

## PANEL 1 RELEASE

### SHOULD A NEUROINTERVENTION BE A CONDITION OF RELEASE FROM PRISON FOR SEX OFFENDERS?

Between 1989 and 1990 Terry John Williamson sexually assaulted five women, five girls and a boy, often abducting his victims from the street at knifepoint or entering their homes.

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In 1990 Williamson, then 20, was sentenced to 24 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 14 years. He eventually spent 22 years in prison and was then released on supervised parole. His two years of supervision would normally have finished earlier this year.

In 2006, New South Wales (NSW), Australia's most populace State, introduced a law that allowed a court to extend a serious sex offender's period of community supervision beyond the time when his or her sentence ends.

In this case, the State of NSW applied for Williamson's supervision in the community to be extended another five years. Among the conditions of the supervision was a stipulation that Williamson continue a treatment programme begun in prison, which included psychological therapy and the regular administration of cyproterone acetate (Androcur) and an antidepressant.

Cyproterone suppresses testosterone activity in the body and, like medroxyprogesterone (Depo-Provera), is often administered to sex offenders with in the hope that it will make recidivism less likely.

Williamson was reportedly happy to remain under the supervision order (and take the medication) though he requested its length be three, not five, years.

Regardless of Williamson's agreement it was up to the Court to determine if an order should be made. Among the evidence considered was the fact that Williamson had taken part in intensive treatment programmes in 1999 and 2001 and in maintenance programmes since. He reportedly made good progress in all.

He had commenced cyproterone in 2004 and since that time, the judge reported "there was evidence which indicates" his

"sexual thoughts are less prominent and intrusive".

With respect to the antidepressant, the judge identified various risk factors for reoffending- "feeling lonely and isolated", "problems with social adjustment", "social anxiety" and "experiencing acute mood swings and coping with this by blaming others" – and suggested, on the evidence of a forensic psychiatrist, that this prevented the emergence of some of these.

Williamson consented to both drugs and in NSW could not have been compelled to take either against his will. However, any non-adherence will be a breach of his supervision order and could result in a custodial sentence.

The extended supervision order was granted.

