



REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION  
OF KARNET PRISON FARM

67 | JULY 2010  
REPORT

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accountable public sector.*



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

**Report of an Announced Inspection of  
Karnet Prison Farm**

Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services  
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# The Inspector's Overview

KARNET: A PRISON IN TRANSITION

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## 2007 – 2011: A TIME OF TRANSITION

This is the report of an announced inspection of Karnet Prison Farm (Karnet), conducted in February 2010. Karnet has a long and interesting history. It originally opened in 1963 as a small facility catering for around 60 convicted alcoholics. Given that drug and alcohol use are such significant factors in offending in 2010, it is interesting to reflect on the fact that 50 years ago the justice system was exploring specialised and targeted approaches to the rehabilitation of offenders with entrenched substance abuse problems.

The prison farm gradually expanded and at the time of our 2007 inspection it held 174 prisoners. It had developed a reputation for good management of prisoners and a relaxed but productive rehabilitative culture. It has also always made a massive contribution to the prison system as a whole through its efficient farm operations, its abattoir and associated work. And of all the state's prisons, it has been one of the best, if not the best, in terms of its community acceptance, support and links.

Reports by this Office have consistently identified Karnet as both a good performer and a place with greater potential. This remains the case in 2010. In the October 2007 Report this translated to a recommendation that Karnet should be expanded to a capacity of 240 through the construction of a new unit and through additional investment in infrastructure and human resources. This recommendation was not supported by the Department of Corrective Services (the Department) which said that 'an expansion at Karnet Prison Farm is not part of the Department's capital investment plan'.<sup>i</sup> Two main reasons were given for this: 'expansion is problematic due to environmental considerations' and 'the need for additional minimum security capacity is not paramount.' In 2007, the Department's future asset planning also included a 'new minimum security prison (replace Karnet)'.<sup>ii</sup> At the same time, there was a great deal of discussion in the prison and the local community about the prospect of the site being taken over by a major mining company.

Not surprisingly, this combination of factors and plans led to very real uncertainty about Karnet's future. But two and a half years later, at the time of this inspection, the position had changed markedly. Prisoner numbers in the system as a whole had increased rapidly – some of this increase being predictable and some less so – and there was particular pressure for more minimum security beds.

In January 2010, Karnet held 256 prisoners, a 40 per cent increase from 2007. This increase had not been achieved through the installation of new purpose built accommodation but through the addition of extra beds to existing cells which were originally intended for single occupancy.

In addition, it had been announced that a new 60-cell unit would be added to the site to accommodate another 120 double-bunked prisoners. The Department said that it expected construction to be completed by April 2010 but at the time of writing this Overview the building project had suffered some delays and was not expected to be completed until October 2010.

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i OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 48.

ii *Ibid*, ii.

With a potential addition of 120 prisoners to existing numbers, it is projected that the population of Karnet could as much as double between 2007 and 2011. Over that time, it will therefore have moved from being a relatively small prison – and one that formed no part of future capital investment planning and was not considered appropriate for expansion – to a much larger facility with a rather more certain future. This rapid transition presents both challenges and opportunities. Fortunately, given the prison’s high level of performance, it is relatively well-placed to meet these demands provided it is afforded the necessary support and resources.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The challenges that Karnet faces include coping with the increasing number of prisoners and possible changes in the profile of offenders, providing sufficient activity for prisoners, and ensuring a positive staff / prisoner culture. The report makes a number of recommendations to those ends.

#### Infrastructure

There is a significant ongoing investment in new (mainly transportable) buildings. In addition to the new accommodation block, this includes a new ‘Shared Facilities Centre’ at the entrance to the prison, and more rooms for education and programs. However, a good deal of this is ‘catch-up’ investment, required to balance the limited investment in such facilities over preceding years. Furthermore, some parts of the site are run down and in urgent need of renovation and upgrading. In particular, Unit 1 should be replaced. As the prison expands, it is therefore critical to address existing deficits as well as focusing on the needs generated by the new unit.

#### Employment and Training

One of the most critical challenges for Karnet and for the system as a whole relates to employment and training. The Legislative Assembly Community Development and Justice Standing Committee recently concluded that: ‘The Department of Corrective Services ... operates with significant cost pressures which cause the under resourcing of employment, training and general education initiatives.’<sup>iii</sup> The Committee found ‘a significant level of underemployment’ in the prison system as a whole (‘masked by an over assignment of prisoners to menial tasks so they can be provided with a gratuity’), and referred to ‘demonstrably inadequate’ infrastructure.<sup>iv</sup>

Traditionally, Karnet has been something of an exception in terms of employment levels, with high levels of real employment both inside and outside the prison. However, the increase in numbers that has already occurred coupled with the pending expansion pose considerable challenges. There are limits to the amount of work available inside the prison

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iii Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, *Interim Report: ‘Making Our Prisons Work’: An Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Prisoner Education, Training and Employment Strategies*, Report No 4 in the 38th Parliament, June 2010 <<http://parliament.wa.gov.au/web/newwebparl.nsf/iframewebpages/Committees+-+Current>> xv.

iv Ibid, xx.

and at the time of the inspection, Karnet had been unsuccessful in its business case for expanding the existing industries and for developing new industries.<sup>v</sup> Karnet and the Department continue to negotiate on these issues but as yet there is no confirmed commitment to additional industries infrastructure or resources.

Karnet is a minimum security facility with a proven track record and a positive community standing. It should therefore be possible to expand external community work activities under section 95 of the *Prisons Act*. Indeed, this seems essential if the high levels of employment are to continue. In the course of this inspection, local councillors and others were certainly very positive about and supportive of such initiatives and Recommendation 4 is directed to this end. It recommends both that external community work be expanded and that a work camp attached to Karnet should be created. Although the Department states that it does not support either part of Recommendation 4, we will be examining any progress with respect to both of these matters in future inspections.

Recommendation 6 also relates to employment. The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) is something of a flagship program, and has attracted significant investment. The aim is to allow prisoners to undertake employment in the last few months of their sentence or to become registered as a job seeker and engage with a community job network. To date, only a limited number of prisoners have actually accessed PEP. In the past 12 months we have published reports on all three of the metropolitan minimum security facilities, namely, Wooroloo Prison Farm, Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women and now Karnet Prison Farm. At Wooroloo, three people were involved in PEP; at Boronia there were two; at Karnet only one prisoner was approved for actual employment and two for job-seeking.

Prisoners are certainly very keen to engage in PEP and the Employment Coordinators at the three facilities are enthusiastic and hard working. The main reasons for the low uptake of PEP are the restrictive selection criteria, and slow approval processes which cause significant frustration to potential employers, prisoners and prison staff. Recommendation 6 is therefore that (i) the approval processes and (ii) the eligibility criteria for PEP be modified so the program is accessible for a greater number of prisoners. Quite independently, both the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee<sup>vi</sup> and the Department's own review of prisoner employment<sup>vii</sup> have made very similar findings and recommendations. After initially responding that it did not support any part of Recommendation 6, the Department resubmitted a response that it supports the recommendation in part and that it will 'look at ways to streamline the process for PEP approvals.' We believe that action is essential on this matter. It is far from clear that the high levels of investment in PEP and the current low levels of engagement offer value for money.

v See [2.20].

vi Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, *Interim Report: 'Making Our Prisons Work': An Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Prisoner Education, Training and Employment Strategies*, Report No 4 in the 38th Parliament, June 2010 <<http://parliament.wa.gov.au/web/newwebparl.nsf/iframewebpages/Committees+-+Current>> 86 (Finding 13 and two associated recommendations).

vii Department of Corrective Services, *Review of Offender Employment in Western Australia 2010* (undated), 47 – 50.

### Aboriginal Prisoners

It is well recognised that recidivism rates amongst Aboriginal prisoners are high and that due to their socio-economic circumstances, many Aboriginal people have limited formal educational or trade qualifications. Imprisonment does at least provide an opportunity for positive intervention, assistance and self improvement and Karnet certainly offers some particularly positive opportunities.

In terms of keeping prisoners close to home, there are also numerous Aboriginal families in the Kwinana / Armadale / Pinjarra / Mandurah / Rockingham areas. However, Karnet continues to house a very small number of Aboriginal prisoners. We have therefore recommended that, subject to appropriate security assessments, proportionately more Aboriginal prisoners should be placed at Karnet, in order to benefit from the positive opportunities it offers. Clearly this is an issue we will continue to monitor.<sup>viii</sup>

### Conclusion

Karnet Prison Farm has always been a good performer. It appears to have a more certain future than was the case three years ago and the expansion in numbers offers both opportunities and challenges. Given its track record, I am optimistic that, provided there is adequate investment in infrastructure and a vigorous proactive engagement with the supportive local community, it can build further on its positive and unique place in the State's prison system.

Neil Morgan  
Inspector of Custodial Services  
19 July 2010

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viii Initially the Department's response to this recommendation was simply 'not supported'. After further discussions with the Inspectorate, it now states that it supports the recommendation in part.



# Summary of Findings and Recommendations

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In February 2010, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office) carried out the fourth announced inspection of Karnet Prison Farm. Karnet is a minimum security facility for adult males and its primary purpose is to prepare prisoners for release into the community. Karnet's other significant role is in food production for the wider prison system.

The last inspection in 2007 found Karnet to be performing at a high standard. In 2010, Karnet had generally maintained a good standard of service delivery, but was facing a number of challenges that meant its performance was not as strong as it had been.

The 2010 inspection took place in the context of severe overcrowding within the Western Australian prison system, and Karnet itself was holding a total of 238 prisoners (64 prisoners more than it was designed to hold). The inspection was therefore focused on the extent to which this overcrowding had affected the operation of the prison. In this context, the inspection also looked at the impact of ageing and inadequate infrastructure on the performance of the prison.

Karnet is to receive an additional 120 beds by the end of 2010, bringing the total capacity to 358 prisoners. This presents the prison both challenges and opportunities.

## KARNET'S PERFORMANCE: PAST AND PRESENT

Historically, one of the best aspects of Karnet Prison Farm has been its ability to provide a positive atmosphere conducive to rehabilitating prisoners and preparing them for their release. In 2010, despite the introduction of a perimeter fence and gatehouse, the prison had been largely successful in retaining an appropriately relaxed atmosphere. However, there was evidence that the relationship between staff and prisoners was not as strong as it has been in the past. In a re-entry prison like Karnet, it is particularly important for staff to be available to provide support and guidance as prisoners approach their release.

### *Recommendation 1*

*The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.*

Karnet is very successful at providing meaningful employment for prisoners. The employment opportunities available to prisoners provide for skill development and encourage a good work ethic. At the time of the inspection, however, it was increasingly common for up to three-quarters of the prisoners in the workshops to be unavailable on any given day. These absences were due to conflicting commitments, such as court appearances, education, medical appointments, and programs. The prison will have to look at the competing demands and determine how it can best structure the day for prisoners and staff to ensure a full complement of workers while still allowing prisoners to satisfy educational and program needs.

### *Recommendation 2*

*The prison should develop a constructive day model that incorporates the objectives of work, education and programs and in particular avoids timetable clashes between these different activities.*

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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As the prisoner population at Karnet is scheduled to increase significantly by the end of 2010, it is essential that plans are established to ensure the ongoing adequacy of employment at the prison. This requires immediate commitment from the prison and the Department to the expansion of existing industries, the creation of new industries and the development of a workable constructive day.

### *Recommendation 3*

*The Department should ensure that Karnet Prison Farm has sufficient staff, resources and infrastructure to maintain the high level of meaningful employment at the prison.*

Karnet undertakes a wide range of work in the community with prisoners who have been granted approval under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) to work outside the prison. There were two section 95 teams operating at Karnet in 2010, meaning only about 12 prisoners were involved in community work at any one time. The experience of working in the community provides great benefit to prisoners and the Office thinks that section 95 work should be expanded at Karnet, particularly in light of the approaching increase in prisoner numbers.

For a minimum security re-entry prison, the opportunity to send prisoners to a work camp is invaluable. A work camp provides prisoners with meaningful employment and close interaction with the local community, and is one of the best ways to help a prisoner reintegrate into society. At the time of the inspection, there was no work camp attached to Karnet Prison Farm.

### *Recommendation 4*

*The Department, in conjunction with the prison, should expand the community work program and create a work camp attached to Karnet Prison Farm.*

The farm at Karnet has always played an important role in contributing produce to the food supply chain for the Western Australian prison system. However, it is difficult to determine what proportion of Karnet's spending goes to projects and resources that benefit the system as a whole as opposed to the prison itself because this is not clearly differentiated in the prison's budget. Consequently, it is not clear exactly how much money Karnet saves the Department each year, nor exactly how much money the Department spends on food production each year. For the sake of accountability, it is essential that the Department has an accurate understanding of these figures.

### *Recommendation 5*

*The Department should provide a separate budget to Karnet Prison Farm for expenses related to food production for the Western Australian prison system.*

The visits centre at Karnet provides perhaps the most pleasant, spacious and family-friendly visiting environment of any custodial facility in Western Australia. This was attested by a number of visitors and prisoners, several of whom stated that they were much more comfortable bringing their children to Karnet than any other prison.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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An excellent visitor services facility had also been completed outside the main gate. The Shared Facilities Centre, as it is known, serves as the visitors' centre on the weekend and a staff training centre during the week. It is an impressive asset for the prison, and a significant achievement, having been built almost entirely by Karnet prisoners.

One of the major initiatives targeted at prisoners due for release is the Prisoner Employment Program, which commenced at Karnet in September 2008. The aim of the program is to allow prisoners to engage in paid work as early as 12 months before their release, or to become registered as a job seeker and engage with a community job network provider to find and prepare for employment.

The Office has previously identified that strict eligibility criteria are restricting the number of prisoners accessing the Prisoner Employment Program.<sup>ix</sup> It appears that at best, applications are approved in around three months, which is far too long for most employers to hold a vacancy. A further issue is that the majority of prisoners who had been successful in the program were those who were quite likely to secure employment even without any assistance. This included prisoners who were returning to work for their previous employer or a family business, and prisoners returning to an established career or trade. Such work placements are of course valuable, but the focus of the Prisoner Employment Program should be on those prisoners less likely to find work easily upon release.

### *Recommendation 6*

*The Department should modify the approval process and eligibility criteria for the Prisoner Employment Program to make it accessible to a greater number of prisoners.*

## THE FUTURE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The most obvious symptom of neglect at Karnet is the degraded and inadequate infrastructure. Units 1 and 2, the older accommodation units at the prison, have been physically deteriorating for several years. Living conditions for prisoners in these units have grown steadily worse, and the Office has long argued that Unit 1 in particular does not provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.

Poor living conditions throughout the prison have been exacerbated by the elevated prisoner numbers. The increase in prisoner numbers has been achieved entirely through double-bunking, with a high proportion of rooms now fitted with bunk beds. Almost 54 per cent of prisoners at Karnet were sharing a room.

As prisoner numbers at Karnet have grown, prison officer numbers have increased accordingly. However, there has been no corresponding expansion or upgrade of staff facilities.

Other utilities were under strain and will require upgrading prior to the capacity increase. The sewerage system, hot water system, and electricity supply have all been scheduled for upgrade by the Department. The potable water supply has been a serious issue for Karnet in the past, and at the time of the inspection a water resource assessment was being undertaken.

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ix OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 62 (November 2009), 21-22.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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A number of capital works projects had been approved as part of the capacity expansion, including a new prisoner reception facility, an extension of the health centre, and a new laundry. The investment in these facilities is very positive for the prison, but there are other areas such as the education centre and the dining room, that will struggle to cope with higher numbers and also need to be considered for expansion. The biggest risk for the prison will be in the existing infrastructure. A comprehensive renovation and maintenance program will be an absolute necessity.

### *Recommendation 7*

*The Department's strategic infrastructure planning should address all infrastructure deficits at Karnet Prison Farm and ensure that existing facilities are maintained and where necessary upgraded to an acceptable standard.*

The inspection identified some security weaknesses at Karnet, but there is a good level of commitment to improvement both at management level and within the staffing group. For any improvements to be made, however, there will need to be an increase in resources to provide the security section with more drive and direction. The only dedicated security position at Karnet is the Assistant Superintendent Security. There is one other officer carrying out the duties of a Senior Officer Security, but officially there is no such position approved for the prison. For a prison that will potentially hold close to 360 prisoners by the end of the year, this is an entirely inadequate level of security staffing. At the very least, the Department must establish a permanent Senior Officer Security position at Karnet and above this should consider the introduction of an additional security officer.

### *Recommendation 8*

*The Department should increase the number of staff dedicated to the management of security at Karnet Prison Farm.*

As the prisoner population has risen, the workload of the senior management team has increased correspondingly and there is now a definite need for an additional position on the senior management team. As numbers rise, the coordination of prisoner services will become crucial.

### *Recommendation 9*

*The Department should establish an additional position on the senior management team at Karnet Prison Farm.*

Staff training has always been challenging for Karnet. Like most minimum security facilities, Karnet is unable to lock prisoners in their rooms and so it is difficult to identify a regular time when staff can be made available to attend training. Consequently, training has tended to be disorganised and opportunistic. As the prison continues to grow, it will be important for Karnet to identify some way in which training may be effectively delivered to the staff group.

*Recommendation 10*

*Drawing on the Youth Justice Services experience, the Department should make arrangements to ensure that all staff at minimum security facilities are provided with the opportunity to undertake training.*

The prisoner profile at Karnet is characterised by a high proportion of sex offenders. It is the only minimum security prison in the Perth metropolitan area available to house sex offenders, and has always successfully managed to do so without segregating them from other prisoners. Sex offenders tend to be a particularly vulnerable and persecuted group within prisons, but they stated they felt safe and supported at Karnet.

Karnet has consistently housed a disproportionately low number of Aboriginal prisoners. At the time of the 2010 inspection, there were only 22 Aboriginal prisoners at Karnet, representing about 8.5 per cent of the population. Given Karnet's good performance in the provision of constructive work, education and re-entry assistance and the high needs of Aboriginal prisoners in these areas, it is not acceptable that such a small number of Aboriginal prisoners are being given the opportunity to benefit. As Karnet moves to accommodate more prisoners, the Department must make efforts to increase the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners at Karnet.

*Recommendation 11*

*The Department should significantly increase the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners housed at Karnet Prison Farm to better reflect the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners in the wider prison system.*

Recreation has improved immensely at Karnet since the time of the 2007 inspection. The appointment of a second recreation officer in late 2009 has been integral to this improvement. The extra resourcing ensures that the prison now has a recreation officer on site every day of the week. This means that prisoners have greater access to recreation, and it has also given the recreation officers the time and opportunity to develop a detailed recreation plan for the prison, something that has been lacking in the past.

The Office has observed a lack of clarity around the role of recreation in the wider prison system. There is confusion about what, if anything, the Department hopes to achieve by making recreation available to prisoners. The Department should consider the place of recreation within a holistic prison system, taking into account the capacity it has to provide constructive and therapeutic activity for prisoners and the contribution it makes to the safety and control of its prisons and the wellbeing of its prisoners.

*Recommendation 12*

*The Department should define the role of recreation within the Western Australian prison system to better link it with rehabilitative outcomes and strengthen its position as a funding priority.*

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Education and training continues to be delivered well at Karnet despite significant obstacles. The education centre is delivering a good number of courses to a wide range of students within the prison and the range and number of traineeships at Karnet is impressive. At present, the campus manager is the only full-time member of staff in the education centre. There is one part-time administration officer and one Prison Education Coordinator employed on a casual basis for four days per week. From an educational perspective, this level of staffing is unacceptable for a releasing prison of Karnet's size.

### *Recommendation 13*

*The Department should establish at least two full-time Prison Education Coordinator positions at Karnet Prison Farm.*

Delivery of offender treatment programs throughout the prison system suffered a major decline between 2006 and 2008. This state-wide trend was reflected at Karnet, with the previous inspection in 2007 finding that the availability of programs was a real concern.<sup>x</sup> Considerable gains had been made in this area by the time of the 2010 inspection. A full suite of programs had been restored at Karnet in 2009 and the prison was scheduled to host 17 programs in 2010 with an overall capacity of 184 prisoners. For the most part, demand based on existing treatment assessments is being met.

The exception was for Pathways, the intensive program to address substance use addiction, for which a backlog still exists. A number of prisoners approaching their release dates complained that not only were they not given the opportunity to undertake this program, but that newer prisoners with later release dates were being placed ahead of them. This was confirmed when electronic assessment and programs records were analysed.

The previous inspection found that Karnet had done a good job of establishing the Department's case management system in which officers were assigned one or more prisoners with whom they would have contact every six months to track their progress against their Individual Management Plans. This was still being faithfully carried out by officers at Karnet, with most handling a case load of three prisoners. However, such a case management system is very limited in scope and offers little to the prisoner in addressing their needs, providing support or preparing them for release.

In many ways, the superficial nature of case management at Karnet is indicative of the gradually deteriorating relationship between staff and prisoners. As staff distance themselves from prisoners, this sort of meaningful personal contact disappears. This is particularly concerning in a re-entry prison like Karnet. A good case management system involving genuine support from staff is a key part of preparing prisoners for release and successful reintegration into the community.

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x OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 33-34.

# Fact Page

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## **NAME OF FACILITY**

Karnet Prison Farm

## **ROLE OF FACILITY**

Minimum security prison for adult males.

Coordination of and contribution to food production for Western Australian prison system.

## **LOCATION**

78 kilometres south of Perth.

The traditional owners of the land are the Noongar people.

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

Karnet Prison Farm was commissioned as a prison in 1963. The facility had previously been a rehabilitation centre for alcoholics. The two original accommodation units remain in use, and a third unit was built in 2000. Construction of a perimeter fence was completed at Karnet in 2007.

## **LAST INSPECTION**

12-15 February 2007

## **DESIGN CAPACITY OF PRISON**

174

## **NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD AT TIME OF INSPECTION**

238

## **DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

- Unit 1 – 54 standard beds
- Unit 2 – 72 standard beds
- Unit 3 – 48 self-care beds

At the time of the inspection, the 64 prisoners above the design capacity were accommodated in 28 bunk beds in Unit 1 and 36 bunk beds in Unit 2.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 In February 2010, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office) carried out the fourth announced inspection of Karnet Prison Farm. Karnet is a minimum security facility for adult males and typically accommodates prisoners in the last part of their sentence prior to re-entering the community. As such, Karnet is a ‘re-entry prison’ and its primary role should be to provide prisoners with the best possible preparation for release and thereby reduce the likelihood of their re-offending. As a re-entry prison, all aspects of service delivery at Karnet should in some way contribute to or support the successful reintegration of prisoners into the community.
- 1.2 Karnet’s other significant role is in food production for the wider prison system. The farm produces milk, eggs, meat and various fruit and vegetable crops for distribution to prisons throughout the state. In this way, Karnet plays an important role in offsetting the cost of imprisonment for the Western Australian community.
- 1.3 The 2010 inspection took place in the context of severe overcrowding within the Western Australian prison system, and Karnet itself was holding a total of 238 prisoners (64 prisoners more than it was designed to hold). This meant that the prison was around 37 per cent above its design capacity of 174 prisoners. It is worth noting that in the weeks leading up to the inspection the prisoner population at Karnet had been as high as 256. The inspection was therefore focused on the extent to which this overcrowding had affected the operation of the prison.
- 1.4 The previous inspection in 2007 found Karnet to be performing at a high standard. That inspection report described Karnet as a very good prison, demonstrating successful management of sex offenders, strong community acceptance, good re-entry programs and positive relationships between staff and prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Because of this high level of performance, and in order to consolidate Karnet’s role within the prison system, the Office suggested that more prisoners should be given the opportunity to spend time at Karnet.
- 1.5 The key strategic recommendation of the report was to improve and expand Karnet to a capacity of 240 prisoners through appropriate investment and upgrades. The Office proposed the construction of two 64-bed units (one of which would replace the existing Unit 1) with accompanying infrastructure for support services.<sup>2</sup> The Department of Corrective Services (the Department) did not support this recommendation, and gave a number of reasons including environmental considerations; the need for support infrastructure in the event of an expansion; and a low level of demand for minimum security beds. The Department made it clear that an expansion of Karnet was not part of its capital investment planning.

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1 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 15-16

2 *Ibid*, 41.



## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.6 The Office was aware that a major mining company had expressed interest in taking over the site. Although never officially stated by the Department, this was common knowledge and a regular discussion topic both in the prison and in the local community. This naturally created further uncertainty about the future of Karnet, and contributed to the impression that there was a lack of commitment to the prison from the Department. It is certainly arguable that Karnet has not been a priority for the Department for the last decade. While the Department has been vocal in its support of Karnet and justifiably proud of the prison's achievements, this has not been backed up by financial investment. To some extent this is understandable; the Department has many competing priorities to manage, and because Karnet has maintained a good standard of performance the Department has tended to focus its resources on other prisons that present a higher risk. And of course the Department does not have access to unlimited funding, but is heavily reliant on Government support for its budget submissions. Unfortunately, the continual overlooking of Karnet's infrastructure needs has led to a situation in which the prison's good performance is now threatened.
- 1.7 Staff at Karnet expressed the view that the prison has been neglected by the Department in comparison to other prisons. Contrasts were drawn with Wooroloo Prison Farm, the other metropolitan minimum security prison, which has benefited from an extensive capital works program in recent years. Since 2006, Wooroloo has received new, purpose-built and permanent facilities including a health centre, a reception centre and a programs and education centre. More recently, renovations of existing buildings on site have been carried out to increase the capacity of Wooroloo. Karnet, on the other hand, has not seen a major capital works project since the construction of the self-care unit and visits centre in 2000. Facilities such as the education centre, health centre and reception centre are desperately overstretched. Any additional infrastructure that has been provided has come in the form of transportable accommodation which does little to create a sense of permanence and commitment to the prison.
- 1.8 As part of the Department's response to a rapidly rising prisoner population, Karnet is to finally receive a capacity expansion and much-needed investment in infrastructure. The prison will have an additional 120 beds by the end of 2010, bringing the total capacity to 358 prisoners. This means that the capacity will have more than doubled in the three years since the previous inspection. Again, it is worth noting that the additional infrastructure will not be permanent facilities but transportable units.

## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.9 As a result of all these developments, 2010 promises to be a year of challenges and opportunities for Karnet Prison Farm. The current overcrowding represents a threat to the continued good performance of the prison, and in particular has highlighted the inadequacy of the existing infrastructure. The approaching capacity increase will see Karnet transform from a relatively small prison of 174 prisoners to a quite large prison of 358 prisoners. This has the potential to drastically alter the culture and atmosphere of the prison. These are real risks, and yet the impending changes also carry the promise of progress. Karnet will benefit from new and improved infrastructure in many areas, and higher prisoner numbers mean a chance to build upon existing strengths, particularly in the industries area and community work program. If funded adequately and managed effectively, these developments may well provide the foundation for Karnet's success in the future.
- 1.10 All of these factors provided the context and determined the focus of the 2010 inspection and the body of this report. Chapter 2 examines the extent to which Karnet has been able to maintain a high level of performance in its traditional areas of strength. Chapter 3 focuses on those aspects of Karnet that are particularly at risk as a result of the approaching population increase.

# Chapter 2

## KARNET'S PERFORMANCE: PAST AND PRESENT

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- 2.1 This chapter looks specifically at those aspects of Karnet Prison Farm's operations that have historically been delivered to a high standard. Many of these continue to be examples of good performance despite the challenges confronting the prison. However, it is clear that overcrowding coupled with various other factors has had a negative impact on certain areas. Many of these are emerging issues that will only become serious if left unaddressed. Given that the challenges facing Karnet are likely to multiply as the prisoner population increases, it is important to respond to these issues now to ensure that the prison is well-prepared for the changes ahead.

### POSITIVE REHABILITATIVE ENVIRONMENT

- 2.2 Historically, one of the best aspects of Karnet Prison Farm has been its ability to provide a positive atmosphere conducive to rehabilitating prisoners and preparing them for their release into the community. In the past, this has been attributed to the wide variety of constructive activities available to prisoners, and the high level of interaction and good relationship between staff and prisoners in the prison. The natural beauty of the surrounding bushland also plays its part in creating a pleasant environment.
- 2.3 Since the previous inspection, the physical environment of Karnet had been changed dramatically by the commissioning of a secure perimeter fence and gatehouse.<sup>3</sup> This meant that the prison, which had previously been notable for its openness and accessibility, was now enclosed by an imposing four-metre high, steel mesh barrier. At the time of construction, staff and prisoners alike expressed concern about the negative impact that the fence could have on the minimum security atmosphere and philosophy of the prison. It was therefore pleasing to observe that the prison had been largely successful in retaining an appropriately relaxed atmosphere. Key to this success was the practice of leaving the front gate open during the normal working day, as recommended by the Office in the 2007 inspection report.<sup>4</sup> Prison management and staff have shown commitment to maintaining the principles of a minimum security facility, with prisoners given more freedom but also more responsibility. Overall, the prison should be commended for its efforts in this area.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding this, there was evidence that the relationship between staff and prisoners was not as strong as it has been in the past. It must be stressed that staff at Karnet, both custodial and non-custodial, generally treat prisoners with respect. However, the prison has experienced a significant influx of custodial staff, including probationary officers from the training academy and experienced officers transferring from higher security prisons. Prisoners complained that some of these officers had a strong focus on security and were trying to undermine the freedoms that prisoners feel they have rightfully earned by achieving minimum security status. This is a difficult issue to assess because the inspection also found that there was not enough of a focus on security at the prison.<sup>5</sup> In a minimum security environment, security procedures should still be robust, but should allow an appropriate level of freedom for prisoners.

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3 At the time of the previous inspection in 2007, the perimeter fence was under construction and not yet operational.

4 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 14.

5 See below, [3.30].

- 2.5 The inspection team observed that the level of interaction between custodial staff and prisoners had decreased since the time of the previous inspection. Most staff did not interact with prisoners unless approached directly by the prisoner or required to deliver a message. Prisoners told the inspection team that prisoners and officers largely 'keep to themselves' and 'try not to get in each other's way'. There was little of the casual interaction that forms the basis of good dynamic security and healthy prisons that had previously been evident at Karnet. In a re-entry prison like Karnet, it is particularly important for staff to be available to provide support and guidance as prisoners approach their release.
- 2.6 The reduction in interaction between staff and prisoners is a growing risk for the prison. The rising proportion of probationary staff and staff transferring from higher security prisons has been mentioned above as contributing to this problem. Another significant factor has undoubtedly been the significant increase in prisoner numbers that Karnet has experienced since the last inspection. In 2007, Karnet was housing 174 prisoners. At the time of the 2010 inspection, there were 238 prisoners at Karnet, meaning the prison had undergone a 37 per cent increase in three years. As the population grows, officers find themselves under more pressure and have a greater tendency to disengage from the prisoner group. Individual attention drops away as officers focus on the challenges of managing the larger group. Also significant is the fact that this increase has been managed without any additional infrastructure, resulting in an overcrowded prison and more difficult working conditions for staff.
- 2.7 The relationship between staff and prisoners will be further tested by the introduction of 120 additional beds at Karnet. With a total population of around 360 prisoners, there will be an even greater tendency to focus on the group rather than the individual prisoner. Local management must address this issue proactively, and stress to officers the importance of meaningful interaction both to the dynamic security of the prison and to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. At this stage, the relationship between staff and prisoners has not degenerated enough to cause alarm, but there has been a notable change. The opportunity now exists to prevent any further decline and restore the level of interaction to its former strength.

*Recommendation 1*

*The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 2.8 One of Karnet's longstanding strengths has been its close connection with the local community. The community not only accepts the presence of the prison, but actively supports it. This strong relationship is fostered through the Community Liaison Group which meets quarterly and includes representatives from the prison and the community. The stated aims of the group are to:
- provide a forum for dialogue between the community and prison management;
  - ensure local people are informed about developments at the prison;
  - ensure community feedback and concerns are expressed to the prison;
  - increase community awareness of prison activity;
  - increase community work projects; and
  - develop further employment opportunities for prisoners.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.9 The success of this group means that Karnet enjoys one of the best relationships with the local community of any prison in Western Australia. Members of the shire council spoke positively of their relationship with prison management and were particularly appreciative of the work carried out in the community by Karnet prisoners. For Karnet, the support of the local community allows the prison to offer a wide range of work outside the prison, giving prisoners the opportunity to engage in meaningful reparation. In short, this is a mutually beneficial relationship with positive outcomes for all involved.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Meaningful work and training

- 2.10 An enduring feature of Karnet Prison Farm is its ability to provide meaningful employment for the prisoners it accommodates. The employment opportunities available to prisoners provide opportunities for skill development and encourage a good work ethic.
- 2.11 Karnet is very much a 'working prison' and has always been focused on this aspect of its operations. Its role as the provider of produce for the whole prison system is important and has dominated its sense of purpose. In its submission to the Office for the inspection the Department stated Karnet is 'critical as the major supplier of farm produce to all public prisons in the State.'<sup>7</sup> In addition it states that 'the prison population is fully employed in meaningful activities within farming and industrial areas'.<sup>8</sup>
- 2.12 Despite the pressure of increased prisoner numbers the prison continues to provide an adequate quantity of work opportunities in areas that are meaningful and provide skills that enhance employability upon release. There were some cases of prisoners allocated to work positions that do not occupy their time constructively for a full work day, however these were fewer in number than found in most other prisons. In the pre-inspection prisoner survey, 93 per cent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their access to work.

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6 Department of Corrective Services, *Karnet Prison Farm Community Liaison Group – Information for Applicants and Terms of Reference*, March 2009, 1.

7 Department of Corrective Services, *Submission for the Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, 27 January 2010, 1

8 Ibid.

- 2.13 Given the high number of prisoners in the prison, it was surprising to find that the major issue for work places was a lack of prisoner workers. While on paper each work location had a full complement of workers, it was increasingly common for up to three-quarters of these workers to be unavailable on any given day. These absences were due to conflicting commitments, such as court appearances, education, medical appointments, and especially programs.
- 2.14 The recent Government<sup>9</sup> and Departmental focus on program delivery is very welcome. However, a number of issues arise at Karnet with respect to the balance between work and program access. A vastly increased number of programs are available but there has been no change to the constructive working day to allow both work and program objectives to be met effectively.
- 2.15 This was extremely frustrating for Vocational Support Officers (VSOs) who are responsible for the work locations. The prison is a functioning farm responsible for providing set amounts of produce for the wider prison system. In addition there are industries that either support farm activities or have separate external contractual commitments. In all cases, meeting deadlines for supply is extremely important. Not having the allocated workers on hand makes it difficult for many areas to achieve outputs.
- 2.16 Current solutions to address the inadequate worker numbers involve VSOs lending each other workers or one work location delaying its own work to undertake the duties usually carried out by a different work area. For example, during the inspection, section 95 workers had abandoned their current tasks to gather fruit crops that would spoil if not picked. VSOs themselves also regularly have to take on worker roles to complete jobs, which affects their ability to supervise the prisoners allocated to them (creating a potential safety and security risk) and to ensure skilled tasks are properly and safely undertaken (creating an occupational health and safety issue).
- 2.17 It is understandable for prisoners to prioritise programs addressing their offending behaviour and other courses that will assist them in securing release and refraining from reoffending once back in the community. However, the conflicting scheduling of these activities with work is making it difficult for Karnet to meet production demand.
- 2.18 With the prisoner population due to increase in the near future, there are opportunities for the prison to become more innovative in its approach to the constructive day. The prison itself will have to look at the competing demands and how it can best structure the day for prisoners and staff to ensure a full complement of workers while still allowing prisoners to attend to educational and program needs.

*Recommendation 2*

*The prison should develop a constructive day model that incorporates the objectives of work, education and programs and in particular avoids timetable clashes between these different activities.*

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<sup>9</sup> The Hon Christian Porter MLA, Minister for Corrective Services, *Program delivery continues to increase in WA prisons*, media statement (25 November 2009).

- 2.19 As the prisoner population at Karnet is scheduled to increase significantly by the end of 2010, it is essential that plans are established to ensure the ongoing adequacy of employment at the prison. This requires immediate commitment from the prison and the Department to the expansion of existing industries, the creation of new industries and the development of a workable constructive day. By committing resources to achieve these objectives now, Karnet can be fully prepared by the time the additional prisoners arrive.
- 2.20 In December 2009, in anticipation of the population increase Karnet submitted a business case identifying industries for expansion, creation of new industries and additional industrial staffing requirements.<sup>10</sup> The Department was not satisfied with the submission and asked for it to be reworked and resubmitted. In this situation, it is important for the Department to work in cooperation with the prison to ensure that requirements are clear and the submission is accepted. In the end, both the Department and the prison are aiming to maintain the high level and high quality of employment at Karnet.

*Recommendation 3*

*The Department should ensure that Karnet Prison Farm has sufficient staff, resources and infrastructure to maintain the high level of meaningful employment at the prison.*

Section 95 activities

- 2.21 Karnet undertakes a wide range of work in the community with prisoners who have been granted approval under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) to work outside the prison. As a minimum security facility, however, the Office has always stated that a larger number of prisoners at Karnet should be able to access section 95 work to ensure they have more opportunities to get out into the community before they are released.
- 2.22 At the time of the last inspection only one section 95 team was operating with around six to eight prisoners working in the community on a daily basis. This inspection found that the section 95 capacity had expanded to two teams, but this still meant only about 12 prisoners were involved in community work at any one time. Given the increased numbers in the prison, this constituted very limited expansion.
- 2.23 The experience of working in the community provides great benefit to prisoners, especially those who have served long sentences and who may require more assistance to become accustomed to life outside. It is important that, with the continuing increase in Karnet's prisoner population, section 95 work is given priority for expansion and that teams are able to source community work that may enable them to camp or stay out in the community for short periods of time, rather than return to the prison every night. In this regard, a work camp attached to the prison would be very valuable. This would allow the teams to take on work further away from the prison and contribute to a larger number of communities.

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<sup>10</sup> Karnet Prison Farm, *Industry Staffing Proposal – a strategy to meet industrial staffing requirements for a proposed muster of 380* (December 2009).

### Work camp

- 2.24 For a minimum security re-entry prison, the opportunity to send prisoners to a work camp is invaluable. A work camp provides prisoners with meaningful employment and close interaction with the local community, and is one of the best ways to help a prisoner reintegrate into society.
- 2.25 The 2007 inspection report recommended the creation of a work camp or mobile work camp linked to Karnet to provide 'a springboard for community work in a new locality' and 'help to accommodate extra prisoners at a time when prisoner numbers in the system are critically high'.<sup>11</sup> Although no new work camp was ever created, administrative responsibility for the Pardelup Work Camp and Walpole Work Camp was passed from Albany Regional Prison to Karnet in May 2008. Despite the practical hurdle of both camps being more than 300 kilometres from the prison, there were positive outcomes for both the work camps and Karnet. The work camps benefited from a management style with greater regard for minimum security principles (Albany is a maximum security prison); and Karnet had more employment and reintegration opportunities to offer its prisoners.
- 2.26 This arrangement was brought to an end in March 2010 when Pardelup was commissioned as a prison in its own right. Responsibility for Walpole Work Camp was transferred to the new Pardelup Prison Farm. Consequently, Karnet again finds itself in the position of not having a work camp. The need to accommodate more prisoners and the need to provide employment for more prisoners is greater than ever, but there appears to be limited impetus at a Departmental level to create a new work camp for Karnet. The prison itself had identified a nearby property at Whitby Falls as having potential to be converted into a work camp, and a proposal to this effect had been submitted to the Department in January 2009. However, at the time of the inspection, the Department's position in relation to the Whitby Falls property was unclear. The prison had received an initial acknowledgement to their proposal, but no formal response. In the lead-up to a significant population increase at Karnet, the Department should be giving serious consideration to the creation of additional employment opportunities. Expansion of the community work program and creation of a work camp will contribute to this, and at the same time provide an important link to the community and assist in the achievement of rehabilitation and reintegration goals.

#### *Recommendation 4*

*The Department, in conjunction with the prison, should expand the community work program and create a work camp attached to Karnet Prison Farm.*

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11 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 31.



## FARM MANAGEMENT AND FOOD PRODUCTION

- 2.27 The farm at Karnet has always played an important role in contributing produce to the food supply chain for the Western Australian prison system. In the 2007 inspection report, the Office recommended that this role should be further developed by giving Karnet overall responsibility for coordinating the prison system's food production. This arrangement is now in place, with Karnet overseeing production at the prison system's three farms (Karnet, Wooroloo and Pardelup). This has resulted in better cooperation between the sites and enabled the Department to ensure that each farm is producing what the system needs it to produce.
- 2.28 Karnet itself is crucial to the food supply chain because it operates the key production industries of the dairy and abattoir. The expansion of the prisoner population across the system has put additional pressure on the production industries at Karnet and the staff responsible for these areas. These industries do not benefit Karnet alone, but the whole of the system, significantly reducing food costs for the Department. To some extent therefore, Karnet subsidises other facilities because it funds from its own budget the staff and other inputs into the production industries. In fact, the prison has funded minor works projects from within its own budget to keep up with demand for produce within the system. For example, the increased demand for milk necessitated the construction of a new cool room to provide storage space. This project was carried out by Karnet without any additional funding from the Department.
- 2.29 It is difficult to determine what proportion of Karnet's spending goes to projects and resources that benefit the system as a whole as opposed to the prison itself because this is not clearly differentiated in the prison's budget. Consequently, it is not clear exactly how much money Karnet saves the Department each year, nor exactly how much money the Department spends on food production each year. For the sake of accountability, it is essential that the Department has an accurate understanding of these figures. For one thing, it will help the Department to determine how much money can justifiably be invested in food production infrastructure for the future.
- 2.30 The Department should allocate a separate budget to Karnet for activities related to the production of goods for the wider prison system. Items such as machinery, some staff costs and livestock for example, should come from separate budgets.

### *Recommendation 5*

*The Department should provide a separate budget to Karnet Prison Farm for expenses related to food production for the Western Australian prison system.*

## FAMILY CONTACT AND VISITS

- 2.31 Because Karnet is a working prison, visits are restricted to weekends and public holidays, with a single two-hour session available each afternoon. As Karnet is some distance from the suburbs of Perth, this is a major excursion for visitors, especially for those having to use public transport and the bus service provided by the prison from Armadale train station.

- 2.32 The visits centre at Karnet provides perhaps the most pleasant, spacious and family-friendly visiting environment of any custodial facility in Western Australia. This was attested by a number of visitors and prisoners, several of whom stated that they were much more comfortable bringing their children to Karnet than any other prison.
- 2.33 Considerable work has gone into expanding the number of shaded picnic tables to comfortably accommodate increased numbers during visit sessions. A new set of toilets had been built but was not yet operational.
- 2.34 An excellent visitor services facility had also been completed outside the main gate. The Shared Facilities Centre, as it is known, serves as the visitors' centre on the weekend and a staff training centre during the week. It is an impressive asset for the prison, and a significant achievement, having been built almost entirely by Karnet prisoners. However, its opening had been delayed for some months because of a failure to obtain planning approval from the local authority. Thus during the inspection it was still the case that visitors queued in the hot sun for an hour or more before being admitted into the prison. Since that time, the centre has received approval and been opened to visitors.
- 2.35 The Department reviewed the protection of children during visits following a recommendation made in the last inspection report.<sup>12</sup> While no issue was identified, Karnet did increase the number of staff present at visits. This level of staffing provides a far better level of surveillance during visits. The increased number of tables also tended to spread people out more, which reduced the opportunity for untoward interaction.
- 2.36 If prisoner numbers continue to rise as anticipated, the prison will struggle to accommodate any more visitors in the existing two weekend visit sessions. This issue has been acknowledged by Karnet management, and there are plans to introduce two more visit sessions on weekend mornings. In light of this, the prison should also consider providing an additional bus service in the morning.
- 2.37 The current arrangement whereby visitor bookings are taken by gatehouse staff needs to be reviewed. As prisoner numbers escalate and demand for visits increases, this will be an undesirable distraction for gatehouse staff and will potentially compromise the monitoring of the gate. It may also result in a negative experience for visitors trying to book a visit session. Clerical staff chosen for their customer service skills are the most appropriate persons for such a task, not officers juggling multiple demands at the gate. It is also inappropriate for the bookings phone line to remain unanswered outside standard booking hours. Apparently, the current telephone system is too antiquated to allow a message or answering machine – a striking example of the lack of investment discussed earlier in this report.

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12 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 23.

### PEER SUPPORT

- 2.38 The peer support team and services provided by the Prisoner Support Officer at Karnet are central to the continuing good performance of the prison. This is recognised by prison management who are highly supportive of the peer support team. The Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Management is closely involved with the peer support team and meets with them regularly to address their issues directly. The peer support team also express satisfaction that the issues they raise are taken seriously by management.
- 2.39 The team is made up of 10 to 15 prisoners, with appropriate representation of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal prisoners. The Prisoner Support Officer tries to ensure that all members of the team have undertaken the Gatekeeper suicide prevention program, although at the time of the inspection not all members had completed this. Arrangements were being made to rectify this.
- 2.40 One of the most positive functions of the peer support team at Karnet is their involvement in orientation. Whenever a new prisoner arrives at the prison, one member of the peer support team is responsible for their initial orientation which includes a tour of the prison. This is a particularly effective way of putting a new prisoner at ease.
- 2.41 The peer support team is also heavily involved in the Karnet's anti-bullying strategy, and members are expected to lead by example and make it clear that bullying is not tolerated within the prison. Posters outlining (and condemning) the various forms of bullying are highly visible throughout the prison, and the anti-bullying strategy is seen as a high priority by management. Evidence that the strategy is successful can be seen in the fact that Karnet is able to safely integrate its sex offender population with other prisoners, and has done so for many years now.

### PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

- 2.42 Release preparation is a strong point at Karnet and it was pleasing to see that the establishment of the Transitional Manager position in 2008 has helped take this area to new heights. This officer has worked hard to create new opportunities for pre-release programs and services, and implemented processes to ensure that every prisoner has access to these. The Transitional Manager meets every new prisoner during their orientation and provides a check list of all programs and services for which they can apply. This is a very good practice that should be implemented more widely across the prison system.
- 2.43 Karnet makes available an impressive range of voluntary courses and programs which are delivered by external service providers and address a variety of personal development needs (as distinct from the programs delivered by the Department aimed at addressing offending behaviour). These included:
- Real Men in Real Relationships (provided by Anglicare Kinway);
  - Challenging the Fury Within: Strategies for Regulating Anger (Kinway);
  - The Sycamore Tree Project reconciling offenders and victims (Chaplains);
  - GATE Program (Gaining Access to Employment);

- Living Skills Program (Outcare);
- Alternatives to Violence (Quakers); and
- DRUMBEAT (Discovering Relationships using Music – Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes & Thoughts).

2.44 Other needs and services on the checklist included:

- finding accommodation;
- opening a bank account;
- obtaining a birth certificate, motor driver's licence, Medicare card or proof of age card;
- contacting the Child Support Agency, Department for Child Protection or Family Dispute & Resolution Agency,
- paying fines,
- obtaining legal advice,
- engaging with a substance use counsellor,
- joining Alcoholics Anonymous; and
- getting help with transport home.

2.45 The Transitional Manager makes appropriate referrals, assigns people to group programs and tracks their progress. Prisoners can submit new requests either directly or through their unit. In a sense, the Transitional Manager offers a far more practical and personal form of case management than that offered through the official case management system. The voluntary programs provided offer excellent opportunities for prisoners to address their personal issues in ways that are profoundly relevant to prevention of reoffending, including better understanding of relationships, anger, victims, substance use, cognitive skills, life skills and job-seeking skills.

2.46 One area of weakness at Karnet in release preparation is the lack of help for prisoners in preparing parole plans. Staff from the assessments team give prisoners notice of when their parole plan is due and can also provide a template. Beyond that, the only assistance available within the prison is offered by a member of the peer support team. This was another indication of the lack of engagement and interaction between officers and prisoners. If a truly meaningful case management system were in place, then prisoners would receive assistance with their parole plans from their case manager.<sup>13</sup>

2.47 The Case Management Coordinator and Prison-Based Senior Community Corrections Officer work together in preparing and assessing applications from medium-term prisoners for home leave or re-entry release orders, and from long-term prisoners and indefinite prisoners for a re-socialisation program prior to consideration of release applications. Many of the latter cases also necessarily involve either the Dangerous Sex Offenders Unit or the Forensic Consultant Team from the Department.

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13 For further discussion see 'Individual case management' below.

- 2.48 The position of Prison-Based Community Corrections Officer is currently under review within the Department. This position is an essential component in pre-release planning and assessment for a high-risk group of prisoners, so care will be needed to ensure that any change does not diminish such a vital service.

#### PRISONER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

- 2.49 One of the major initiatives targeted at prisoners due for release is the Prisoner Employment Program, which commenced at Karnet in September 2008. The aim of the program is to allow prisoners to engage in paid work as early as 12 months before their release, or to become registered as a job seeker and engage with a community job network provider to find and prepare for employment. Such a program provides obvious advantages to prisoners in becoming accustomed to their working environment before release and easing their transition to community life. Money earned beyond the modest board payable to the prison can be released to their families or saved towards bonds, furniture or other essentials on release.
- 2.50 Regrettably, the Prisoner Employment Program at Karnet, as at other sites, was underperforming. This is in no way a reflection on the Employment Coordinator, whose enthusiasm is unquestionable as evidenced by the Employment Expo held at Karnet in September 2009.
- 2.51 In a releasing prison such as Karnet, it would be reasonable to assume that most prisoners already assessed as suitable for section 95 activities would be eligible to work or to seek employment. In practice, the program is hindered by the bureaucratic process. At the time of the inspection, only one prisoner was approved for employment and another two for job-seeking. This low level of participation is by no means limited to Karnet. During the most recent inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm there were three prisoners involved<sup>14</sup> and at the inspection of Boronia Pre-Release Centre there were two.<sup>15</sup>
- 2.52 The Office has previously identified that strict eligibility criteria are restricting the number of prisoners accessing the Prisoner Employment Program.<sup>16</sup> Prisoners must have completed more than half of their minimum sentence and have less than 12 months remaining. They must also be medically fit, be approved as suitable by the Department, and have a good work and behaviour history. It appears that at best, applications are approved in around three months, which is far too long for most employers to hold a vacancy. It is unclear why the process takes so long when applicants are rated minimum security and may well have already been working outside the prison on section 95 activities.
- 2.53 A further issue is that the majority of prisoners who had been successful in the program were those who were quite likely to secure employment even without any assistance. This included prisoners who were returning to work for their previous employer or a family business, and prisoners returning to an established career or trade. Such work placements are of course valuable, but the focus of the Prisoner Employment Program should be on those prisoners less likely to find work easily upon release.

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14 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009), 25-26.

15 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 62 (November 2009), 21-22.

16 Ibid.

- 2.54 Due to the location of Karnet, only employment in rural areas or the southern outskirts of suburban Perth was accessible and prisoners had to personally obtain and comprehensively insure a vehicle before being considered for a placement. This of course was only possible for a minority of prisoners. If the program is to succeed, workers should be based in proximity to their employment. This is problematic for both Karnet and Wooroloo because they are located on the very outskirts of the Perth metropolitan area. The Department needs to identify other options to make the program more accessible for minimum security prisoners in Perth. A suburban work release facility may be worth considering.
- 2.55 Overall, the Office believes that the Prisoner Employment Program needs rethinking. Employers with vacancies should not have to wait so long before prisoners can commence following a preliminary assessment. They are also entitled to be matched with the person best fitted for the position from a larger pool, not just the one or two currently approved for job-seeking. Final assessments should be completed within a strict time-frame.
- 2.56 Since the introduction of the Prisoner Employment Program, the Office has been reluctant to criticise its operation because the underlying philosophy is sound. However, the Office has become increasingly concerned that the program is not achieving as much as it should be. It must be stressed that this is not an attack on the Prisoner Employment Program itself, but rather on the unwieldy bureaucratic process that is preventing the program from fulfilling its potential.

*Recommendation 6*

*The Department should modify the approval process and eligibility criteria for the Prisoner Employment Program to make it accessible to a greater number of prisoners.*

## HEALTH SERVICES

- 2.57 Unlike the majority of prisons in Western Australia, Karnet presented with very few concerns from prisoners or staff about access to health care. Staff in the health centre are experienced and most have been at Karnet for some years. The centre responds to requests for medical appointments promptly and provides a high level of care. The centre is also active in health promotion and education.
- 2.58 The pre-inspection prisoner survey indicated that 78 per cent of respondents were satisfied with access to health services, and prisoners spoken to during the inspection had no complaints. In fact, prisoners praised health services at Karnet in comparison to services at other prisons in the state.

2.59 As with all other areas of service delivery, it is anticipated that demand for health services will rise as the prisoner population increases. In this context, the biggest obstacle facing the health centre is a lack of space. The necessary increase in provision of health services will only be possible if additional consulting rooms are made available. At present there are plans to open a new dental therapy room, but this will not address the basic need for more rooms to allow more appointments with general practitioners and other visiting specialists. The provision of additional infrastructure must be a priority if the centre is to maintain its current level of good performance.

#### FOOD

- 2.60 Food is a common cause of complaint for prisoners throughout the prison system but this was not the case at Karnet. Eighty-two per cent of respondents to the pre-inspection prisoner survey were satisfied with both the quality and quantity of food available at Karnet. In comparison to results from other prisons, this was so unusually high as to be noteworthy. No doubt the prison's role in food production for the system gives it access to the freshest produce, but great credit must go to the staff and prisoners who work in the kitchen. Karnet consistently produces meals of the highest quality, and this remains one of the incentives for prisoners who live there.
- 2.61 In 2009, the kitchen was given a full refurbishment. This is one of the few infrastructure upgrades that Karnet has received in recent times. As a result the kitchen is now well-equipped to cope with the approaching population increase. However, the adjacent dining room is already struggling to accommodate existing numbers. Karnet management have been forced to consider splitting meal times into two shifts. If this occurs it will be important to ensure an equitable split of time with enough time given for both shifts to complete their meals. This will need to be addressed prior to the arrival of more prisoners.
- 2.62 At present, only prisoners from Units 1 and 2 use the dining room. Prisoners in the self-care unit cook their own food. It was a concern for the Office that very few self-care prisoners had completed a food safety and hygiene course. In fact, very few prisoners at all had completed such a course. There are a high proportion of prisoners at Karnet involved in handling of food products in some way (whether preparation, packaging, storage, or serving), and all of them should have received food safety and hygiene training. The prison should aim to provide this training to all prisoners who enter the prison because most will ultimately become involved in food production or preparation at some point.

# Chapter 3

## THE FUTURE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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- 3.1 The immediate future for Karnet Prison Farm promises a capacity increase of 120 beds with various accompanying capital works projects and infrastructure upgrades. As stated in the introduction to this report, this will be a challenge for the prison, but also represents an opportunity for Karnet to move forward. In the past, Karnet has suffered from a lack of investment and been forced to operate with ageing infrastructure and insufficient resources. Now, provided that adequate funding is made available, the prison is in a position to address some of its weaknesses and build upon its strengths. At the same time, if the necessary financial support is not forthcoming, the proposed capacity increase poses a serious threat to the continued good performance of the prison.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- 3.2 The most obvious symptom of neglect at Karnet is the degraded and inadequate infrastructure. Almost every service area in the prison has been affected to a greater or lesser extent by this lack of investment. Although there have been some notable additions, much of the prison infrastructure has remained unchanged since it opened. Given that the prisoner population has increased fourfold since then, it is not surprising that many areas are under strain.

#### Accommodation units

- 3.3 Karnet Prison Farm has three accommodation units. Units 1 and 2 are standard accommodation units and were in place when the prison commenced operations in 1963. Unit 2 was expanded in 2005 with the addition of two transportable units containing 12 rooms. Unit 3 provides self-care accommodation and was opened in 2000.
- 3.4 Unit 3 offers a good standard of accommodation for prisoners, but the two older units have been physically deteriorating for several years. Living conditions for prisoners in these units have grown steadily worse, and the Office has long argued that Unit 1 in particular does not provide an acceptable standard of accommodation. Indeed, the Office recommended that Unit 1 be replaced as far back as 2001.<sup>17</sup> In 2007, the Office again recommended the replacement of Unit 1 as part of an expansion that would increase Karnet's capacity to 240 prisoners. As discussed earlier in this report, these recommendations were not supported by the Department. With another three years elapsed, the physical condition of both Unit 1 and Unit 2 has further degenerated. The building exteriors are in various stages of dilapidation, with rotting drainpipes and rust throughout. Ingrained dirt and mould was evident in cells and common living areas, and prisoners reported that cockroach infestations were a recurring problem. More generally, the overall design of these units is fundamentally outdated, with low ceilings and an absence of natural light creating an oppressive feel at odds with the otherwise positive atmosphere of the prison. Ventilation in the units is poor, making stale air a problem and contributing to the spread of mould.

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17 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 5 (April/May 2001), 63.



- 3.5 The two transportable buildings attached to Unit 2 present their own specific issues. The buildings are situated facing each other, with the room doors opening onto a corridor that is closed off at one end. As a result, air flow through the area is minimal. It also means that the area has only one exit which, coupled with the absence of any fire sprinklers, creates a significant risk in the event of fire.
- 3.6 The rooms themselves have thin walls, leading to both a lack of privacy and poor temperature control. Prisoners complained that the rooms were particularly hot in summer and cold in winter. Although similar transportable accommodation is used by mining companies in the North-West, it is worth noting that they are always air-conditioned. The rooms at Karnet have no such provisions.
- 3.7 Poor living conditions throughout the prison have been exacerbated by the elevated prisoner numbers. Like most other prisons in Western Australia at this time, Karnet is experiencing significant overcrowding. The irony is that Karnet now houses close to the Office's 2007 recommendation of 240 prisoners, but there have been no corresponding additions or upgrades to infrastructure.
- 3.8 The increase in prisoner numbers has been achieved entirely through double-bunking, with a high proportion of rooms now fitted with bunk beds. Almost 54 per cent of prisoners at Karnet were sharing a room. In the months leading up to the inspection the prison was also forced to accommodate a number of prisoners on mattresses on floors because of an urgent need for beds. The impact of this sort of overcrowding is particularly acute at Karnet because most of the rooms are quite small. The double-bunked rooms provide an extremely cramped living space for two adult men. Prisoners complained of insufficient storage space, and it was common to find power sockets dangerously overloaded because there were twice as many electrical appliances in each room. The small size of the rooms means that the bunk beds sit against the window, which impedes both air flow and natural light.
- 3.9 Many prisoners were dissatisfied at the conditions in which they were expected to live. Prisoners who achieve minimum security classification expect to receive some sort of reward for their status, and in the past Karnet was an attractive place to live and a good incentive for minimum security prisoners. This is less the case now. Karnet is now a very overcrowded place in which to live, and even the proposed capital works expansion is unlikely to change this.
- 3.10 As part of the state-wide capital works plan aimed at addressing the shortage of prison accommodation, Karnet will receive an additional 120 beds. At the time of the inspection, this project was to be completed by May 2010. The project subsequently suffered significant delays, and by May the initial ground works had only just commenced. The remaining construction work was expected to take at least another three months. At the time of writing, no firm completion date was available.

- 3.11 This expansion is made up of two parts. Firstly, a new unit (Unit 4) will be created out of transportable buildings, providing 48 rooms. Each room will be designed to accommodate two prisoners and include an ensuite shower and toilet. An additional two transportable buildings will serve as day room facilities for this new unit.
- 3.12 The second part of the expansion involves the addition of a further three transportable buildings to Unit 2, which will provide an additional 12 rooms. The configuration of the rooms will be the same as in Unit 4 described above.
- 3.13 Although these new units will still require prisoners to share rooms, living conditions will be far better because the rooms are actually designed to accommodate two people. This will not, however, provide any relief to those prisoners stuck in the old units. Even as the new infrastructure is introduced, it will be important to avoid further neglect of the existing infrastructure.
- 3.14 At present, although Karnet will receive an additional 120 beds, it is unclear whether this will allow the prison to remove any of the existing double-bunking. Current trends in prisoner population growth make it unlikely that the Department will be able to afford to remove any beds. Consequently, it is probable that Karnet will end up with 120 prisoners on top of its existing 238.

#### Staff amenities

- 3.15 As prisoner numbers at Karnet have grown, prison officer numbers have increased accordingly. However, there has been no corresponding expansion or upgrade of staff facilities. As with prisoner accommodation, conditions are especially poor in the older Units 1 and 2.
- 3.16 The unit offices are simply too small to comfortably accommodate the number of officers now assigned to each unit. If all officers are in the office at the same time the space is so crowded that moving around is difficult. There is no space in the units for officers to take their meal breaks, and the single toilet available in each unit is inadequate. Like the prisoner rooms, the unit offices show their age. They provide trying working conditions for staff who are already under added pressure because of higher prisoner numbers.

#### Water supply, sewerage system and other services

- 3.17 In the past, availability of water has been a serious issue for Karnet. Because the prison is not connected to the mains water supply and is entirely dependent on dam water, it is vulnerable to drought. Water levels in the dam are currently good, and prison management have plans to take better advantage of other water catchment areas on the farm. However, the long-term viability of the water supply remains unpredictable, and the approaching increase in prisoner numbers elevates the risk.
- 3.18 The Department has engaged a consultant to undertake a water resource assessment at Karnet in anticipation of the prison expansion. Supply and management issues associated with delivery of potable and non-potable water will be assessed against the worst-case scenario of a two-year continuous drought. However, at the time of the inspection, despite the intent to increase numbers, this assessment was still under way.

- 3.19 There were claims from both staff and prisoners that the water supply at Karnet was contaminated a few months prior to the inspection, with several staff members and prisoners stating that they became ill after drinking water at the prison. The Office was unable to substantiate these claims. However, whether or not this was actually the case, it is absolutely essential that the Department ensures a safe and reliable water supply for Karnet. If contamination of the water supply ever is confirmed, the Department is at risk of legal liability.
- 3.20 The concerns about contamination of the water supply were closely linked to concerns about the sewerage system. The existing system was struggling to cope with the increased prisoner numbers, exemplified by the fact that two prisoners were employed to shovel excrement to prevent overflow. The system will certainly not handle a further 120 prisoners. This had been recognised by the Department, and an upgrade of the sewerage system was included in the capital works plan associated with the expansion.
- 3.21 Also scheduled for upgrades were the electricity supply and hot water supply. The shortage of hot water in particular has been a common cause of complaint for prisoners in the past 12 months. At Karnet this is not only an issue of comfort. There are implications for hygiene if prisoners employed on the farm or in the abattoir are not able to access a hot shower at the conclusion of their working day.

#### Other facilities

- 3.22 There are a number of other facilities within the prison that have been desperately in need of extension for many years. With the approaching capacity increase, the prison has finally received approval for several of these projects.
- 3.23 A new prisoner reception facility is to be constructed to the east of the medical centre. The current reception centre is far too small, with reception officers working in unacceptably cramped conditions. Prisoner property is stored in sea containers nearby because the reception centre itself does not have enough space.
- 3.24 The health centre will expand into the old reception centre, with a new dental therapy room. However, as discussed above, there will still be a need for additional consulting rooms in the health centre to adequately cater for the expanded prisoner population.
- 3.25 A new laundry will be constructed next to the existing laundry building, with the old building to be converted into storeroom. The existing laundry does not have the capacity for even the current prisoner population. Some of Karnet's laundry is currently sent to Hakea Prison. The new facility will allow Karnet to handle all laundry for the increased population.

- 3.26 The investment in these facilities is very positive for the prison, but there are other areas such as the education centre<sup>18</sup> and the dining room<sup>19</sup>, that will struggle to cope with higher numbers and also need to be considered for expansion. Because Karnet has seen so little capital investment for so long, many areas of the prison remain inadequate for the current prisoner numbers, let alone any increase. The biggest risk for the prison will be in the existing infrastructure, most of which is after all more than 45 years old. A comprehensive renovation and maintenance program will be an absolute necessity.

*Recommendation 7*

*The Department's strategic infrastructure planning should address all infrastructure deficits at Karnet Prison Farm and ensure that existing facilities are maintained and where necessary upgraded to an acceptable standard.*

## SECURITY

### Dynamic security

- 3.27 The concept of dynamic security relies heavily on good interaction between staff and prisoners to gather intelligence and identify problems. Historically, Karnet has had very effective dynamic security. In 2010, the inspection found that there was still evidence of successful dynamic security and collection of valuable intelligence. However, it was equally clear that this was not as strong as it had been in the past, and there was a risk that it would continue to deteriorate.
- 3.28 This was largely because of the decreasing interaction between staff and prisoners at the prison, which has already been linked to the growing prisoner numbers in the prison.<sup>20</sup> Given that prisoner numbers are due to rise even further by the end of 2010, it seems likely that this situation will get worse unless some sort of action is taken by management. However, the ability for the prison to address this and other security needs is compromised by the low level of resourcing available.
- 3.29 The only dedicated security position at Karnet is the Assistant Superintendent Security. There is one other officer carrying out the duties of a Senior Officer Security, but officially there is no such position approved for the prison. For a prison that will potentially hold close to 360 prisoners by the end of the year, this is an entirely inadequate level of security staffing. It impacts on the ability of Karnet management to promote security awareness within the prison, and is perhaps most clearly seen in the prison's difficulty in maintaining full compliance with procedural security requirements.

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18 See discussion under 'Education' below.

19 See discussion under 'Food' above.

20 See discussion under 'Positive rehabilitative environment' above.

### Procedural security and control of substance use

- 3.30 Previous inspections have identified weaknesses in procedural security at Karnet with consequent impact on the ability to minimise use of illicit substances within the prison.<sup>21</sup> Infrequent use of drug detection dogs and insufficient searching of cells, common areas, workplaces and visitors were identified as particular areas of concern in the past.<sup>22</sup> The 2010 inspection found some improvements in this area, but overall many gaps remained. It is of course appropriate that there is a lower focus on security in the minimum security environment of Karnet than in more secure prisons. However, a number of staff expressed concern that standards had dropped to an unacceptable level. There is a need for the whole area of security to be reinvigorated at Karnet to increase awareness of and compliance with security requirements.
- 3.31 Prevention of substance use has always been challenging for Karnet because of the open nature of the prison. It was hoped that the introduction of the perimeter fence would help to reduce the availability of drugs within the prison, but the 2010 inspection found that this was not necessarily the case. In pre-inspection surveys both staff and prisoners identified failure to prevent drug use in the prison as a concern. This was one of the few identified problem areas in a prison that otherwise scored very well in staff and prisoner surveys. As outlined in previous inspection reports,<sup>23</sup> the Office has specific concerns about the impact of substance use at a working prison like Karnet. There is elevated risk associated with drug-impaired prisoners using heavy machinery and other dangerous equipment on a daily basis in the industrial workshops, on the farm, and in the abattoir.
- 3.32 Although there have been some reductions in positive urinalysis results since the fence was installed, these improvements have not been maintained. Quarterly prevalence testing results<sup>24</sup> from September 2008 to January 2010 showed that positive urinalysis rates have varied from a high of 25 per cent in September 2009 quarter to a low of 8.5 per cent in March 2009. Results in January 2010 just prior to the inspection were again quite high with 15.7 per cent of prisoners testing positive. The Department has set a benchmark of 10 per cent or below, and for the 16-month period mentioned above, Karnet only met the benchmark once.
- 3.33 The vast majority of positive results at Karnet indicate cannabis use. Staff (and many prisoners) were unhappy that the security classification scoring system effectively allowed prisoners to remain in minimum security at Karnet despite repeated positive urine tests for cannabis use. This undermines the prison's efforts to prevent drug use, and is extremely frustrating for staff.

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21 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 15-16; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 26 (March 2005), 16-17.

22 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 15.

23 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 18; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 26 (March 2005), 16-17.

24 Prevalence testing is random testing that is centrally coordinated and done on a quarterly basis in all prisons. Each prison is provided with a randomly generated list of prisoners for testing. This testing, which is truly random, provides the best available evidence on the true level of drug use in a prison.

- 3.34 Although the main part of the prison is now contained within a secure perimeter, the industrial workshops and extensive farm property remain outside the fence. A high proportion of prisoners leave the confines of the fence every day for work and so there remains ample opportunity for the smuggling of contraband items into the prison. Security staffing is insufficient to allow adequate patrolling of the farm boundaries.
- 3.35 Despite the identified security weaknesses at Karnet, there is a good level of commitment to improvement both at management level and within the staffing group. For any improvements to be made, however, there will need to be an increase in resources to provide the security section with more drive and direction. At the very least, the Department must establish a permanent Senior Officer Security position at Karnet and above this should consider the introduction of an additional security officer. This level of resourcing is currently in place at the state's other prison farm, Wooroloo, and there is no reason why Karnet should not be equivalently staffed.

*Recommendation 8*

*The Department should increase the number of staff dedicated to the management of security at Karnet Prison Farm.*

## STAFF

### Management team

- 3.36 For many years, Karnet had been well-served by a stable and experienced senior management team. This is undoubtedly one of the factors behind the prison's sustained high level of performance. This stability will be disrupted throughout 2010 as the substantive Superintendent approaches retirement at the end of the year and acquires leave owed. The Department will need to manage this transition carefully, particularly because this will be a crucial 12 months for the prison as the new units are constructed and the prisoner population expands.
- 3.37 As the prisoner population has risen, the workload of the senior management team has increased correspondingly. Human resources and finance staffing has been increased in the last 12 months and this has relieved some of the pressure on the Business Manager. However, with the Karnet population projected to reach 356 in 2010 there is a definite need for an additional position on the senior management team. The Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Management position at Karnet carries a particularly heavy workload, and is in need of support. A similar issue was identified at Wooroloo Prison Farm during the 2009 inspection,<sup>25</sup> and an Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Services position was subsequently approved by the Department for that facility. Given that the prisoner population at Wooroloo and Karnet will ultimately be the same, there is equal justification for Karnet to be granted an equivalent management position. As numbers rise, the coordination of prisoner services, especially the increased number of rehabilitation programs, will become crucial.

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25 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009), 16-17.

*Recommendation 9*

*The Department should establish an additional position on the senior management team at Karnet Prison Farm.*

**Staff profile and numbers**

- 3.38 Karnet is in a strong position in terms of staffing levels, with only three vacancies across all positions (both custodial and non-custodial) in the entire prison. The total number of full-time equivalent positions at Karnet is 100.5, although this will increase in response to the approaching capacity increase. Positively, at the time of the inspection the Department had already begun transferring additional custodial staff to Karnet. The prison's approved number of prison officers was 35.5, but there were actually 65 prison officers on the roster. This means that the prison is well-placed to prepare for the capacity increase.
- 3.39 Karnet has traditionally not received probationary officers from the training academy, but this policy changed not long before the inspection. The prison had recently received its first group of probationary officers and was expecting more in the near future. Local management were in support of this development and expressed the view that it would be good for the prison to experience fresh ideas and enthusiasm from new staff. Prison officers also thought it was a positive move, but pointed out that their workload would increase because of the need to supervise probationary officers. They were also concerned that probationary officers who came to work in a minimum security prison after graduating from the academy would be poorly prepared for working in a higher security prison if they later transferred. These concerns are valid, but there are also specific skills to be gained from working in a minimum security environment. It should be possible to address any identified shortfalls in knowledge or competency through training.

**Training**

- 3.40 Staff training has always been challenging for Karnet. Like most minimum security facilities, Karnet is unable to lock prisoners in their rooms and so it is difficult to identify a regular time when staff can be made available to attend training. Consequently, training has tended to be disorganised and opportunistic.
- 3.41 As part of the Department's response to identified training deficits throughout the state, a Senior Officer Training was appointed at Karnet in November 2008. This has been a big step forward for Karnet. Although the same obstacles remain, the Senior Officer Training position has brought some crucial direction and organisation to the area of training. The prison now has a comprehensive formal Training Plan<sup>26</sup> and has introduced a Training Communication Form to track self-identified training needs of staff. Importantly, the Senior Officer Training is a strong advocate for training within the prison.

26 Karnet Prison Farm, *Karnet Prison Farm Training Business Plan 2009 – 2010* (December 2009).

- 3.42 The construction of the Shared Facilities Centre in front of the prison, which is used in part for staff training, has been an important development. However, although there is now a dedicated venue available, it is still just as difficult to relieve staff of their duties in order to make time for training. It remains common for training to be run for groups of less than five, which is a highly inefficient method of delivery.
- 3.43 The workload of the Senior Officer Training has increased (and will continue to increase) as staff numbers rise in response to prisoner numbers. In addition, the introduction of probationary officers to the prison brings with it a whole new level of training requirements. Even without these extra stressors, training delivery at Karnet is failing to meet needs. Training deficits exist in key areas such as use of restraints and chemical agents, and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. Despite the best efforts of the Senior Officer Training, training is reactive rather than proactive, with the prison struggling to achieve even basic compliance requirements. As the prison continues to grow, it will be important for Karnet to identify some way in which training may be effectively delivered to the staff group.
- 3.44 In fact, given that this is an issue common to minimum security facilities in Western Australia,<sup>27</sup> there is a need for the Department to devise a strategy to address it at a systemic level. The Department may find that a solution already exists within its own organisation. The Youth Justice Services division faces similar difficulties in providing training to its staff in the two juvenile detention centres and has implemented a strategy that overcomes the problem. This involves delivering all training to staff in a three-week period during which staff are not permitted to take leave. This means that staff are available to relieve each other during the day, allowing training to take place without affecting the operation of the centre. There is of course a cost associated with this but investment in staff training should be a priority for the Department. The strategy has so far been successful in the juvenile custodial estate. The Department should consider some way to achieve a similar outcome in its adult minimum security facilities.

*Recommendation 10*

*Drawing on the Youth Justice Services experience, the Department should make arrangements to ensure that all staff at minimum security facilities are provided with the opportunity to undertake training.*

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27 See OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009), 15-16.



## PHOTOGRAPHS

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*The extension to Unit 2 which was created with transportable units.*



*A transportable unit used as office space by staff including the Transitional Manager, Employment Coordinator and Community Corrections Officer.*

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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*Sea containers utilised as storage space for prisoner property.*



*Two transportable units to be used as program rooms were being installed at the time of the inspection.*

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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*The visits centre provides a positive atmosphere for prisoners and their families during visit sessions.*



*The new Shared Facilities Centre serves as the visitors' centre on the weekend and a staff training centre during the week. It is an impressive asset for the prison, and a significant achievement, having been built almost entirely by Karnet prisoners.*

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## PRISONER PROFILE

### Sex offenders

- 3.45 The prisoner profile at Karnet is characterised by a high proportion of sex offenders. It is the only minimum security prison in the Perth metropolitan area available to house sex offenders,<sup>28</sup> and has always successfully managed to do so without segregating them from other prisoners. This situation remained unchanged at the 2010 inspection, with sex offenders making up approximately 45 per cent of the total prisoner population. Sex offenders tend to be a particularly vulnerable and persecuted group within prisons, but they stated they felt safe and supported at Karnet. It was especially pleasing to hear that staff are quick to react to any threats or abuse directed towards this group by other prisoners. This is evidence of the success of the prison's anti-bullying strategy.
- 3.46 One of the concerns for the Office in the lead-up to the inspection was the potential for this sense of safety and security amongst sex offenders to be destroyed by the increase in prisoner numbers. If the proportion of sex offenders at Karnet decreases with the influx of new prisoners, it is likely that they will begin to feel more vulnerable. The Department has expressed confidence that the high proportion of sex offenders at Karnet will be maintained after the capacity increase so perhaps this issue will not arise. Nevertheless, this situation will need to be monitored and the prison may need to make extra efforts to ensure the continued success of its anti-bullying strategy.

### Aboriginal prisoners

- 3.47 Karnet has consistently housed a disproportionately low number of Aboriginal prisoners. The previous inspection report recommended that the prison should develop 'a strategy aimed at increasing the proportion of indigenous prisoners'.<sup>29</sup> The Department supported this recommendation but there has been little progress in this area. At the time of the 2010 inspection, there were only 22 Aboriginal prisoners at Karnet, representing about 8.5 per cent of the population. It is easily the lowest proportion of Aboriginal prisoners in any prison in Western Australia. This is grossly disproportionate when compared to the fact that Aboriginal men make up over 40 per cent of the total prisoner population in the state.
- 3.48 Given Karnet's good performance in the provision of constructive work, education and re-entry assistance and the high needs of Aboriginal prisoners in these areas, it is not acceptable that such a small number of Aboriginal prisoners are being given the opportunity to benefit. Karnet management themselves have limited control over the prisoners sent to their prison. Prisoners are assessed at the beginning of their sentences to determine their path through the system and where they will ultimately be accommodated should they attain minimum security. In the metropolitan area this is completed at the Hakea Prison Assessments Centre, where the needs and priorities for the prisoner are identified and the most appropriate prison to match these is placed on their plan. It is therefore at this point that Aboriginal prisoners are not being identified for placement at Karnet. Although there is no official policy, it has

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28 Wooroloo Prison Farm does not accommodate sex offenders because of a longstanding agreement with the local community.

29 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 21.

become common practice for minimum security Aboriginal prisoners to be sent to Wooroloo rather than Karnet, regardless of factors such as family access. For many Aboriginal prisoners, Karnet will be a more convenient location for their families to visit than Wooroloo, and would therefore be a more appropriate placement option.

- 3.49 It is also worth noting that the Aboriginal prisoners spoken to by the inspection team were generally happy at Karnet. They enjoyed the employment available to them, and the location and natural environment of the prison. The high quality of the food was a big attraction, and they were satisfied with their access to traditional cultural food with a cook-up of kangaroo meat held on a monthly basis. They spoke positively of the Aboriginal representation on the peer support team and the Indigenous Services Committee. They also noted that the proposal to run a Noongar language course in the education centre was a particularly good development. The only negative point raised by the Aboriginal prisoners was that recreation opportunities were better at Wooroloo than at Karnet.
- 3.50 Karnet is a potentially valuable and beneficial environment for all prisoners, and Aboriginal prisoners should be given the opportunity to make the most of this. All prisoners, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, should be placed in prisons according to factors such as programmatic and educational needs, and access to family. As Karnet moves to accommodate more prisoners, the Department must make efforts to increase the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners at Karnet. This will require changing attitudes within the Hakea Prison Assessments Centre, and perhaps also changing the attitudes of Aboriginal prisoners who have grown equally accustomed to being sent to Wooroloo rather than Karnet.

*Recommendation 11*

*The Department should significantly increase the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners housed at Karnet Prison Farm to better reflect the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners in the wider prison system.*

## RECREATION

- 3.51 Recreation has improved immensely at Karnet since the time of the 2007 inspection. The appointment of a second recreation officer in late 2009 has been integral to this improvement. The extra resourcing ensures that the prison now has a recreation officer on site every day of the week. This means that prisoners have greater access to recreation, and it has also given the recreation officers the time and opportunity to develop a detailed recreation plan for the prison, something that has been lacking in the past. This plan outlines not just the immediate recreation program, but also looks forward strategically to identify resource requirements, policy development needs and promotional opportunities for the future.
- 3.52 In the past, many of the recreational activities at Karnet were organised by prisoners and suffered from a lack of coordination and supervision by recreation officers. It is therefore very positive that the prison now has a formal recreation plan, offering a good range of recreational options, suitable for all prisoner demographics.

- 3.53 Central to the recreation plan is the expansion of prisoner involvement in community-based sporting competitions. This issue has stirred controversy in the media in the past 12 months, but provided that participating prisoners undergo a proper risk assessment and there are suitable policies and guidelines in place, the Office supports all such initiatives. For minimum security prisoners approaching release, being involved in sporting activities outside of the prison is extremely valuable. There can be few better ways to help a prisoner reintegrate into the community.
- 3.54 There have been good additions to recreation infrastructure at Karnet since the previous inspection. A new gymnasium has been constructed and the range of weight-lifting and exercise equipment available is unparalleled within the prison system. The old gymnasium has been converted into a library and passive recreation room. However, the lack of space throughout the prison meant that the passive recreation room was mainly being used as a venue for offender treatment programs.
- 3.55 Although the new recreation plan is in its early stages, there is every reason to be confident that recreation will develop into a very successful area for Karnet. However, to guarantee continued success it will be necessary to ensure that recreation remains adequately staffed and resourced as the prisoner population increases. It was a concern that the 2010 recreation budget had been cut by almost 30 per cent compared to 2009. It seems nonsensical to decrease funding when the prisoner population is increasing.
- 3.56 The Office has observed a lack of clarity around the role of recreation in the wider prison system. There is confusion about what, if anything, the Department hopes to achieve by making recreation available to prisoners. Recreation is not incorporated into strategic planning in the same way that the Department considers prisoner employment or offender treatment programs, for example. But recreation has a role to play in rehabilitation as well. It is arguable that, as the prisoner population continues to increase and it becomes difficult to find meaningful employment for all prisoners, recreation grows ever more important as an effective means of occupying prisoners' time. There is also great potential for recreation to be linked more closely with education and training.
- 3.57 The Department should consider the place of recreation within a holistic prison system, taking into account the capacity it has to provide constructive and therapeutic activity for prisoners and the contribution it makes to the safety and control of its prisons and the wellbeing of its prisoners.

*Recommendation 12*

*The Department should define the role of recreation within the Western Australian prison system to better link it with rehabilitative outcomes and strengthen its position as a funding priority.*

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 3.58 Education and training continues to be delivered well at Karnet despite significant obstacles. In the past, because of the prison's focus on employment, there have tended to be fewer full-time students at Karnet than might otherwise be expected. However, vocational training has always been a priority, and Karnet has been very successful at providing traineeships in the various workplaces throughout the prison.
- 3.59 In 2010, the inspection team found that the education centre was delivering a good number of courses to a wide range of students within the prison. There were around 300 prisoners enrolled in education during 2009, and typically around 50 per cent of prisoners at Karnet participate in some education and training activity each month.
- 3.60 Karnet has historically accommodated fewer inmates with very low literacy and numeracy levels than most other prisons. This continued to be the case in 2010 with 19 per cent assessed as having basic or poor literacy skills and 16 per cent basic or poor numeracy skills. As a result, there is less basic education offered than in other prisons with a total of 17 students enrolled in basic education courses at the time of the inspection.
- 3.61 Karnet has come up with some innovative offerings to encourage inmates to develop higher level literacy and numeracy skills. For example, the centre offers an aviation course that teaches the principles of navigation, and an electro-technology course that teaches electrical principles. These courses are highly attractive to adult males and demand intense literacy and numeracy development for most of the students. This focus on development of higher skills is in line with Australian Government policy to encourage higher skill levels in the population.
- 3.62 Students undertake a range of external studies at university and TAFE level. However, at the time of the inspection the Department had withdrawn all personal computers from prisoners' cells throughout the state. This greatly affected the ability of prisoners to continue with external studies because they were restricted to using the limited number of computers available in the education centre. If the prohibition of personal computers becomes permanent policy, the prison will need to ensure that suitable study space with a sufficient number of computers is made available to prisoners undertaking external studies. The Department will also need to acknowledge that additional education staff hours will be required to supervise and support these prisoners. Note that these comments are true of every prison in the state.
- 3.63 The range and number of traineeships at Karnet is impressive. Last year, 50 traineeships were completed across 25 qualifications. Over 20 per cent of the prisoner population was engaged in traineeships as at December 2009. These outstanding results are achieved because traineeship delivery is accepted as central to the prison's operation. Traineeships are an integral part of the work program in most industry areas, and prison management are strongly committed to vocational training. Because traineeships are routinely incorporated into most job roles throughout the prison, there is an opportunity with the approaching capacity increase to boost the number of trainees at Karnet further still. However, education staffing needs will need to be addressed to facilitate this.

- 3.64 At present, the campus manager is the only full-time member of staff in the education centre. There is one part-time administration officer and one Prison Education Coordinator employed on a casual basis for four days per week. On a practical level, the shortage of full-time staff compromises the centre's ability to make relief arrangements. There are also security implications arising from the fact that it is not always possible to ensure that there are at least two staff in the education centre.
- 3.65 From an educational perspective, this level of staffing is unacceptable for a releasing prison of Karnet's size. Other prisons of comparable size (such as Bunbury Regional Prison, Albany Regional Prison and Bandyup Women's' Prison) generally have two full-time Prison Education Coordinator positions. Woorloo Prison Farm, which is most similar in size and purpose to Karnet, has three positions. The Department needs to address this weakness in one of its key releasing prisons as a matter of priority. Karnet should have at least two full-time Prison Education Coordinators. This would allow one of these positions to be dedicated to promoting and supporting traineeships, which will become more and more critical as prisoner numbers rise. This issue is absolutely central to Karnet's role in preparing prisoners for release and reintegration into the community.

*Recommendation 13*

*The Department should establish at least two full-time Prison Education Coordinator positions at Karnet Prison Farm.*

- 3.66 In the months leading up to the inspection, the education centre was expanded with the addition of a transportable building containing two classrooms and an office space. Prior to this, the centre had remained unchanged since the prison opened in 1963 housing only 60 prisoners. The additional classroom and office space was welcomed by education staff. However, even with the new extension, the reality is that the education centre is still too small to cope with the needs of the prisoner group at Karnet. There is no doubt that more space will be needed when the prisoner population rises. Having said that, because almost half of the students enrolled at any time are trainees, there is capacity to increase participation within the current facilities as long as sufficient staffing is available.

## REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMS

- 3.67 Offender treatment programs throughout the prison system suffered a major decline between 2006 and 2008 as a result of funding shortages, policy changes and management issues in the period following formation of the Department of Corrective Services. This state-wide trend was reflected at Karnet, with the previous inspection in 2007 finding that the availability of programs was a real concern.<sup>30</sup>

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30 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 33-34.



- 3.68 Considerable gains had been made in this area at the time of the 2010 inspection. A full suite of programs had been restored at Karnet in 2009, including a number of programs new to the Western Australian prison system. The Moving On From Dependency program that addresses substance abuse has been replaced by the Pathways program which was developed in the United States. A new medium intensity violence program has also been sourced from New Zealand.
- 3.69 Even when program delivery was at its lowest ebb, Karnet was still running the medium intensity sex offender treatment program and this continued. In a new development, however, Karnet had begun hosting the intensive sex offender treatment program for the first time. In other prisons, the intensive sex offender treatment program is a residential program, meaning that participants occupy a special unit separate from other prisoners. This is not the case at Karnet, nor can the prison even guarantee that participants in this program will be exempt from sharing a room. While this is certainly not ideal, the demand for programs necessitates such compromises, and the positive environment of Karnet makes it less of a problem than it might be at other prisons.
- 3.70 The Department has made a significant investment in training and recruitment in the programs area, and has also expanded the use of contractors and improved clinical supervision. All these factors should ensure that a good level of program integrity will be maintained. However, there are acknowledged difficulties in adapting programs sourced from overseas to the Western Australian context. It may be particularly challenging to ensure that such programs are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal prisoners.
- 3.71 Karnet itself is very supportive of programs, and local management had worked hard with the Department to secure two transportable buildings to provide extra space to accommodate programs. A former officer house outside the prison had been fitted out as a base for visiting programs officers, and a group of interview rooms for official visitors including programs officers had also been established near the administration building. The prison's commitment to programs was best evidenced by the regular delivery of the Think First cognitive skills program which is run by prison officers. Karnet was scheduled to deliver seven Think First programs in 2010 which is an impressive level of service, and represents a vast improvement from the 2007 inspection when this program was at a virtual standstill.
- 3.72 In total, Karnet was scheduled to host 17 programs in 2010 with an overall capacity of 184 prisoners. A similar number had been provided in 2009, and demand based on existing treatment assessments is largely being met. The exception was for Pathways, the intensive program to address substance use addiction, for which a backlog still exists. A number of prisoners approaching their release dates complained that not only were they not given the opportunity to undertake this program, but that newer prisoners with later release dates were being placed ahead of them. This was confirmed when electronic assessment and programs records were analysed.

- 3.73 The inspection team found that 15 of the 66 prisoners assessed to require Pathways had not yet been allocated to a program. Of those 15, five were already past their earliest release date. Another nine had an earliest release date in or before October 2010. On the other hand, seven of the 20 prisoners scheduled for Pathways in the first quarter of 2010 had an earliest release date after December 2010. This illustrates a clear breakdown in the system, with the result that prisoners are needlessly, and through no fault of their own, being denied the opportunity to be released at the earliest possible date. It is also a particularly negative outcome for the Department in these times of overcrowding when it is so important to free up bed space whenever possible. Furthermore, for the Western Australian public, every day that a prisoner spends in prison beyond their earliest release date represents an unnecessary cost.
- 3.74 The reasons for this breakdown are complex, but fundamentally equate to a system-wide failure to redress those prisoners who missed out on programs during 2006 to 2008 when few were offered. New prisoners are being assessed for treatment and placed in the next available places while existing prisoners are reviewed infrequently and are consequently not being signed up for programs. Part of the problem is also that there is nobody at Karnet to track and address such issues. The previous inspection identified the need for a programs coordinator,<sup>31</sup> but in 2010 there was still no position in the prison with responsibility for coordinating programs. Earlier in this report, it was recommended that the Department introduce an additional position on the senior management team at Karnet, and the responsibility of coordinating programs would fall logically into this role.
- 3.75 The Department should consider providing extra courses, especially Pathways, until any backlog is cleared up. Placements in programs at Karnet should also be reviewed at least quarterly to prioritise those with more urgent requirements. However, the value of giving new prisoners an early opportunity to complete programs is acknowledged, both therapeutically and to assist their progression to minimum security, and their eligibility for section 95 work, home leave and other entitlements.

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31 OICS, *Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007), 33.

#### INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGEMENT

- 3.76 The previous inspection found that Karnet had done a good job of establishing the Department's case management system in which officers were assigned one or more prisoners with whom they would have contact every six months to track their progress against their Individual Management Plans. This was still being faithfully carried out by officers at Karnet, with most handling a case load of three prisoners. However, such a case management system is very limited in scope and offers little to the prisoner in addressing their needs, providing support or preparing them for release. As noted above, the Transitional Manager provides more effective case management for prisoners at Karnet.
- 3.77 The Department acknowledges that its present case management system is rather limited in scope and is trialling a fuller version elsewhere. In some prisons, case managers also have responsibility for other important reports such as Individual Management Plan Reviews, parole reports and so on. However, at Karnet these and other reports are all done by the assessments team.
- 3.78 In many ways, the superficial nature of case management at Karnet is indicative of the gradually deteriorating relationship between staff and prisoners. As staff distance themselves from prisoners, this sort of meaningful personal contact disappears. This is particularly concerning in a re-entry prison like Karnet. A good case management system involving genuine support from staff is a key part of preparing prisoners for release and successful reintegration into the community.

# Appendix 1

## THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

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Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> 1. The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.	<b>Supported <i>existing departmental initiative</i></b> The Department's philosophy is about making a positive difference to offenders and continuous improvement in whatever we do is our central ethos. There needs to be a healthy balance between dynamic security and prisoner relations and this is formally reviewed on a regular basis across the entire prison system. In relation to Karnet the Inspector has requested there be an improved level of interaction between staff and prisoners and therefore the interaction at this prison will be specifically reviewed to identify and implement any improvement strategies.
<b>Reparation / Rehabilitation</b> 2. The prison should develop a constructive day model that incorporates the objectives of work, education and programs and in particular avoids timetable clashes between these different activities.	<b>Supported <i>existing departmental initiative</i></b> The Department has already identified the need to better balance the competing demands of a structured day and is currently working to achieve this. The structured day needs to be developed within the constraints of an operating prison farm. This is a constant challenge within the prison sector and not unique to Karnet.
<b>Reparation</b> 3. The Department should ensure that Karnet Prison Farm has sufficient staff, resources and infrastructure to maintain the high level of meaningful employment at the prison.	<b>Noted</b> Of course the Department would always like to ensure that Karnet Prison Farm has sufficient staff, resources and infrastructure to maintain the high level of meaningful employment at the prison. Resource levels are linked to available funding.

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THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p><b>Reparation</b></p> <p>4. The Department, in conjunction with the prison, should expand the community work program and create a work camp attached to Karnet Prison Farm.</p>	<p><b>Not Supported</b></p> <p>The Department is in the process of developing work camps in Warburton and the Wheatbelt, as well as expanding the operations of the Wyndham workcamp. These workcamps will have a new operational model with increased interaction with Community Corrections. Once these workcamps are established then the Department will consider further expansion of the workcamp program. The Whitby Falls site is not considered viable as a Workcamp.</p>
<p><b>Correctional Value for Money</b></p> <p>5. The Department should provide a separate budget to Karnet Prison Farm for expenses related to food production for the Western Australian prison system.</p>	<p><b>Not Supported</b></p> <p>As OICS is already aware, the Department has already conducted it's own review of prisoner industries and has identified many areas for improvement including accounting and reporting practices. The Department is currently progressing appropriate reforms and budgeting practices will be considered in the context of improving the system state wide, not just Karnet.</p>
<p><b>Reparation / Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>6. The Department should modify the approval process and eligibility criteria for the Prisoner Employment Program to make it accessible to a greater number of prisoners.</p>	<p><b>Supported in part</b></p> <p>The Department will continue to look at ways to streamline the process for PEP approvals whilst maintaining community safety as a priority. Such an important initiative can not be compromised by the inappropriate management of the risks involved for all parties and our exploration of the issue may, or may not, support modification of the approval process. Section 95 is significantly different from the PEP program and should not be compared.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p><b>Correctional Value for Money</b></p> <p>7. The Department's strategic infrastructure planning should address all infrastructure deficits at Karnet Prison Farm and ensure that existing facilities are maintained and where necessary upgraded to an acceptable standard.</p>	<p><b>Supported <i>existing departmental initiative</i></b></p> <p>The annual Strategic Asset Plan includes submissions requesting funding to address infrastructure shortfalls across the prison system as well as maintenance requirements. Resource levels are linked to available funding.</p>
<p><b>Custody and Security</b></p> <p>8. The Department should increase the number of staff dedicated to the management of security at Karnet Prison Farm.</p>	<p><b>Not Supported</b></p> <p>The Department is currently progressing a comprehensive range of security reforms across all prisons including Karnet and recognises that security is the responsibility of all staff. Karnet already has a dedicated security specialist (Assistant Superintendent) to coordinate the security activities of all Karnet Staff. This position is a crucial part of the state wide security and intelligence framework.</p>
<p><b>Staffing Issues</b></p> <p>9. The Department should establish an additional position on the senior management team at Karnet Prison Farm.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p> <p>As OICS is aware, the Department has already recognised this and has instigated a review of the staffing complement as part of the muster increase.</p>
<p><b>Staffing Issues</b></p> <p>10. Drawing on the Youth Justice Services experience, the Department should make arrangements to ensure that all staff at minimum security facilities are provided with the opportunity to undertake training.</p>	<p><b>Supported <i>existing departmental initiative</i></b></p> <p>Like all prisons, Karnet has a dedicated Satellite Trainer in place. Any strategy that supports the increase in staff who can undertake appropriate training on site or at the Academy will be considered.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p><b>Racism, Aboriginality and Equity</b></p> <p>11. The Department should significantly increase the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners housed at Karnet Prison Farm to better reflect the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners in the wider prison system.</p>	<p><b>Supported in part</b></p> <p>The prisoner classification and assessment processes determines the objective placement of offenders. The increased placement of Aboriginal prisoners at Karnet will be explored and if there legitimate opportunities to increase Aboriginal representation the department is willing to take this action.</p>
<p><b>Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>12. The Department should define the role of recreation within the Western Australian prison system to better link it with rehabilitative outcomes and strengthen its position as a funding priority.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p>The value of recreation is well recognised by the Department and is already factored into the structured day planning but maintains, as with other aspects of the structured day, that balance is essential.</p>
<p><b>Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>13. The Department should establish at least two full-time Prison Education Coordinator positions at Karnet Prison Farm.</p>	<p><b>Not supported</b></p> <p>The Department utilises objective workforce planning processes to determine the particular resource requirements within budget parameters.</p>

## Appendix 2

### SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 47, <i>Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
1.	<b>Staffing Issues</b>  That the Department of Corrective Services undertake a system-wide review of staffing levels for health, education and other offender services, especially in light of escalating prisoner populations.		•			
2.	<b>Staffing Issues</b>  That the position of Training Officer be filled as soon as practicable and that a comprehensive training-needs analysis be conducted in consultation with staff, management, the Corrective Services Academy and other stakeholders, and a staff training strategy be developed and implemented as a high priority.			•		
3.	<b>Correctional Value For Money</b>  That Karnet Prison Farm be made the base for coordination of the prison system's food production system, to secure efficiencies and security of supply. A consolidated and comprehensive farm plan including detail for each prison farm, should be maintained annually.			•		
4.	<b>Custody and Security</b>  That, once the capital works associated with the fence project and the duress alarm system have been handed over by the contractors, the prison should (in conjunction with the Director State Security and the Special Services Branch) conduct a full site security review to test and adjust the emergency plans and routine orders that have been drafted.		•			
5.	<b>Custody and Security</b>  That special efforts be made to ensure that the operational culture of this essential re-entry prison is not adversely impacted by the new fence. The front gate should remain open during the normal working day, unless exceptional circumstances arise.			•		



SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE  
2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 47, <i>Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
6.	<b>Custody and Security</b>  That Karnet Prison review current arrangements and establish better systems to ensure compliance with procedural security standards, including searching and drug testing. These methods should be compatible with Adult Custodial record-keeping and reporting to enable prison system comparison.			•		
7.	<b>Custody and Security</b>  That the Department audit the application of the Justice Drug Plan across all prisons to identify operational risk and service improvements. The plan was first issued in 2003 and the inspection at Karnet shows that several aspects have either not been implemented or that the service delivery should be strengthened.			•		
8.	<b>Custody and Security</b>  That the occupational safety and health system at Karnet be maintained as a high priority. There should also be further consideration on the question of the impact of substance misuse by prisoners on workplace safety.			•		
9.	<b>Racism, Aboriginality and Equity</b>  That the Karnet Prison Farm Business Plan include a strategy aimed at increasing the proportion of indigenous prisoners. This should include a review of any issues militating against their selection for transfer to Karnet, steps aimed at strengthening the communication and understanding between indigenous prisoners and staff and of enhancing welfare support and cultural opportunities for indigenous prisoners.		•			

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE  
2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 47, <i>Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
10.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  That a visitor services facility be established at Karnet. In the interim, a shaded waiting area with seats should be provided.			•		
11.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  That the Department review visits arrangements at Karnet Prison Farm to ensure that children are fully protected.			•		
12.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  That shade be installed over the children's play area as a matter of urgency.			•		
13.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  That toilets for visitors be provided in a location where the entrance may be supervised by staff.			•		
14.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  a) That the Department consider provision of secure supervised and recorded video conference connections over the internet to prisoners with family in other regions, states and countries, given the increasing popularity and effectiveness of this technology around the world.  b) That the Department broadly review its management of prisoner computers and prisoners' access to computers.		•			
15.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  a) That the operation of the gymnasium, the quality of the equipment available and arrangements for supervision and training be reviewed.  b) That the cancellation of external sporting activities be reviewed as soon as possible.			•		

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE  
2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 47, <i>Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
16.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b>  That prisoner support systems at Karnet be reviewed with consideration given to extending the Prisoner Counselling Service and to ensuring all custodial staff and peer supporters have relevant training in suicide prevention.			•		
17.	<b>Reparation</b>  That the Department, in conjunction with Karnet Prison administration, review the operation of the community work program in consultation with stakeholders, develop an ongoing consultative mechanism, identify opportunities to extend the program (including creation of a work camp or mobile work camp) and commit to the necessary resources to extend the program.			•		
18.	<b>Rehabilitation</b>  That Education Branch purchase and store sufficient computers to respond to future security events in order to minimise inappropriate disruption to service delivery, until such time as a fully networked and secure system can facilitate timely administration, backups and auditing of educational computers.		•			
19.	<b>Rehabilitation</b>  That the Department develop a plan to establish a learning centre precinct in Karnet Prison Farm of sufficient scale to meet the existing and future needs of prisoners in education and vocational skills development. There should also be interim arrangements to improve service delivery through increased funds, increased staffing levels and the provision of temporary accommodation.		•			

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE  
2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 47, <i>Report into the Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
20.	<p><b>Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>That more resources be provided for offender services at Greenough Regional Prison to address the delay in treatment assessments and to implement initiatives to reduce staff burnout and improve staff retention.</p>			•		
21.	<p><b>Correctional Value For Money</b></p> <p>That the Department's infrastructure and recurrent funding plans be revised to reflect a commitment to the continuation, improvement and expansion of Karnet Prison Farm, in the medium and longer terms. This should include construction of two 64-bed units (one to replace the existing Unit 1) and of other service delivery infrastructure (especially for education, training, employment and programs) for an effective prisoner population of approximately 240.</p>	•				

## Appendix 3

### THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Professor Neil Morgan	Inspector
Natalie Gibson	Director of Operations
Kieran Artelaris	Inspections and Research Officer
Cliff Holdom	Inspections and Research Officer
Jim Bryden	Inspections and Research Officer
Elizabeth Re	Inspections and Research Officer
Joseph Wallam	Community Relations Officer
Cheryl Wiltshire	Expert advisor, Department of Training and Workforce Development
Dace Tomsons	Expert advisor, Drug and Alcohol Office
Angela Rizk	Expert advisor, Drug and Alcohol Office

# Appendix 4

## KEY DATES

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Formal notification of announced inspection	21 October 2009
Pre-inspection community consultation	30 November 2009
Start of on-site phase	7 February 2010
Completion of on-site phase	12 February 2010
Inspection exit debrief	12 February 2010
Draft Report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	24 May 2010
Original response to Draft Report returned by the Department of Corrective Services	21 June 2010
Amended response to Draft Report returned by the Department of Corrective Services <sup>32</sup>	9 July 2010
Declaration of Prepared Report	19 July 2010

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32 The Office sought clarification of certain points in the Department's original response to the Draft Report. Subsequent to this, the Department provided an amended response.



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