



MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON 6TH AUGUST 2013

Report No. 84 – An Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm

The Inspector of Custodial Services has released a report of an announced inspection of Karnet Prison Farm ('Karnet') conducted in January 2013. The report offers the broad conclusion that that Karnet continues to be one of the state's strongest performing prisons.

In launching the report, the Inspector Neil Morgan said:

The establishment of a strong and stable senior management team, and the introduction of a vision for the future by the new Superintendent has provided Karnet with a clear path forward for the prison and for the well-being of its prisoners.

It was pleasing to observe the large number of Karnet's prisoners who have embraced the multitude of opportunities available to them, including those offered by way of employment, education and training, and recreation.

Nonetheless the inspection identified a number of challenges, the greatest being the significant increase in prisoner population over the past three years. Mr Morgan said that:

While there have been a number of infrastructure upgrades to sustain the new population; including power, water and a number of new buildings; more investment is still required.

In the prison's fiftieth year, the age and small size of some of its buildings remain a problem. Even at the time of this Office's first inspection of Karnet in 2001 it was identified that the majority of its buildings needed to be upgraded. This situation is largely unchanged.

The report also highlights the impact of the recent findings of this Office's *Report on the Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps*, which found that changes to the Department's security assessment tool have inadvertently disadvantaged Aboriginal prisoners. Aboriginal prisoners are subsequently underrepresented at minimum security level across the state, including Karnet.

Despite making up 41 per cent of the state's prison population, only 11 per cent of Karnet's prisoners were Aboriginal. Given the many opportunities Karnet has to offer, this is disappointing.

In summarising Mr Morgan said:

Previous reports by this Office have consistently identified Karnet as both a good performer and a place with the potential to do even better. However, this is a potential Karnet now appears to be achieving. Given its track record, and the vision of the new management team, and despite the problems of aging infrastructure, it is expected that Karnet will continue to build on its positive and unique place in the State's prison system.

Neil Morgan
Inspector

5th August 2013

For more detail, see the Inspector's Overview to the Report (copy attached)

About Karnet Prison Farm

Karnet opened in 1963, and celebrated its fiftieth anniversary earlier this year. From its earliest days Karnet's main focus has been on the rehabilitation of prisoners through training, education and the provision of a secure and positive environment.

About the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office)

The role of the Office is to bring independent external scrutiny to the standards and operational practices relating to custodial services within Western Australia. The Office is required under its legislation to undertake an inspection of each prison every three years. Commencing operations in June 2000 the Office reports directly to Parliament.

For Further Media Information

The Deputy Inspector, Mr Andrew Harvey, will be available for comment from 12 noon on Tuesday 6th August and can be contacted on 0477 307 559

The full report will be available on the Inspector's website (www.oics.wa.gov.au).