to view upper levels of multi level cell blocks however this does not affect the enjoyment of the tour and these areas can be removed from tour itinerary's at the request of the organiser.

Some of the cells are quite small and visitors who are affected by confined spaces should not enter those cells. Visitors should not close the cell doors if other people are inside the cell and definitely not lock people unawares in the cells.

The site has many trip hazards and therefore it is not recommended for unassisted visitors with vision impairment. Site emergency procedures are notified by siren and so visitors with hearing problems should be appropriately accompanied.

- *Emergency procedures and relevant training of venue staff*

Emergency evacuation procedures have been developed and will be invoked by staff in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Fire fighting equipment is installed throughout the facility and is available for staff and visitors alike to use as necessary.

Staff have access to first aid kits situated throughout the facility and will make these available to the group's first aid officers as required. Staff have various levels of first aid accreditation however no assurance will be given that any first aid competent staff are on duty at any particular time.

- *Known hazards and controls related to proposed activities*

Trip Hazards - Because of the nature of the site and the age of many of the buildings, there are a number of trip hazards. These include unusual height and worn steps and the possibility of uneven surfaces throughout the site.

Water Hazards - Due to smooth and painted surfaces there is the possibility of slip hazards where water is present.

Door Hazards - Doors throughout the complex can be very heavy. The cell doors are particularly heavy, some weighing in excess of 80kg's, so care needs to be taken when shutting them and also to ensure fingers do not get jammed. Also some door heights are unusually low or may have small rises at the threshold.

Razor Wire - Razor wire was installed as a security measure towards the end of the Gaol's operation and remains in place. Visitors must not attempt to climb any fences or other vertical surfaces. The razor wire in particular is designed to inflict appreciable injury and is very sharp.

- *Equipment available*

Fire fighting equipment is tested and stamped by approved and licensed personnel. Visitors should not be required to operate any other equipment within the site other than interpretive displays and lighting which will generally be operated by standard 240v electricity.

- *Use of licensed personnel for construction, maintenance and repairs*

Maitland City Council only uses suitably qualified, licensed and insured staff and contractors for construction, maintenance and repairs.

- *Availability of appropriate facilities e.g. showers, refreshments, toilets*

Maitland Gaol has several toilets available throughout the facility, currently with three designated as accessible. No showers are available to the public.

Refreshments are usually available during normal daytime hours at the café associated with Maitland Gaol. This facility is privately operated and is not controlled by Maitland Gaol. Check with the Gaol Administration Office or the Café for details (see also the Maitland Gaol website).

Both on-street and off-street parking is available for vehicles (incl. Coaches) with two designated accessible car parks and the facility is accessible from East Maitland Railway Station.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made here to answer as many questions as possible that may arise in the assessment of the Maitland Gaol site by groups/institutions. If there is any further information required please contact Maitland Gaol on (02) 4936 6482 and the Customer Service staff will assist wherever they can. No assurances are given or implied that the information provided here is necessarily appropriate to any individual or group visiting Maitland Gaol. Please ensure that any essential requirements are in accordance with the group's own Risk Assessment by arranging a personal inspection.

We trust you will enjoy your experience at Maitland Gaol.