

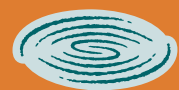


REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF
ROEBOURNE REGIONAL PRISON

70

FEBRUARY 2011
REPORT

*Independent oversight
that contributes to a more
accountable public sector.*



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison

Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services
Level 27, 197 St George's Terrace, Perth WA 6000

www.oics.wa.gov.au

February 2011

ISSN 1445-3134

**This report is available on the Office's website
and will be made available, upon request,
in alternate formats.**



This document uses environmentally friendly paper, comprising
50% recycled & 50% totally chlorine free plantation pulp.

Contents

THE INSPECTOR'S OVERVIEW

SOME IMPROVEMENTS BUT PLANNED INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY,
DECENCY AND IMPROVED OUTCOMESiii

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS viii

FACT PAGE xviii

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION1

Roebourne Regional Prison: Inspection History1

The 2010 Announced Inspection3

CHAPTER 2

LOCATION, PROFILE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING.....6

Location and Population6

Overcrowding: Design and Operational Capacities7

Future Planning.....7

Physical Condition and Maintenance Deficits..... 10

Cells 10

Bunk Beds..... 11

Climatic Control 12

Rodent and Other Pest Control 15

Workshops and Stores 15

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS 17

Management and Staff..... 17

Staff and Prisoners 18

Communication with Visitors..... 19

CHAPTER 4

PRISONER WELLBEING AND SERVICES.....20

Introduction.....20

Aboriginal Visitor Scheme.....20

Prison Support Officer.....21

Women's Support Officer.....22

Complaints.....22

Food23

Visits.....24

Library, Recreation and Canteen25

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN AT ROEBOURNE REGIONAL PRISON.....	27
History	27
Strategic Management and Policy Setting.....	27
Women's Profile	30
Services.....	30

CHAPTER 6

HEALTH	40
Introduction.....	40
Context.....	40
Staffing.....	41
Training and Development	42
Access	42
Dental, External Specialist and Allied Health Services.....	44
Assessment and Care Planning.....	44
A Portfolio Approach to Clinical Care	46
Medication Management	47
Information Management.....	48
The Way Forward.....	48

CHAPTER 7

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE.....	49
Assessment and Case Management	49
Programs.....	49
Education and Training.....	53
Reparation and Employment	54
Employment and Rehabilitation	57
Resettlement	61
Community Engagement.....	64

APPENDIX 1

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	66
--	----

APPENDIX 2

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	72
SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	73

APPENDIX 3

THE INSPECTION TEAM	79
---------------------------	----

APPENDIX 4

KEY DATES	80
-----------------	----

The Inspector's Overview

SOME IMPROVEMENTS BUT PLANNED INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY, DECENCY AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES

INTRODUCTION

Roebourne Regional Prison has always been a source of concern to the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services. This is demonstrated by the fact that whilst the Office usually reports on prisons once every three years (the minimum legislative requirement), it has been considered necessary to inspect Roebourne, on average, once every two years (2002, 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010). Previous inspection reports identified numerous problems. They included fragile staffing arrangements, poor prison infrastructure, and the dehumanising effects of overcrowding and inadequate climate control.

This report of the September 2010 inspection shows that there has been positive progress in some areas, most notably with respect to custodial staff numbers and external training opportunities for prisoners. In this sense the prison is better placed than before. However, it still suffers from its ailing and outdated infrastructure, a lack of investment, and a lack of clear strategic direction for the future. Although custodial staffing levels have improved, too many key prisoner service positions have simply not been functioning for long periods. The inspection also found that urgent action was required to improve relationships, morale and consistency across both staff and management. And because little has been done to improve climatic control, most prisoners are still housed in inhumane conditions which carry risks to their health.

ACTION ON INSPECTION FINDINGS

One of the most important elements of formal announced inspections is the Inspector's 'Exit Debrief' which is presented to management and staff at the end of the period on-site.ⁱ The Exit Debrief highlights the findings of the inspection to date and the main areas where the Inspector considers that action is required by the Department of Corrective Services ('the Department') at local or central level. Ideally, and subject to resources, the Department will then be able to take appropriate remedial action without awaiting final publication of the inspection report (which usually takes around six monthsⁱⁱ).

The Department supports sixteen of the seventeen recommendations in this report, and in over half the cases, states that the recommendation in question is subject to a Departmental initiative. It is positive that so many recommendations are subject to Departmental initiatives rather than being 'shelved' as ideas or potential future options. However, the ultimate test is one of outcomes and results. At the time of the inspection, there was little evidence that some of these initiatives were active and some four months later, few of them have yet yielded concrete outcomes.ⁱⁱⁱ This Office will continue to monitor progress and will request supporting evidence of actual outcomes from the Department over the coming months.

i A separate debrief is also provided to prisoners.

ii The Office takes three months to draft an inspection report. This is circulated to the Department and other relevant parties who have one month for comment. The report is then finalised, printed and lodged in Parliament. It only becomes a public document one month after being lodged.

iii See below.

SOME IMPROVEMENTS BUT PLANNED INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY,
DECENCY AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES

PLANNING FOR ROEBOURNE PRISON AND THE PILBARA REGION

At the strategic level, it is very disappointing that there is no Custodial Plan for the delivery of custodial services in the Pilbara region, including objectives, targets and timeframes. Roebourne is a Pilbara Aboriginal prison in the sense that more than 90 per cent of its prisoners are Aboriginal and the vast majority come from the Pilbara. The goal, as stated in Departmental policy documents, should be to keep people ‘in country’ as far as possible and to address their specific cultural, custodial, health, rehabilitation and re-entry needs.

However, supply and demand are already seriously out of alignment. Around one third of prisoners from the Pilbara are currently imprisoned out of country and predicted demographic changes and rapid economic development mean that their numbers are destined to increase.^{iv} Without carefully planned future investment, the lack of alignment will therefore get worse. And although the prison estate is in a period of unprecedented expansion, this mainly involves double bunking existing single cells and adding new units to existing south west prisons.^v A new prison is scheduled to open in Derby in early 2012 (designed for 150) and a replacement for Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison is scheduled to open in 2015 (designed to add an extra 150 beds). However, there are no confirmed plans for expansion anywhere on the coast between Derby and Perth.^{vi}

This Report suggests a number of short and longer term options. Consistent with previous reports, it argues that the current Roebourne prison should be replaced with a larger, modern, fit-for-purpose facility. It also argues that, as part of planning for the Pilbara, consideration should be given to establishing a new facility in the Port Hedland area to better service the main regional court, the local community and prisoners from that area.^{vii} The Department has indicated that it intends to consider these options^{viii} but short of a major shift in forward planning, there is no prospect that either will occur in the short to medium term.

In the absence of new facilities, it is therefore incumbent on all relevant parties (the Department, Treasury and government as a whole) to make necessary and appropriate investments in the existing Roebourne prison to see it through the next five to ten years. This report argues that the construction of a minimum security facility outside the current perimeter would be feasible, cost-effective and likely to improve correctional outcomes through expanded opportunities for community work and external training. Significantly, the Department has supported this recommendation and it is currently the subject of a business case in the 2011 / 2012 State budget process.^{ix}

iv See paras 2.1–2.4.

v The new units will have the capacity for over 1000 prisoners. Hakea and Casuarina Prisons in Perth will each have another 256 beds; Albany Regional Prison will have another 128 beds; and the minimum security facilities at Wooroloo, Karnet and Pardelup Prison Farms have been expanded by a total of around 284 beds (this includes new units and double bunking). Current plans also anticipate an additional 256 beds at Acacia Prison.

vi An extra 30 beds are to be added for women prisoners at Greenough Regional Prison but the plans have not yet been finalised.

vii Port Hedland is some 200 kilometres away and home to the main regional court. A significant number of prisoners from the Pilbara also come from the East Pilbara area.

viii See the response to Recommendation 1.

ix See the Department’s response to Recommendation 2

SOME IMPROVEMENTS BUT PLANNED INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY, DECENCY AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Secondly, even if a new prison is being considered for some future date, substantial renovation and upgrading of the existing prison is required to meet the standards of decency expected of modern prisons and to promote better correctional outcomes. Key areas include a more proactive preventative maintenance program, a bed replacement program, the installation of air-conditioning and improved facilities for education and skills training within the prison.

MAINTENANCE, CLIMATIC CONTROL AND BEDS

No amount of maintenance can overcome Roebourne Prison's fundamental design problems but a more sustained preventative maintenance program is needed to see the prison through the next few years.^x For example, some shutters, intended to provide cyclone protection were hanging off their fastenings, there were problems with rust in some areas, and there were long-standing problems with the condition and safety of the oval. Prisoners also complained of rodent activity inside their cells at night earlier in the year. Dried rodent droppings beneath holes in flyscreens gave credence to such claims.^{xi}

In terms of climatic control, this report essentially repeats the recommendation, made in earlier reports, that air-conditioning or some other form of climate control should be installed in the units. The Department's response to this recommendation is that 'various options are continually being explored and will be implemented within available budget resources'. In other words, there is no commitment and no projected timeframe. All this Office can do is to repeat, yet again, that the current situation is intolerable and inhumane. The heat can be ferocious, and the conditions pose risks to the health and safety of prisoners, especially as many of them have health problems such as diabetes. If the State is to adequately meet its duty of care, adequate climate control is a necessity not an option.

For over 18 months, this Office has been raising concerns about the poor design of many of the bunk beds that now exist at prisons across the state. The risks include a lack of roll out protection and poor access arrangements to many of the top bunks. Due to concerns about the Department's slow response and lack of incident tracking, the Office issued a formal Risk Notice in August 2010.^{xii} This prompted the Department to develop a new Policy Directive relating to shared cells.

In response to Recommendation 4, the Department states that 'an audit process is in place to identify beds which do not comply with safety standards.' The Inspector's Exit Debrief commented that at Roebourne, such an audit would be extremely straightforward and take very little time. Poor access arrangements, damaged beds and potential hanging points abound and it is clear that few bunks, if any, comply with any sensible safety standards. It appears that the bed safety audit was carried out at the end of January 2011 but the critical outcome will be bed replacement.

x See Recommendation 3.

xi See para 2.39. The problem appears to be to some extent seasonal and appeared to have been addressed at the time of the inspection.

xii See para 2.26 and footnote 38.

SOME IMPROVEMENTS BUT PLANNED INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY, DECENCY AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES

STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

Housing availability and the high cost of living previously caused problems in terms of ensuring a permanent custodial workforce at Roebourne. The Department of Corrective Services is to be commended for successfully building up permanent custodial staff to appropriate levels.

However, there has been a consistent and wholly unacceptable shortfall in most of the key prisoner service positions. Prior to September 2010, there had been no Prison Support Officer (PSO) for some eight months (though one was acting for around three weeks at the time of the inspection) and no Women's Support Officer for a similar period of time. There had also been no Aboriginal Visitor Scheme (AVS) presence at the prison for almost two years. Services of this sort are essential, not least in regional Aboriginal prisons. The reasons behind the service shortfalls are complex at Roebourne but the bottom line is clear; arrangements must be put in place to ensure that these positions and services have a consistent and effective presence at all prisons.^{xiii}

Ongoing improvement at the prison was also being hindered by issues of communication and relationship dynamics across the site. These were having a negative effect on staff morale, confidence and team spirit. The report recommended that strategies be developed at the prison and at departmental level to address these issues and to provide appropriate supports to management and staff. Since the inspection, the Department has invested more energy and resources into this exercise.

PRISONER TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

External training and employment opportunities for prisoners have become more firmly embedded and better developed since the last inspection. A good deal of this is due to the engagement of mining and resources companies, notably Rio Tinto Iron Ore, who are providing training opportunities for prisoners so they are skilled up for employment on release. The companies are keen to build further on what has been achieved to date.

In many respects, the results are impressive but this report identifies opportunities for improvement. First, there is a need to improve training opportunities *within* the prison for those prisoners who are not rated minimum security. The workshops are inadequate and provide little by way of program or skills training.^{xiv} Secondly, the opportunities for employment and training outside the prison should be further enhanced through the construction of a minimum security section outside the main prison (see above) and expanding the programs currently provided through the DECCA training facility.^{xv}

xiii At the time of writing this Overview, these issues were still in the process of being addressed: see Recommendations 9, 10 and 12. The report also notes that many of the service shortfalls at Roebourne are replicated at the other Aboriginal regional prisons (see paras 4.5-4.6).

xiv See Recommendation 6.

xv See Recommendations 2 and 16.

SOME IMPROVEMENTS BUT PLANNED INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY, DECENCY AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES

The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) is another important avenue but this Office remains concerned that cumbersome and bureaucratic approval processes are hindering its expansion. The processes are causing palpable frustration and disenchantment not only to prisoners but also to some currently willing PEP employers. A recent Parliamentary Committee shared the same concerns, recommending that PEP processes be simplified and streamlined.^{xvi} Recommendation 17 in this report is to identical effect. The Department has rejected this recommendation but hints at some improvements down the track. It is disappointing that progress is taking so long: PEP has attracted significant funding and, in terms of value for money, the scheme should now be reaching more prisoners and the approval process should be swifter.^{xvii}

CONCLUSION

Roebourne Regional Prison has made some significant advances over the last three years and has further potential. However, for that potential is to be realised, there needs to be expansion, investment, upgrading, a clearer sense of direction, and a more cohesive team spirit. If the issues raised in this report can be addressed, the prison should be able to achieve improved correctional outcomes and to offer improved value for money.

Neil Morgan
5 February 2011

xvi Parliament of Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, *Making Our Prisons Work: An Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Prisoner Education, Training and Employment Strategies*, Report 4 (Interim Report, June 2010), p 86.

xvii This Office agrees with the Department that community safety should not be compromised but many prisoners who apply for PEP are already undertaking trusted out of prison activities under section 95 of the *Prisons Act* with very limited supervision. Section 95 and PEP serve somewhat different purposes so that separate approval processes may well be required. But the delays generated by those processes are difficult to understand.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The on-site inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison was conducted over a five-day period from 20 to 24 September 2010. This was the fifth inspection of this facility since the Office commenced in 2000, reflecting a high level of concern about aspects of Roebourne's operations.

This inspection found significant improvement in certain respects. In particular, the Office's previous concerns about staffing levels and lack of effective re-entry initiatives for prisoners had been addressed. However, there were a number of areas that had either not been addressed or required further improvement. These included infrastructure deficits, communication issues and failure to fill key prison services positions.

LOCATION, PROFILE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

Roebourne Regional Prison is located between the Roebourne and Wickham town sites, approximately 1572 kilometres from Perth. It operates as the regional correctional facility for the vast and remote Pilbara region. It was built to accommodate 116, but through double-bunking, its operational capacity was increased to 161. On the first Monday of the inspection, 159 prisoners were accommodated within the prison and another seven at Millstream Work Camp. Another 65 prisoners from the Pilbara region had to be accommodated in prisons outside their region.

These facts suggest that extra Pilbara capacity should be a priority for the Department, but there have been no confirmed plans for either an expansion to the prison or for development of a new facility in the Pilbara. While it has previously been argued that a new prison should be located in Port Hedland closer to the main regional court and the homes of the majority of prisoners, it was found that the numbers originating from the East and West Pilbara now appear to be broadly similar.

It can also be argued that because of improved staffing arrangements and deepening links with local industry and others, Roebourne is now better placed to provide the training and re-entry services that had previously been found lacking. Perhaps two facilities are needed in the longer term.

Recommendation 1:

Develop a Pilbara Custodial Plan in consultation with relevant community organisations and stakeholders. As part of this plan, give consideration to establishing a new facility in the Port Hedland region and constructing a replacement prison at Roebourne.

One potential option for expansion of capacity in the medium term is the establishment of a new minimum-security section outside the prison's perimeter fence. This may prove a cost-effective way to relieve over-crowding, at the same time as assisting the further roll-out of positive initiatives such as DECCA, the Prisoner Employment Program and activities under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2:

Keep under active review the option of constructing, in the short term, a minimum-security area outside the current perimeter fence.

The prison is 26 years old and the physical infrastructure of the buildings is deteriorating. It has now reached the stage where it is necessary to spend a considerable amount of money on repairs and upgrading. This is not simply a matter of aesthetic appearance; but a case of meeting mandatory occupational health and safety requirements, as well as basic standards of humane and decent treatment. Issues included: unattached shutters on cells, holes in concrete paths and floors, a rusted water tank, showers lacking doors, holes in flywire screens, recreation oval unserviceable, and rust in support poles for mesh enclosures in units.

Recommendation 3:

Implement a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan.

Double-bunk beds have become an increasingly common feature of Western Australian prisons in order to accommodate increased prisoner numbers. The risks for prisoners associated with bunk bed designs in use in WA prisons have been an issue of major concern for this Office. This Office has raised these concerns with the Department numerous times since mid-2009, culminating with the issue of a formal Risk Notice to the Department with respect to bunk bed safety on 20 August 2010.

The majority (if not all) of the bunk beds at Roebourne fail to comply with any sensible design and safety standards for adult prisoners. Generally speaking, there is no side protection to prevent prisoners falling out of bed and no ladder for access to and from the top bunk. For access, prisoners were either climbing on bars (which were also potential ligature points) at the end of the bed or were using lightweight plastic chairs. Furthermore, the bunks were showing signs of age and disrepair. Many slats and tubes were buckled or bent and many others had already been re-welded at least once.

Recommendation 4:

(a) At Roebourne Regional Prison and across the system as a whole, replace or modify beds that do not comply with appropriate safety standards.

(b) Provide custodial officers across the state with training in removing people from top bunks in the event of medical or other emergencies.

This Office has consistently and unequivocally raised concerns about the extreme climate in Roebourne and its effect on prisoners. The Inspectorate acknowledges that the women's section and the maximum-security section have been air-conditioned in recent years, but this represents less than 17 per cent of cells. Overall, the Department has failed to prioritise previous recommendations, risking the safety and decent treatment of prisoners.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Such risks have been highlighted by the heat-related death of Aboriginal elder Mr Ward in the rear of an escort van in January 2008. Many at Roebourne prison are especially vulnerable due to health conditions such as diabetes, which impairs their ability to sweat. Urgent investment is needed in proper climate control.

Recommendation 5:

- (a) Install suitable climatic controls to reduce air temperatures and to increase cool air circulation in prisoners' cells at Roebourne Regional Prison.*
- (b) Explore and implement other management measures to reduce the impact of the harsh climate.*

There were numerous signs of relatively recent rodent activity in the prison, especially around the units. It was clear, even on a superficial inspection, that rodents had been frequently and easily accessing cells because dried droppings proliferated around windows and torn flywire screens. The maintenance deficits, referred to above, combined with the fact that prisoners generally eat meals in the units rather than in the dining room, serve to exacerbate the problem.

The workshops at Roebourne are small and inadequate. They have very little storage space and lack the capacity to successfully conduct any form of extensive program or skills training. Given the current size and layout of the site, there is virtually no room to expand the workshops. However, the stores, together with the space required to turn a vehicle, currently take up a considerable area.

In the Office's opinion, it would be possible to expand the workshops if the stores area was moved outside the prison. Given their existing contributions to DECCA and the Prisoner Employment Program, it is not inconceivable that Rio Tinto and other companies would be prepared to enter discussions about potential engagement in new training programs within the prison.

Recommendation 6:

Expand industries and vocational skills and training programs on site and relocate the store to facilitate this expansion.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

In staff surveys, meetings and interviews with managers and staff members in the present inspection, it became clear that many staff felt powerless, disillusioned and distressed about their relations with others. The breakdown in relations at Roebourne Regional Prison is such that this Office has no confidence that the prison's management team can address the problem without external support.

Recommendation 7:

Develop and implement strategies at both Departmental and prison levels to stabilise and harmonise the leadership team at Roebourne, develop good processes for communication and cooperation, and build up peoples' sense of commitment to their colleagues, their managers and their work.

Interactions and engagement between staff and prisoners were mixed. The team certainly observed and learned of some very positive cases of staff being proactive and highly responsive to prisoners and also of prisoners engaging positively and appropriately with staff.

However, it was worrying to find consistent comments from prisoners about what they saw as disengaged and disrespectful behaviour by a handful of staff. Several staff also felt they would benefit from cultural awareness training. It is also essential for the Superintendent (and other members of the senior team) to be visible, active and engaged in the prison itself.

Feedback from visitors to the prison was rather mixed and this reflected the Inspectorate's own experience. Many staff were polite and respectful but the quality of customer service lacked consistency, indicating a need for targeted training opportunities in customer service techniques.

Recommendation 8:

Provide more extensive training at Roebourne with respect to (i) cultural awareness (using local Aboriginal providers if possible) and (ii) customer service techniques.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PRISONER WELLBEING AND SERVICES

Although Departmental literature trumpets the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme (AVS) when describing its services to Aboriginal prisoners, not one of the state's Aboriginal prisons has had a properly functioning AVS in recent times. At the time of the inspection, Roebourne prison had not been visited by the AVS since December 2008 (some 21 months) and there were no signs of change.

Recommendation 9:

Ensure that the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison and also at all other prisons (including coverage for any lengthy absence).

At the time of the inspection, the Prisoner Support Officer's (PSO) position at Roebourne had been vacant for approximately eight months as the substantive holder of this position had taken long-term sick leave. Immediately prior to the inspection the position was filled on a fly-in, fly-out basis from Perth (for a 4-week term). This position is intended to play a key role in preventing suicide and self-harm, and in many cases is a prisoner's first and primary welfare contact in the prison.

Recommendation 10:

Ensure that the Prison Support Officer position has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison (including coverage for any lengthy absence).

Many prisoners stated that they did not trust the Department's ACCESS complaints system. They also said they were reluctant to go to officers with complaints because they felt that many of their complaints were not acted upon or might be turned against them. Prisoners also thought that recently installed cameras in the day rooms of the wings where the confidential mailboxes were also located meant that the prison administration was trying to identify who was putting confidential mail in the boxes.

The Department has been examining its processes with respect to prisoner inquiries and complaints and this inspection has reaffirmed the importance of that work.

It was found that prisoners were required to eat breakfast, lunch and some evening meals in the units. There were not enough tables or chairs in the units for prisoners to sit down and eat in a decent and comfortable manner. Prisoners often ate in their cells or sat on the steps of the veranda to eat their meals. After they have eaten their meals there is no access to facilities to properly wash their dishes.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 11:

- (a) For the vast majority of prisoners, use the dining room for all meals.*
- (b) In the case of prisoners who are required to eat their meals in the units, provide suitable facilities including chairs, tables and washing facilities.*

Prisoners and visitors spoken to by the inspection team said that they were happy with the way social visits were conducted and stated that staff are generally polite to visitors. However, the visits area lacks facilities to make a cup of tea or coffee (there is only a vending machine), and the small area designated for children needs new toys and games. It was also unfortunate that there was no bus service from Port Hedland to Roebourne Regional Prison even though it is a major catchment area for the prison.

The library is a small but well-patronised part of the prison. However, the collection of books and other materials is very limited. There is little or no access to relevant and contemporary legal materials and the printed copies of legislation are unacceptably out of date. There was also a distinct lack of computers for prisoners to access.

The recreation observed during the inspection was structured and had good participation from many of the prisoners. However, the oval had been out of commission for months leading up to the inspection for returfing, replacement of reticulation and top dressing. Prisoners raised concerns that the canteen had little variety but these claims were not borne out upon inspection.

WOMEN AT ROEBOURNE REGIONAL PRISON

During this Inspection there were 18 women accommodated in the women's unit at Roebourne Regional Prison. In the previous inspection, there were nine. Female prisoner numbers have increased at a rate much faster than men (from 5 per cent of prisoners in 1993 to 8.7 per cent in 2010), especially since mid-2008. There are only twelve standard beds in the women's unit, with two of the other six sleeping on the floor, and the other four placed in cells which should be reserved for observation, punishment and for a mother with child. Despite this overcrowding, the women were adamant they would prefer to sleep on the floor rather than being transferred to a prison out of country.

Much has been achieved aesthetically since the 2006 inspection, with wooden decking returning the area to a single level. Potted shrubs and palms have been added, but the roof remains caged and the overall appearance is of a concrete box. Air-conditioning in the women's cells constitutes a significant improvement for the wing since 2006.

Adjacent to the unit, an outside garden area with access to a demountable multi-purpose room has been added. This is a significant improvement, but had not long been open at the time of the inspection and the nature and extent of its use was yet to be established. Concerns were raised that women's access to services outside the wing might be further restricted as a result of the availability of the new multi-purpose room.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women prisoners' access to a variety of services at Roebourne has long been the subject of criticism by the Office. Unfortunately, this inspection found that the situation had not substantially changed. This may have been different if the Women's Support Officer (WSO) position had been filled, but it had been allowed to remain vacant for over seven months at the time of the inspection. A number of quite positive activities and programs that had been implemented had ceased.

The Department did not agree to a recommendation from the 2006 inspection that the part-time (0.4 FTE) WSO position be increased to full-time, but undertook to consider increasing the number of hours allocated to the position. This had not occurred by the time of the 2010 inspection.

Recommendation 12:

(a) Ensure that the Women's Support Officer position has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison (including coverage for any lengthy absence).

(b) Increase the Women's Support Officer position to a full-time position.

Although an officer is assigned each day to the women's unit, the unit has been left unmanned in cases of staff shortages. When the grille is locked, this can mean that women have very infrequent contact with officers. In these circumstances, the safety and wellbeing of the women cannot be assured, especially without a WSO on site.

Education services have been consistently available to the women in Roebourne Regional Prison, but it was found there are limits to participation.

Likewise, women only have limited opportunities for employment with only three working external to the accommodation wing at the time of the inspection. Women have also not participated in section 95 external work activities for many months and are no longer permitted to participate in the deservedly lauded DECCA Work Ready program. Intervention programs are also limited.

More positively, women were seen to be participating in recreational activities in the quadrangle, mixing with the men in the afternoon. However, such mixed recreation appears to be in doubt with a new Women's Precinct Plan signalling an intention to reduce the level of interaction between women and men during recreation.

Recommendation 13:

Provide services for women in Roebourne Regional Prison that are commensurate with those provided in metropolitan facilities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HEALTH

This inspection found that the health service is now fully staffed with the majority of nursing staff holding substantive positions.

However, it is not clear that prisoners' health needs are being identified and adequately met. Factors contributing to the Inspectorate's concerns about the provision of health care to prisoners at Roebourne include:

- A failure to develop and implement an Aboriginal and women-centred health care strategy suited to the needs of a prisoner population from the Pilbara;
- A lack of Aboriginal health care staff;
- A lack of culturally and locally relevant health-care need assessment tools;
- A lack of cultural awareness training for health staff; and
- Deficiencies in the provision of transport of prisoners to external medical, allied health and dental appointments.

Recommendation 14:

Ensure that the new contractual arrangements relating to prisoner transport that will come into force in 2011 result in a better service with respect to external medical, allied health and dental appointments.

Recommendation 15:

Develop and implement an Aboriginal health care strategy at Roebourne Regional Prison Health Centre that recognises the cultural and differing gendered needs of the local prisoner population. This strategy should include details of and commitment to:

- *actively recruiting Aboriginal health staff as vacancies occur;*
- *developing and implementing culturally appropriate clinical assessment tools;*
- *actively engaging Aboriginal health care organisations to provide in-reach services to the prison; and*
- *providing training in the delivery of culturally sensitive health care.*

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

The main staff member responsible for preparing prisoner management plans is the Assessment and Integrated Prison Regime (AIPR) writer. The AIPR writer is reliant on advice, supervision and training from the Assistant Superintendent Prison Management (ASPM) who is not in a position to devote the necessary time for the continued development of staff rotating through this position.

Notwithstanding some staffing issues, there is much to commend the quality and stability of program delivery at Roebourne compared to that encountered in earlier inspections. This is not to say, however, that program needs are being fully met at Roebourne. It was found that only half of Roebourne's medium- and long-term sentenced prisoners can expect to have their assessed program needs met prior to their earliest date of release.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The education centre at Roebourne provides an effective service not only within the prison, but externally as a partner in the DECCA program. The inspection team was informed that 281 prisoners including 253 Aboriginal prisoners participated in 1359 units of education or training in 2009–2010, of which 804 units were completed.

At Roebourne, prisoners are utilised in cooking, cleaning, gardening and maintenance activities, but only marginally in other productive activities that could be said to reduce the costs of their imprisonment. External work was a strength at Roebourne, with seven prisoners placed at Millstream Work Camp, 16 at DECCA and eight involved in section 95 work.

On a typical work day during the inspection, only 119 of 168 workers had any work to do, and a number of these had roles which required only short periods of effort, such as unit workers, rubbish gang and peer supporters. Others were sent back to units for an hour and half for lunch, and many were not required after lunch.

Since the previous inspection, the Department, in partnership with a number of agencies has renovated the DECCA site and effectively established an ongoing training system to skill prisoners for future employment. The number of prisoners who have obtained and continued in work since leaving prison, having participated either in the general program at DECCA, or in the Rio Tinto Work Ready program for Indigenous prisoners, indicates the success of this strategy. At the time of the inspection, 68 prisoners were listed as having commenced employment and received post-placement support from the Employment Coordinator since December 2008.

The strength of Roebourne – the efforts and enthusiasm of a handful of staff – is also Roebourne’s weakness. It is difficult for senior management to maintain the partner relationships necessary to leverage resources and goods at the same time as managing a prison. Only one VSO is provided to DECCA, despite having up to 20 prisoners on site. There is no formal relief arrangement for that position.

Recommendation 16:

Fund and provide staffing and other resources to DECCA to increase the level of service provided to prisoners, the prison and the community.

Applications of the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) at Roebourne appear to have bogged down in a ‘perfect storm’ of communication issues, short staffing in certain areas, management distractions and policy deliberations that added to known procedural issues with PEP. It is extremely concerning that the Department is risking cooperation with one of its major employers of released prisoners when an interest is being shown by other companies in the Work Ready program and PEP as a pathway for prisoner employment not only in the Pilbara, but in other regions

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 17:

Ensure that the approval processes and eligibility criteria for the Prisoner Employment Program make it accessible to as many prisoners as possible.

The Millstream Work Camp has been under-resourced from its inception. Like most Western Australian work camps, Millstream was not purpose built; however, compared to other established work camps Millstream suffers from a distinct lack of resources. Investment and resourcing is urgently required to enable Millstream Work Camp to fulfil its objectives of reparation and to enable it to better prepare prisoners for release.

The re-entry system is partly dependent on the position of Transitional Manager to provide information to make an initial assessment of prisoner needs and address some of them before referrals are made to re-entry providers. Former Transitional Managers at Roebourne also initiated and coordinated various outside agencies in providing information sessions and programs for prisoners.

Unfortunately, there have been difficulties in staffing arrangements for this position over an extended period, with no-one acting in this position between mid-July 2010 and prior to the inspection in October 2010. Nevertheless, prisoners benefited from what appeared to be good service provocation from the re-entry contractor at Roebourne, the KDM Corporation.

The most significant gap in re-entry services is in finding accommodation for released prisoners, with the Department's Transitional Accommodation Service (TAS) not operating in the Pilbara and rental properties prohibitively expensive. Another gap appears to be in the addictions area, in particular there does not appear to be any funded addictions agencies engaging with prisoners prior to their release and providing post-release support.

Community relations have long been a priority for the administration at Roebourne Regional Prison, with the section 95 program, the Millstream Work Camp and DECCA all requiring major input from the Shire, Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, corporations and community representatives. A difficulty was apparent, however, in the prisons' relations to external stakeholders due to a lack of consistency in representation in its relations with many of these agencies or forums.

It was also found that a number of community representatives were discomforted by the loss of a number of support staff over the last 12 months, and were particularly concerned about the loss of the Prisoner Support Officer and the lack of Aboriginal Visitors. There were also some issues for community agencies attending the prison that need to be carefully monitored and addressed which impacted on their service delivery with prisoners.

Fact Page

NAME OF FACILITY

Roebourne Regional Prison

ROLE OF FACILITY

Originally a minimum security prison Roebourne was upgraded to a medium security prison in 1995. Roebourne houses minimum, medium and short term maximum prisoners both male and female. The prisoners are predominantly Aboriginal people from the Pilbara region.

LOCATION

1572 kms north of Perth

The traditional owners of the land in this area are the Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi people.

BRIEF HISTORY

Roebourne Regional Prison was opened in 1984. The facility replaced the old Roebourne Prison located five km's away in the Roebourne Township.

LAST INSPECTION

Announced Follow-up Inspection – 15-17 January 2008

Announced Inspection – 26 Nov-01 December 2006

DESIGN CAPACITY OF FACILITY

116

NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD AT TIME OF INSPECTION

166 including seven prisoners at Millstream Work Camp.

DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Unit 1: 57 bed design capacity including three special purpose beds.

Unit 2: 59 bed design capacity including nine beds for female prisoners and four special purpose beds.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

ROEBOURNE REGIONAL PRISON: INSPECTION HISTORY

- 1.1 Roebourne Regional Prison is an Aboriginal prison in every sense of the word.¹ More than 90 per cent of its prisoners are Aboriginal and although the surrounding area has seen massive investment in the mining sector over recent years, it is unmistakably an area of strong Aboriginal culture and laws.² It is also a mixed prison, holding both male and female sentenced and unsentenced prisoners across all three security classifications (maximum, medium and minimum).
- 1.2 The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services commenced operations in June 2000 and since that time it has conducted five inspections of Roebourne Regional Prison.³ The first announced inspection of Roebourne took place in April 2002. While the second announced inspection was scheduled for April 2005 pursuant to the Office's three-year inspection cycle, the Inspector was sufficiently concerned by the first inspection findings to bring the second inspection forward to November 2003.
- 1.3 The third announced inspection was conducted in November 2006.⁴ Although this followed the normal three-year inspection cycle, the Office closely monitored the prison's performance by conducting extra and more-intensive liaison visits in the intervening period. The Inspector's exit debrief at the conclusion of the 2006 inspection noted that the prison was still fragile due to a range of factors including:
- crippling staff shortages;
 - overcrowding (the prison was operating at over 50 per cent more than its design capacity);
 - substandard infrastructure;
 - extreme climatic conditions;
 - paucity of services (offender programs were barely available and workshop facilities were inadequate);
 - absence of an Aboriginal prison perspective; and
 - failure to implement change.⁵
- 1.4 Because of these factors, the Inspector foreshadowed the possibility of a further inspection within 12 months. Although the Department of Corrective Services made significant efforts to address some of the matters referred to in the Inspector's debrief (in particular,

1 See also Chapter 2.

2 See Kathryn Trees, 'Contemporary Issues Facing Customary Law and the General Legal System: Roebourne Case Study' in Law Reform Commission of Western Australia (LRCWA), *Aboriginal Customary Laws Background Papers*, Project No. 94 (2006) 213; LRCWA, *Thematic Summary of Consultations in the Pilbara Region* (2004) <<http://www.lrc.justice.wa.gov.au/2publications/reports/ACL/Thematic/Pilbara.pdf>>.

3 See Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 14 (April 2002); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 24 (October 2004); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008).

4 This inspection was actually held on 26/11/2006 to 1/12/2006. OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 46 has an incorrect timeline.

5 Harding R, *Roebourne Regional Prison Inspection Exit Debrief* (16 March 2007).

INTRODUCTION

by bolstering staff numbers), progress was unsatisfactory and a short follow-up inspection of the prison was conducted in January 2008.⁶ Other factors that led to the decision to conduct the 2008 follow-up inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison included:

- management instability;⁷
- high levels of overcrowding; and
- the use of the prison as an ‘overflow prison’ for excess prisoners from Broome Regional Prison.

- 1.5 The 2008 inspection found some areas of improvement. However, it was noted that the employment market in the surrounding areas, which is driven by the mining industry, would impact on staff recruitment and was likely to keep the prison under pressure for many years to come.⁸ The 2008 inspection concluded that, with two exceptions,⁹ the recommendations made after the 2006 inspection should stand and continue to be monitored.¹⁰
- 1.6 The report of the 2008 inspection also drew attention to the failure to address some issues which were raised at the Inspector’s debrief at the end of the 2006 inspection, and were later reflected in Recommendations 11, 12 and 13 of the inspection report.¹¹ These recommendations concerned measures required to reduce the impact of the harsh climatic conditions (including the introduction of climatic control in cells; conducting a review of the impact of daylight saving; and introducing a late lock up for minimum-security prisoners, in line with the rest of the state).
- 1.7 The two exceptions made in 2008 to the 2006 recommendations both related to DECCA Station. DECCA is a skills and training facility located approximately 20 kilometres from the prison, which became operational in early 2006 with the approval of the traditional land owners, the Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation.¹² The 2006 inspection report supported this initiative on the proviso that it was supported by adequate planning and resources. The 2008 inspection revealed no substantive improvement and therefore recommended that DECCA be closed and that the Department develop vocational skills and training programs for prisoners on-site at Roebourne Regional Prison equivalent to those that were intended at DECCA. It also emphasised the need for adequate funding for any such initiative.¹³ The situation at DECCA was further exacerbated by the discovery of asbestos contamination.

6 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008).

7 The Superintendent and several senior managers had taken sustained periods of leave, leaving a series of officers acting in senior roles.

8 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 15.

9 Ibid [1.7].

10 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 31–40.

11 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 33.

12 DECCA Station is located on a disused signals and communication station that was part of global navigation system for shipping and aviation that ceased operation in the 1980s. Further information is available at: <http://www.jproc.ca/hyperbolic/DECCA.html>. The site covers approximately 20 hectares and is powered, has sewerage connected and mains water supplied.

13 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 15.

INTRODUCTION

THE 2010 ANNOUNCED INSPECTION

1.8 The report of the 2008 inspection stated:

This short follow-up inspection should not be seen as disturbing the sequence of scheduled inspections. The fragility and vulnerability of Roebourne Regional Prison demands that the Office keep it under continuous review through liaison visits and regular formal review through inspections. The next scheduled inspection should accordingly take place no later than November/December 2009.¹⁴

1.9 Progress at the prison was carefully tracked through liaison visits during 2008 and 2009. As a result of improvements noted during this time, the Office decided to delay the next announced inspection to September 2010. The aim of the delay was to give the prison (and its somewhat more stable administration group) the opportunity to successfully manage the changes that had been implemented and also to make further improvements before the inspection. The Office continued to monitor the prison during 2010 through regular pre-inspection liaison visits at Roebourne Regional Prison and at nearby DECCA station and Millstream Work Camp.¹⁵

1.10 The on-site inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison was conducted over a five-day period from 20 to 24 September 2010. Prior to the inspection, meetings were held with community-based organisations and service providers and surveys were completed by staff and prisoners. The Department also provided documentation as requested. The findings and recommendations in this report are informed by the information gathered from these sources and from interviews and observations during the on-site inspection phase.¹⁶

1.11 The 2010 inspection found significant improvement. In particular, of the Office's previous concerns about staffing levels and lack of effective re-entry initiatives for prisoners had been addressed. However, there were a number of areas that had either not been addressed or required further improvement. These included infrastructure deficits, communication issues and failure to fill key prison services positions. These and other issues are discussed in the following chapters.

14 Ibid.

15 For discussion of Millstream Work Camp, see Chapter 7.

16 The Office also contributed to, and drew from, the Community Development and Justice Committee of the Legislative Assembly's 2009-2010 review of prisoner employment, education and training in the state's prisons. The Committee's June 2010 interim report included a discussion of programs at DECCA station and Millstream Work Camp. See, Parliament of Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, *Making Our Prisons Work: An Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Prisoner Education, Training and Employment Strategies*, Report 4 (Interim Report, June 2010) and Report 6 (Final Report, November 2010): available at <http://parliament.wa.gov.au/web/newwebparl.nsf/iframewebpages/Committees+-+Current>.

INTRODUCTION

1.12 Areas that had improved by 2010 included the following:

- Staffing levels generally were much improved over those encountered in 2006. Following strong representations to the Department by the Inspector after that Inspection, temporary teams of staff were flown in from other parts of the state to boost staff numbers in the short term. Subsequently, the Department amended its regional incentive scheme, in particular by providing free rental for its prison staff and successfully obtaining more accommodation under the Government Regional Officer Housing program (GROH). This greatly improved permanent staffing levels.
- DECCA had improved greatly since 2008. The Department had invested in cleaning up asbestos at the site and had provided limited recurrent resources. A number of partners, including major mining companies, had also made significant contributions. As a result, the program had become a nationally recognised showpiece for industrial training in prisons. It also provided a pathway for a number of prisoners to enter employment on release.
- Re-entry services at Roebourne have been significantly enhanced by the addition of the positions of Employment Coordinator and Transitional Manager. This investment has helped build links with local employers and linked a number of prisoners with actual employment opportunities.
- The delivery of offender rehabilitation programs, as at most prisons, has improved a great deal at Roebourne since the 2006 inspection. Program delivery has been more reliable and more suitable programs are being provided.
- Prisoners have also benefited from a range of less formal programs and information sessions to help prepare them for life in the community, in areas such as relationships, health, driver training and accessing services in the community.

1.13 Areas of concern that require attention included the following:

- Much of the physical infrastructure is nearing the end of its life cycle. The condition of the prison, its location, and expansion possibilities require further exploration in light of a custodial plan for the Pilbara region as a whole.
- Irrespective of longer term plans, there are major infrastructure deficits that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. They include serious wear and tear, climatic control issues, bunk beds and workshops.
- Relationships and communication were a serious issue at all levels of the prison (within management, between management and staff and between different staff members). This area needs to be improved if the gains made in other areas are to be sustained and built upon.
- Staff/prisoner relationships were found to be very mixed. Some examples of good practice were found, but a number of staff appeared rather disengaged. Prisoners also regarded the behaviour of some staff as culturally insensitive (and therefore racist).

INTRODUCTION

- Key positions in prison services, including the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme, the Women's Support Office and the Prison Support Officer, had been absent for extended periods. The impact of this was being felt throughout the prison, by both prisoners and staff.
- There have been some improvements to the women's section but these were not fully functional during the inspection. Even with these improvements, the environment is claustrophobic and limited. Women, like all prisoners, prefer to remain close to home but, as at other regional prisons, they are disadvantaged in a predominantly male environment.
- There were many good aspects to health services at Roebourne and this provides a good base for the Department to develop more culturally appropriate health services for its largely Aboriginal, largely Pilbara prisoners.
- While DECCA has proved itself as a provider of industrial training for a proportion of the Roebourne Prison population, the majority of prisoners were unable to access this program and have little or no access to substantive industrial or vocational training within the prison.

Chapter 2

LOCATION, PROFILE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

LOCATION AND POPULATION

- 2.1 Roebourne Regional Prison is located between the Roebourne and Wickham town sites, approximately 1572 kilometres from Perth. It operates as the regional correctional facility for the vast and remote Pilbara region. The size and diversity of the Pilbara region poses significant challenges for government service delivery. The particular challenges faced by the prison were described as follows in the 2004 inspection report:
- Roebourne Prison is a regional prison, an Aboriginal prison and a Pilbara prison. It accommodates prisoners from multiple skin groups, diverse communities, families, languages and cultural traditions. It is a complex place requiring flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness at the local level and clear strategic direction when planning and implementing custodial management.¹⁷
- 2.2 This still rings true. On the first Monday of the inspection, 94 per cent of the total population of 166 prisoners identified as Aboriginal and although they are predominantly from the Pilbara, they remain a complex mix of people from different cultures, communities and skin groups.¹⁸
- 2.3 The number of Kimberley prisoners at Roebourne has dropped significantly. In 2006, approximately 60 per cent of the prison's population were from the Pilbara region, 35 per cent were from the Kimberley region and five per cent from other areas.¹⁹ The presence of so many Kimberley prisoners with their own distinct cultures and customs had added a layer of complexity to prison management. By contrast, at the time of this inspection, around 90 per cent of prisoners were from the Pilbara itself. Only five per cent were from the Kimberley region and the remaining prisoners were from other areas of Western Australia.²⁰ As a result, and without ignoring the diversity of the prisoners, it is a somewhat more homogenous group. This greater homogeneity should make on-site management easier as well as presenting opportunities for external relationships of relevance to the prisoner group as a whole.
- 2.4 Generally around 10 per cent of the Roebourne Prison population is female, with 18 women prisoners accommodated there at the time of the inspection. The number of women prisoners from the Kimberley region increased during construction of the new women's section at Broome Regional Prison; however, the present population of women prisoners is mostly from the Pilbara region.

17 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 24 (October 2004) 14.

18 TOMS, 'Ethnicity for current prisoners – facility' (20 September 2010).

19 Superintendent's briefing to OICS inspection team (20 September 2010).

20 Ibid. In part, the change reflects the fact that large numbers of Kimberley prisoners have been transferred even further away from home to Casuarina Prison where some of them have participated in the 'Displaced Aboriginal Prisoners' Program (DAP). For a review of DAP see OICS *Report of an Announced Inspection of Casuarina Prison*, Report No. 68 (September 2010) Chapter 7.

OVERCROWDING: DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES

- 2.5 Roebourne Regional Prison was opened in 1984 to replace the old Roebourne Gaol. According to official figures, the prison's original capacity and its current design capacity are 116.²¹
- 2.6 The rapid rise in prisoner numbers during 2009 and the program of adding extra beds to existing cells led to the Department introducing a new measure: operational capacity.²² Broadly speaking, the operational capacity includes bunk beds or other beds that are installed in the cells but excludes mattresses on floors. At the time of writing this report the Department's website put Roebourne's operational capacity at 161.
- 2.7 Prisoner numbers have invariably exceeded Roebourne's design capacity over recent years. They have also frequently exceeded the operational capacity. The average daily prison population over the 12 months from September 2009 to September 2010 was 183,²³ though the population did decrease from 188 to 166 over the month leading up to the inspection.²⁴ These figures include Millstream Work Camp, which houses an average population of seven prisoners. Since the inspection, the total population has settled at around 170.²⁵
- 2.8 In terms of current and future planning, prison capacity and condition are two important factors; however, two other factors should also be taken into consideration. First, a very significant number of prisoners from the Pilbara are currently being held in prisons outside the region, contrary to the principle that people should be imprisoned as close as possible to home. On 8 December 2010, 65 prisoners from the Pilbara (around one third of all such prisoners) were held in prisons other than Roebourne. Of these, 45 were designated medium-security, 10 were maximum-security and 10 were minimum-security. Secondly, as the region continues to expand the number of Pilbara prisoners is likely to increase.²⁶

FUTURE PLANNING

- 2.9 The facts set out above suggest that extra Pilbara capacity should be a priority for the Department. It is unfortunate that there has been no expansion to date and that future plans for expansion remain unconfirmed.

21 Original capacity refers to the bed capacity of the prison when it was first opened. Design capacity refers to the total number of cells designed for single occupancy, plus the number of designated beds for shared cells or dormitories. See Department of Corrective Services (DCS) website www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au.

22 See DCS website www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au.

23 DCS, *Average Daily Muster By Facility – 19 September 2009-19 September 2010* (2010).

24 Superintendent's briefing to OICS inspection team (20 September 2010); TOMS, 'Count facility – Historical' (1 August 2010); TOMS, 'Count facility – Historical' (20 September 2010)

25 Figures obtained from DCS, *Weekly Offender Statistics*, available at www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au.

26 Over the period from 2004 to 2009, there has been an increase of 47.6 per cent in the number of adult prisoners from non-metropolitan regions. This increase has occurred at a significantly faster rate than the increase in adult prisoners from the metropolitan area: DCS, *A Statistical Profile of Offenders by Region* (17 November 2009).

-
-
- 2.10 As noted in previous inspections, it is not immediately obvious why the prison was originally sited at Roebourne. The main regional court is based at Port Hedland, some 200 kilometres away and, historically, the largest proportion of Roebourne prisoners have come from Port Hedland and other eastern parts of the Pilbara. Past inspections reports have therefore expressed the view that the prison should have been built at Port Hedland to better facilitate family visits to prisoners, to reduce transport distance to and from court and to provide better re-entry services on release.²⁷
- 2.11 These considerations, combined with the prison's serious infrastructure and service deficits, led the former Inspector to conclude that Roebourne Regional Prison was 'unfit for purpose' and should be replaced by 2015.²⁸ The Office also recommended that any replacement prison be located in the Hedland area.
- 2.12 However, the position no longer appears so clear-cut. On the one hand, the prison's infrastructure clearly remains a major problem and there are compelling arguments for its replacement on this basis alone.²⁹ On the other hand, the present inspection found a considerable increase in the number of prisoners from the local area, including from Karratha and Roebourne. In fact, the numbers originating from the East and West Pilbara now appear to be broadly similar.³⁰ It can also be argued that because of improved staffing arrangements and deepening links with local industry and others, Roebourne is now better placed to provide the training and re-entry services that had previously been found lacking.
- 2.13 In 2007, the Department committed to *replacing* or expanding Roebourne by 2015.³¹ However, a recent departmental briefing to the Inspector showed no confirmed plans in this regard.³² Significantly, the briefing referred merely to a *possible expansion* of Roebourne, with no mention of replacement.
- 2.14 The Office would be very concerned if expanding Roebourne by around 60 beds was to be treated as the only medium-term regional option. There are already 65 Pilbara prisoners out of country and this number is likely to increase. A comprehensive Pilbara Custodial Plan which reflects current and projected need, and maximises rehabilitation opportunities for people 'in country' is urgently required. In developing such a plan, it will be necessary to hold meaningful consultations with local community groups and other key stakeholders, such as the courts and the Western Australia Police. The aim should be to retain the advances that have been made at Roebourne, especially in terms of its linkages to training and employment, but to address its continuing deficiencies.

27 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 14 (April 2002) 5; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) iii; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 14.

28 OICS, *Directed Review of the Management of Offenders in Custody*, Report No. 30 (November 2005) 173. The Department's Strategic Assets Plan 2007-2008 also identified 2015 for the expansion or replacement of Roebourne Regional Prison.

29 See the rest of this chapter for discussion of infrastructure and maintenance deficits.

30 S. Krikstolaitis, Assistant Superintendent Prison Management, Roebourne Regional Prison, email (20 October 2010).

31 Department of Corrective Services, *Strategic Assets Plan 2007-2008*.

32 Department of Corrective Services, *Strategic Asset Plan Briefing* 19 November 2010.

- 2.15 It would be premature to suggest a specific model, but it is strongly recommended that, rather than focusing on expanding Roebourne (or even on a single replacement Pilbara facility), the Department should examine the feasibility of two facilities. A new facility in the Hedland area could service remand prisoners and could also draw on Roebourne's experience to develop positive re-entry employment opportunities for prisoners from the Hedland area. The Roebourne site could be used as a dedicated training and programs facility. Part of the Pilbara Custodial Plan should also include a dedicated minimum-security area outside the prison. This could cater, among other things, for prisoners undertaking outside work and training programs.

Recommendation 1:

Develop a Pilbara Custodial Plan in consultation with relevant community organisations and stakeholders. As part of this plan, give consideration to establishing a new facility in the Port Hedland region and constructing a replacement prison at Roebourne.

- 2.16 Given that the recent departmental briefing to the Office refers only to an (unconfirmed) future 'expansion' of Roebourne prison, and not to replacement, it can be predicted that the prison will still be there, much in its present form, in five to 10 years' time. As such, it is important to examine options for improvement in the short term and prior to the implementation of any comprehensive Pilbara Custodial Plan.
- 2.17 One potential option, which has apparently already been the subject of consideration, is the establishment of a new minimum-security section outside the prison's perimeter fence. This would bring several potential benefits. First, it would assist the further roll-out of positive initiatives such as DECCA, the Prisoner Employment Program and activities under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA). Secondly, it may bring some relief to the overcrowded conditions inside the prison. A recent quotation obtained by the prison also suggests that this option may be relatively cost-effective.³³
- 2.18 At this stage, the Office does not have sufficient detail to support a determination about the viability or otherwise of such a proposal, but it is an option that should be kept under active review. As the remainder of this chapter shows, it is also critical to invest in significant repair and upgrading.

Recommendation 2:

Keep under active review the option of constructing, in the short term, a minimum-security area outside the current perimeter fence.

33 A member of the management team showed the Inspector a quotation totalling approximately \$4.2 million for 70 air-conditioned beds (in donga-style accommodation) and associated infrastructure. However, the Office has not attempted to calculate costs that would necessarily be incurred with respect to additional infrastructure and staffing.

PHYSICAL CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE DEFICITS

- 2.19 The prison is 26 years old and the physical infrastructure of the buildings is deteriorating. For the most part, the prison's approach to maintenance has been reactive, with little funding available for the replacement of items or for undertaking preventative measures to limit deterioration. It has now reached the stage where it is necessary to spend a considerable amount of money on repairs and upgrading. It must be emphasised that this is not simply a matter of aesthetic appearance; rather, it is a case of meeting mandatory occupational health and safety requirements, as well as basic standards of humane and decent treatment.
- 2.20 Maintenance issues of particular concern – most of which were obvious to the naked eye – included the following:
- shutters no longer properly attached to the outside of the cells (a particular risk given that the prison is located in a cyclone-prone area);
 - holes were evident in concrete paths and floors around the prison;
 - a water tank had significant rust, including holes, and was unfit for use;
 - some showers were without doors;
 - substantial holes were found in flywire screens, allowing rodent access into cells and other areas;
 - the oval had been out of action for a prolonged period and still had problems with the surface (and at the time of writing it was still out of action); and
 - rust was found in the support poles for the mesh enclosures over the units.³⁴

*Recommendation 3:
Implement a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan.*

CELLS

- 2.21 Roebourne prisoners, like their counterparts in Broome, frequently sleep in cells that were designed for multiple occupancy. A reasonable and decent capacity for most of these cells would be four, but they frequently accommodate six to eight. There is a high use of bunk beds and in some cases prisoners have been required to sleep on mattresses placed on the floor. During the inspection, when the prison population figures were down, there was little need for prisoners to sleep on the floor but some had chosen to sleep on mattresses so as to be accommodated in the same cell as family members or friends. The Superintendent, although tolerant of this practice, stated that during the cyclone season this practice could not be condoned for safety reasons.
- 2.22 The design of the prison and its occupancy levels mean that there is limited scope for separation according to desirable criteria, such as skin groups, cultures, age, customs and behaviour. However, the prison endeavours to manage such issues using latitude and common sense.

³⁴ Although not a great deal of investigation into the amount of rust and impact on the structure was carried out during the inspection, the rust was likely to be more extensive than could be seen upon quick inspection.

2.23 While the cells at Roebourne have breezeways both front and back, they still experience the extreme climatic conditions of the region.³⁵ Maintenance deficits with respect to flywire screens have also created a situation where rodents and other pests have, at times, been readily able to access cells.³⁶

BUNK BEDS

2.24 Bunk beds have become an increasingly common feature of Western Australian prisons in order to accommodate increased prisoner numbers. Bunk bed design has been an issue of major concern for this Office for a number of reasons, including that:

- bunk beds are often retrofitted into cells that were designed and intended for single occupancy. This has impacted on prisoner privacy and also on the space available for prisoners to undertake in-cell activities.
- many of the bunk beds used in the state's prisons do not have any 'roll-out' protection.
- access to and from the bunk beds can be difficult due to the design of the 'ladders' and this poses risks of falls and injury.
- difficult questions can arise in terms of accurately assessing whether prisoners are fit to sleep on the top bunk; and whether particular prisoners can share safely with each other.
- there is no formal program to train staff in procedures to remove a prisoner from a top bunk in the event of illness.

2.25 Although the Inspector has raised concerns about bunk designs numerous times since mid-2009 (including in inspection debriefs, inspection reports and through other channels), the Department has been slow to respond.³⁷ The Office has been informed that senior head office staff have visited Roebourne (and other prisons) to review the number of beds and bunks; however, no audit of safety issues has resulted. Neither does there appear to have been any reporting on the very obvious deficiencies, nor any systematic tracking of the issues identified above.

2.26 The Inspector's concerns culminated in the issue of a formal Risk Notice to the Department with respect to bunk bed safety on 20 August 2010. This detailed the various risks and noted that there had been at least 12 reported prisoner accidents / incidents involving bunk beds during the preceding 12 months.³⁸

35 See below under 'Climatic Control'.

36 See below under 'Rodent and Other Pest Control'.

37 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Greenough Regional Prison*, Report No. 66 (June 2010) 6-7.

38 TOMS, 'Incidents and Charges' (1 July 2009 to 18 August 2010). Despite the concerns already expressed by the Inspector, the Department appeared quite unaware of these incidents and, therefore, of the potential risks. For example, on 10 August 2010 in response to the release of this Office's Report No. 66 (ibid), the Department issued a media release which stated there had been no bunk-related incidents recorded at Greenough. In fact, there were at least five recorded incidents in the previous 13 months at the prison, one of which had occurred only the week prior to the date of the media release.

- 2.27 The Office did not undertake a formal safety assessment of Roebourne’s bunk beds – that is firmly the responsibility of the Department of Corrective Services. However, team members did examine beds in a number of cells and also reviewed the TOMS database for the 12 months prior to the inspection. The TOMS review did not find any recorded bunk bed incidents at Roebourne, but this should not be interpreted as a lack of risk. Several prisoners interviewed during the inspection referred to slipping when climbing in or out of top bunks, but said they had not reported the incidents.³⁹
- 2.28 The Inspector noted at the exit debrief that the majority (if not all) of the bunk beds at Roebourne would not comply with any sensible design and safety standards for adult prisoners.⁴⁰ Generally speaking, there is no side protection to prevent prisoners falling out of bed and no ladder for access to and from the top bunk. For access, prisoners were either climbing on bars (which were also potential ligature points) at the end of the bed or were using lightweight plastic chairs. Furthermore – and this was symptomatic of Roebourne’s general maintenance issues – the bunks were showing signs of age and disrepair. Many slats and tubes were buckled or bent and many others had already been re-welded at least once.
- 2.29 The August 2010 Risk Notice does appear to have generated greater risk awareness. New policies have been developed and the Department has requested all superintendents to report on the standards and condition of bunk beds. It seems, therefore, that formal safety auditing processes are in train. Nonetheless, remedial action is needed as a matter of urgency at Roebourne as well as at other sites.

Recommendation 4:

(a) At Roebourne Regional Prison and across the system as a whole, replace or modify beds that do not comply with appropriate safety standards.

(b) Provide custodial officers across the state with training in removing people from top bunks in the event of medical or other emergencies.

CLIMATIC CONTROL

- 2.30 This Office has consistently and unequivocally raised concerns about the extreme climate in Roebourne and its effect on prisoners.⁴¹ The Inspectorate acknowledges that the women’s section and the maximum-security section have been air-conditioned in recent years, but this represents less than 17 per cent of cells. Overall, the Department has failed to prioritise previous recommendations, risking the safety and decent treatment of prisoners. Urgent investment is needed in proper climate control.

39 TOMS, ‘Incidents and Charges’ (20 September 2009 to 20 September 2010).

40 Morgan N, *Roebourne Prison Inspection Exit Debrief* (24 September 2010).

41 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 14 (April 2002) 30, 62–63; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 24 (October 2004) 22–23; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 11–12; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 11–12.

- 2.31 The 2006 inspection found that the lowest internal temperature at the prison was four degrees Celsius higher than the lowest external temperature.⁴² Leading up to the 2008 inspection, the temperature had reportedly reached 52 degrees in the yard area during the day dropping to a minimum in the low thirties at night. As a result of this information, Report 52 concluded:

[I]t was a reasonable supposition that the night-time temperature in the cells would have been of the order of 36 or 37 degrees Celsius during the week prior to the ... Inspection.⁴³

- 2.32 Report 52 went on to say that:

While there are fans in all cells, these simply move hot and, in frequently overcrowded cells, stuffy air around for minimal benefit. These are the sorts of situations where heat-stroke can occur, particularly amongst a population with poor health profiles, including diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease. In the view of the Inspector, the implications of this should be quite clear: if a death (or near-miss) occurred in such circumstances, the Department could be found to have breached its duty-of-care to prisoners both under the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) and at Common Law.⁴⁴

- 2.33 The heat-related death of Aboriginal elder Mr Ward in the rear of an escort van highlighted the potential risks of exposure to high temperatures for lengthy periods of time.⁴⁵ The risks are, of course, greater should the person have health problems. For example, it is well documented⁴⁶ that people with diabetes have an impaired ability to sweat, which predisposes them to heat-related illnesses. Awareness of such risks is crucial so that sufferers can apply self-protecting strategies, such as keeping out of harsh heat conditions as much as possible, maintaining good hydration and so on. Prisoners' ability to take such precautions are limited by virtue of their incarceration. It is therefore incumbent upon prison authorities to take responsibility for controlling and ensuring the health and safety of the environment in which prisoners are secured.

42 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 11.

43 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 11. For the 2010 inspection, the Office engaged the services of an expert from the Department of Health to measure the temperature and other variants both inside cells and in the open areas of the prison. There were several devices placed around the prison for a 24-hour period and readings were taken every five minutes. This experiment will be repeated in early 2011 in order to obtain comparative data. The results of both these sets of readings will be compared and the Department will be informed of the findings.

44 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 11.

45 Hope AN, *Record of an Investigation into Death (Mr Ward)*, Coroner's Court of Western Australia (12 June 2009).

46 For example see: The Endocrine Society, *Science Daily*, Many people with diabetes do not know or heed dangers of hot weather (21 June 2010); Petrofsky JS, Besonis C, Rivera D, Schwab E, and Scott, L, *Journal of Applied Research in Clinical and Experimental Therapeutics*, Heat Tolerance in Patients with Type I and Type II Diabetes (2006); and Manzella, D, Summer Heat and Safety and Diabetes, available at <http://www.about.com>.

- 2.34 The potential risks of extreme temperatures to prisoner health and safety are further heightened at Roebourne as a result of more prisoners undertaking out-of-prison work, often involving the operation of heavy machinery. This is an extremely positive development but workers cannot operate to their full potential without a comfortable night's sleep. The prison has tried to circumvent these issues where possible and on at least one occasion has placed a prisoner in an air-conditioned Multi Purpose Cell while he was engaged in outside work with the Prisoner Employment Program. But this solution is neither satisfactory nor sustainable.
- 2.35 Over the years, the Department has defended the lack of climatic control throughout the prison on two main grounds. The first has been that air-conditioning 'is not fully supported by all prisoners'.⁴⁷ This claim appears to the Office to be entirely without foundation. Unanimous prisoner support has never been a guiding principle in prison management and at least the last two inspections found the air-conditioned parts of the prison to be very much sought after. The recent decision to air-condition the women's and maximum-security cells should put an end to this 'prisoner preference' argument.
- 2.36 The Department's second argument against installation of effective climatic control within the prison is that the cost would be 'prohibitively expensive'.⁴⁸ While the Office acknowledges that the cost of installation of air-conditioning would be expensive, it also highlights that the financial cost of any heat-related death or serious injury would also be very high. Further, as the Inspector stated in 2008:
- Such expenditure, amortised over a further lifespan of the prison of even ten years, is not ... prohibitively expensive. Particularly given that at their worst the climatic conditions for male prisoners could, in the view of the Inspector, amount to 'cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment' in terms of the *United Nations Convention [Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment]*.⁴⁹
- 2.37 Other measures should also be considered to reduce the impact of the extreme climatic conditions in Roebourne. For example, a later lockup (at least for minimum-security prisoners) may assist in reducing the heat and discomfort in the cells. Extra laundering of bed linen and clothing may also be necessary during the hotter months.
- 2.38 In summary, the Department and other government agencies can no longer view the installation of air-conditioning or another adequate climatic control system as an optional extra or a question of cost. It is essential not only for health and safety reasons, but also to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners at Roebourne Regional Prison. As the state experiences the worsening impacts of climate change, the situation is unlikely to improve during the probable lifespan of the prison.

47 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008), 33.

48 Ibid.

49 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008), 12.

Recommendation 5:

- (a) Install suitable climatic controls to reduce air temperatures and to increase cool air circulation in prisoners' cells at Roebourne Regional Prison.*
- (b) Explore and implement other management measures to reduce the impact of the harsh climate.*

RODENT AND OTHER PEST CONTROL

2.39 There were numerous signs of relatively recent rodent activity in the prison, especially around the units. It was clear, even on a superficial inspection, that rodents had been frequently and easily accessing cells because dried droppings proliferated around windows and torn flywire screens. Prisoners used hanging plastic bags to protect food and other items from rodent access and spoke of rodents running across them as they lay in bed. The prison acknowledged that there had been a problem earlier in the year but advised the inspection team that it had been addressed. Although no rodent activity was observed by the inspection team during the inspection, it is a problem that is likely to be seasonal and which must be actively monitored and controlled. The maintenance deficits, to which we have referred, combined with the fact that prisoners generally eat meals in the units rather than in the dining room, serve to exacerbate the problem.⁵⁰

WORKSHOPS AND STORES

- 2.40 The workshops at Roebourne are small and inadequate. They have very little storage space and lack the space to successfully conduct any form of extensive program or skills training. It appears that they are largely utilised as a kind of shed from which prisoners can access tools to carry out tasks they are undertaking elsewhere, rather than dedicated workshops for extended hours of work on complex projects or training. Major construction projects appear to be carried out at DECCA rather than the prison and there is certainly no scope for the workshops to match the type of work, training and programs undertaken at DECCA. This is a missed opportunity for those prisoners (the majority at Roebourne) who will not be assessed as suitable for DECCA.
- 2.41 Given the current size and layout of the site, there is virtually no room to expand the workshops. However, the stores, together with the space required to turn a vehicle, currently take up a considerable area. In the Office's opinion, it would be possible to expand the workshops if the stores area was moved outside the prison. Given their existing contributions to DECCA and the Prisoner Employment Program, it is not inconceivable that Rio Tinto and other companies would be prepared to enter discussions about potential engagement in new training programs within the prison.⁵¹

50 See paras 4.17-4.21.

51 See also Chapter 7.

- 2.42 Moving the stores would also bring significant logistical and security benefits. Currently the prison has little control if any, over the times of deliveries to and from the stores because the trucks deliver the goods on the way to other towns. This means that delivery vehicles are regularly entering the prison throughout the day (and often the time of arrival is unknown). If the store was located on the outside of the main fence, fewer vehicles would need to enter and leave the prison and the prison itself could control delivery of goods into the prison. The size of the storage space could also be increased to match the needs of the prison. These processes should also reduce security risks and the demands on gate staff.

Recommendation 6:

Expand industries and vocational skills and training programs on site and relocate the store to facilitate this expansion.

Chapter 3

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

- 3.1 One of the most contentious and prominent concerns expressed during all facets of the inspection (on-site, during pre-inspection activities and in the staff and prisoner surveys) was poor communication and relationships. The issue impacts across all areas and all levels of the prison: within the management team; between management and staff (uniformed and non-uniformed); within the staff; and between staff and prisoners.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

- 3.2 The administration team of Roebourne Regional Prison is reasonably small compared to other prisons around the state. It comprises the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Prison Management (ASPM), Security Manager, Business Manager and administrative support staff. In total there are 12.6 full-time equivalent positions (FTE) allocated to administration, 65 FTE for prison officers and 10 FTE for vocational support officers. A number of people working in the prison are employed by other parts of the Department (eg, educational & vocational training, health services and offender management staff) or contracted agencies (eg, re-entry staff).⁵²

- 3.3 Prison staff were surveyed prior to the inspection. In the course of the inspection, there were meetings with several different groups representing all staff areas and individual meetings with managers and staff members. This experience was disconcerting for the inspection team as it became clear that many staff felt powerless, disillusioned and distressed about their relations with others. According to the evidence provided by staff and by members of management, this manifested in:

- divisions within the management team, between management and other staff and between various groups of staff;
- allegations of bullying between management and staff, and among staff;
- claims (some supported by independent evidence) of policies and procedures being implemented, reversed and changed again depending on who was acting in management roles;
- a claimed lack of consultation and information sharing with people affected by decisions;
- projects starting then stalling after being challenged by other parties;
- lack of cooperation with others, allegedly based on personal or factional issues; and
- a relatively high number of people taking stress-related sick leave.

- 3.4 It is not this Office's role to investigate allegations of this nature or to make judgements about the roles of individuals in such cases. However, the concerns were widespread and, whilst individuals' explanations for the problem may have differed, it was apparent there was a serious problem. Furthermore, it was becoming difficult in some operational areas to separate the problems from the personalities. Overall, the result was that the willingness and / or ability of staff to achieve consistently good results was being undermined by hostility, distrust and miscommunication.

52 Information supplied to the Office by the prison through the document request prior to the 2010 inspection. These figures do not include staff employment at the prison by other parts of the Department (eg, education and vocational staff, health staff, offender management staff) or contracted agencies (eg, re-entry staff).

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

- 3.5 Despite the problems, all parties expressed a commitment to Roebourne Regional Prison and a desire to have a more positive culture. All parties must now share the responsibility of addressing the problems. This will require many skills, including negotiation, cooperation, flexibility and common sense.
- 3.6 In terms of leadership, it is incumbent on the management team to model harmonious and professional relations between themselves and to carry these over to relations with other staff. It is possible that regular, minuted management meetings would help. Whatever processes are adopted, the important outcome is that policies, procedures and projects are pursued *on a consistent and united basis*.
- 3.7 As with any prison, operational decisions and planning for the future should be preceded, as far as possible, by consultation with staff. Equally, however, staff must be prepared to play a role in responding with appropriate flexibility to management proposals, and in assisting management to develop and instigate operational changes within the prison.
- 3.8 The performance management system and in-service training can also be used as a way to better align individual performance with goals and values of the agency.
- 3.9 The breakdown in relations at Roebourne Regional Prison is such that this Office has no confidence that the prison's management team can address the problem without external support. A senior departmental representative commented that it was unfortunate that the change management process had been allowed to lapse at Roebourne; a sentiment with which this Office agrees. Change management was a head office initiative in which facilitators were progressively sent to engage representative groups of staff from all levels in each prison in a series of consultations to identify issues of concern in local prison operations and to develop and implement local solutions to these concerns. This program achieved quite positive results in some prisons but it would appear that more is now needed at Roebourne.
- 3.10 In summary, measures need to be taken to stabilise and harmonise the leadership team at Roebourne; to develop good processes for communication and cooperation; and to build up peoples' sense of commitment to their colleagues, their managers and their work.

Recommendation 7:

Develop and implement strategies at both departmental and prison levels to stabilise and harmonise the leadership team at Roebourne, develop good processes for communication and cooperation, and build up peoples' sense of commitment to their colleagues, their managers and their work.

STAFF AND PRISONERS

- 3.11 Interactions and engagement between staff and prisoners were mixed. The team certainly observed and learned of some very positive cases of staff being proactive and highly responsive to prisoners and also of prisoners engaging positively and appropriately with staff. For example, an officer was observed assisting a group of six to eight prisoners with understanding legal correspondence and also offering other advice and assistance. He had a good rapport with the prisoners but the professional boundaries were clear: he was evidently respected and was, in turn, both respectful and helpful. Such proactive, professional engagement represents excellent practice.

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

- 3.12 A good deal of the time, however, staff appeared to congregate in the central pods and to have somewhat limited interaction with prisoners, except on a more reactive basis. Prisoners told us – and we observed for ourselves – that staff were generally fairly helpful when they did seek assistance.
- 3.13 However, it was worrying to find consistent comments from prisoners about what they saw as disengaged and disrespectful behaviour by a handful of staff. We probed the alleged incidents with prisoners and some of the behaviours appeared to be examples of boisterousness or ‘being in your face’ or even misplaced attempts at humour which were interpreted as teasing. However, even if there is no unpleasant intent, such behaviours need to be changed, particularly in the context of an Aboriginal Pilbara prison. They were perceived by prisoners as disrespectful and hurtful, not only to the individual but also culturally. As a result, they were also defined as racist. Quite independently, a number of staff members also expressed concern about the attitudes of some staff. Several staff also felt they would benefit from cultural awareness training.
- 3.14 Members of the senior management team admitted that they did not get out into the prison as often as they would have liked. The view was that it had become increasingly difficult to do so because of heavy demands from emails and other paperwork, the fact that members of the management team were so often on leave, and the need to build up community and industry engagement. These are undoubtedly very real pressures and similar concerns are expressed at many sites. However, in the Inspectorate’s view, it is essential for superintendents (and other members of their senior team) to be visible, active and engaged in the prison itself. It is also crucial that the necessary systems and resources are in place to ensure this can happen.

COMMUNICATION WITH VISITORS

- 3.15 The front gate of a prison is the first point of contact with a prison and first impressions are often those that are remembered and set a visitor’s overall impression of a facility. Feedback from visitors to the prison was rather mixed and this reflected the Inspectorate’s own experience. Many staff were polite and respectful⁵³ but the quality of customer service lacked consistency, indicating a need for targeted training opportunities in customer service techniques.

Recommendation 8:

Provide more extensive training at Roebourne with respect to (i) cultural awareness (using local Aboriginal providers if possible) and (ii) customer service techniques.

53 See for example, para 4.23.

Chapter 4

PRISONER WELLBEING AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

4.1 Many areas relating to prisoners' conditions and services are discussed elsewhere in this report.⁵⁴ However, there are some specific matters that deserve attention here. The first relates to failings in three key service areas: the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme, the Prison Support Officer, and the Women's Support Officer. Their absence was having a detrimental and cumulative impact on prisoner services and was causing increasing pressure for other already stretched services such as the Prisoner Counselling Service. Other areas that require some mention are complaints; food; visits; recreation; the library; and the canteen.

ABORIGINAL VISITOR SCHEME

- 4.2 Roebourne is an Aboriginal prison and the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme (AVS), administered from Perth, has a potentially valuable role to play. The AVS was established in response to a recommendation of the Western Australian Interim Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody⁵⁵ and seeks to ensure that:
- culturally appropriate counselling is provided to Aboriginal detainees or prisoners;
 - Aboriginal detainees and prisoners are given adequate support and a referral service; and
 - the Aboriginal community is satisfied that detainees and prisoners are treated in a fair and humane manner whilst incarcerated.⁵⁶
- 4.3 Shortly before the 2010 inspection, following the death in custody of a female prisoner from Greenough Regional Prison, the Department issued a media release which recognised the importance of the AVS, especially at such times: 'A range of support and counselling services is available at [Greenough] prison for staff and prisoners, including the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme, prison support officers, peer support and chaplaincy services.'⁵⁷
- 4.4 Despite this recognition, and despite Roebourne being an Aboriginal prison to its core, the AVS has been virtually invisible at Roebourne for many years. In early 2007 the Office found that AVS visits 'had become sporadic as a result of illness ... [and t]he relationship between the Aboriginal Visitor Service and local prison management was at times strained.'⁵⁸ The report recommended that 'Roebourne Regional Prison provide greater support to the activities of the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme'.⁵⁹

54 For example, see discussion of cell conditions and climate control issues in Chapter 2; general staff-prisoner relations in Chapter 3; the position of women prisoners in Chapter 5; health services in Chapter 6; and education, programs and re-entry in Chapter 7.

55 Vincent P, *Interim Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in Western Australia* (1998), Recommendation 20.

56 Prosser P, *Aboriginal Visitors Scheme*, paper presented to the Australian Institute of Criminology Best Practice Interventions in Corrections for Indigenous People Conference, Adelaide (13-15 October 1999).

57 Department of Corrective Services, *Death in Custody*, media release (16 September 2010).

58 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 14.

59 Ibid.

- 4.5 Unfortunately, the situation had deteriorated by September 2010. The prison had not been visited by the AVS since December 2008 (some 21 months) and there were no signs of change. Roebourne is not alone when it comes to limited AVS service provision. Other regional prisons have also experienced long periods without an AVS service or with only a sporadic service. In fact, despite the claims of the media release referred to earlier, in September 2010 there was no operative, ongoing service by AVS at Greenough itself or at the state's other two Aboriginal prisons, Broome and Eastern Goldfields.
- 4.6 Although departmental literature trumpets the AVS when describing its services to Aboriginal prisoners, not one of the state's Aboriginal prisons has had a properly functioning AVS in recent times. This situation is unacceptable. In response to a recommendation of this Office's 2010 Report of an Inspection of Greenough Regional Prison, the Department acknowledged that there were some 'local management issues'.⁶⁰ But it is clear that the problems run far deeper and that there may be systemic problems that need to be addressed.
- 4.7 The Office is aware of the efforts (although unsuccessful) of the AVS manager, in conjunction with Marwarnkarra Health Centre, to recruit visitors. However, AVS positions are part-time and the pay level is not high. In these circumstances, it is understandable that people, who may be interested in principle, will be reluctant to take up the position. One option may be to provide for fly-in, fly-out arrangements on a contract basis for which, if necessary, funding should be found.

Recommendation 9:

Ensure that the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison and also at all other prisons (including coverage for any lengthy absence).

PRISON SUPPORT OFFICER

- 4.8 The Prison Support Officer (PSO) is another position within the prison that is essential to day-to-day operations. The PSO is intended to play a key role in preventing suicide and self-harm, as well as performing some other roles. In essence, the PSO is a conduit to staff and management and in many cases is a prisoner's first and primary welfare contact in the prison.
- 4.9 The PSO's position at Roebourne had been vacant for approximately eight months as the substantive holder of this position had taken long-term sick leave. However, the fact that there was no vacancy to be filled permanently should not have prevented the position from being filled on a casual or temporary basis pending the return of the substantive position holder.
- 4.10 Immediately prior to the inspection the position was filled on a fly-in, fly-out basis from Perth. The presence of the PSO for a few weeks made a positive impact on both prisoners and staff. He was energetic and enthusiastic in his role and appeared to gain the confidence and respect of prisoners and staff very quickly. His presence only served to reinforce the need for the position to be filled at all times; however, shortly after the inspection the position reverted to becoming vacant. The gaps in service delivery were even more exposed because of the invisibility of the AVS and the absence of a Women's Support Officer.

⁶⁰ OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Greenough Regional Prison*, Report No. 66 (June 2010) 48.

Recommendation 10:

Ensure that the Prison Support Officer position has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison (including coverage for any lengthy absence).

WOMEN'S SUPPORT OFFICER

- 4.11 The Women's Support Officer went on leave in early 2010 and did not return. Again, this is a key support position which should be operational and, in the event of prolonged absences, arrangements should be made to cover the role. Recommendations pertaining to this position are contained in Chapter 5.

COMPLAINTS

- 4.12 Many prisoners stated that they did not trust the Department's ACCESS complaints system. They also said they were reluctant to go to officers with complaints because they felt that many of their complaints were not acted upon or might be turned against them.
- 4.13 This did not surprise the inspection team because the same view appears to be shared by prisoners in many prisons. However, at Roebourne, the prisoners' lack of confidence was also reflective of their concern about the attitudes of some staff members⁶¹ and about a specific security-related matter. Cameras had recently been installed at various locations around the prison, including in the day rooms of the wings where the confidential mailboxes were also located. Prisoners interpreted this to mean that the prison administration was trying to identify who was putting confidential mail in the boxes. We were told that in some cases, prisoners asked other prisoners to put mail in the box on their behalf.
- 4.14 Management advised that on hearing of the prisoners' concerns through the prisoner support group they intended for the cameras to be removed from the day rooms and relocated. However (apparently unknown to senior managers) during the inspection there were still cameras in at least two of the dayrooms (the women's unit and minimum-security). It was suggested that the camera in the women's unit was required for operational reasons. The Office recommended to management that if this was the case, the confidential mailboxes should be relocated to a position with no camera surveillance.
- 4.15 Prisoners were also reluctant to register a grievance as they felt that officers tried to talk them out of it; others felt that they would be victimised if they registered a grievance. Many prisoners stated that they felt that the higher they went with their complaint or grievance, the better response they got and the more chance of it being acted upon. Prisoners also stated that they often waited until a particular officer or support officer was on duty and went to them for assistance.

61 See above, [3.11] – [3.14].

- 4.16 The Department has been examining its processes with respect to prisoner inquiries and complaints and this inspection has reaffirmed the importance of that work. Given that the Department is already examining these issues, this report does not make any specific recommendations. However, the Office will monitor progress and return to the issue in future reports. The ‘bottom line’ is that prisoners across the state do not trust the current complaints system and are reluctant to use it.

FOOD

- 4.17 During the inspection it was found that prisoners were required to eat breakfast, lunch and some evening meals in the units. There were not enough tables or chairs in the units for prisoners to sit down and eat in a decent and comfortable manner. Prisoners often ate in their cells or sat on the steps of the veranda to eat their meals. After they have eaten their meals there is no access to facilities to properly wash their dishes.
- 4.18 Prisoners whilst eating in the units, were found to be feeding the local wildlife such as birds and lizards. This, combined with the deterioration of food and the accompanying smell during the summer is likely to increase the numbers of rodents and insects inside the facility. During the inspection, (including a night visit) the inspection team did not personally encounter these rodents; however, their presence was confirmed by evidence of ‘droppings’.
- 4.19 Prisoners raised concerns that their breakfast packs were too small and that they were left hungry. The inspection team observed delivery of breakfast packs to the prisoners and noted that they contained ample food and that prisoners were permitted to take seconds and thirds if they wished. They were also permitted to take several ration packs as they left the dish up area. The team observed that some of the prisoners took far more food than they could eat in one meal. It can be assumed that the excess was intended to be saved or fed to the local wildlife. Section 95 workers raised an issue that they were given the same ration packs and meals as other prisoners, but found that the meals provided were not enough for a working prisoner and they often returned to the prison hungry.
- 4.20 All meals should be eaten in the dining room to maintain control of portions and cleanliness of the facility. The dining room is also the only area prisoners can sit and eat in air-conditioned comfort. There are some prisoners who cannot attend the dining room because of their security rating or other issues. The prison should provide any prisoners who are required to eat their meals in the unit with a table and chairs to enable them to dine in a dignified manner. These prisoners should also be given access to facilities for the cleaning of their dishes.

- 4.21 During the inspection these matters were raised with the Superintendent who expressed agreement with these views and commenced action to reinstate a policy of meals to be taken in the dining room. Most staff indicated to the inspection team that they supported this, so it was disappointing to learn, shortly after the inspection, that they had apparently rejected the Superintendent's proposal.

Recommendation 11:

(a) For the vast majority of prisoners, use the dining room for all meals.

(b) In the case of prisoners who are required to eat their meals in the units, provide suitable facilities including chairs, tables and washing facilities.

VISITS

- 4.22 The visits room is divided into three main areas: an outdoor seating area under trees, a semi-enclosed seating area and an enclosed seating area. The visits area had room for all prisoners and visitors to be seated. However if there was a requirement for all prisoners and visitors to be inside the enclosed visits room (eg, in heavy rain) the space would be limited. The visits area lacks facilities to make a cup of tea or coffee although there is a vending machine available to the visitors. There is also a small area designated for children; however, this is in need of new toys and games to keep the children entertained.
- 4.23 Staff at the gate were polite to visitors and it was observed that a visitor who had not booked a visit was treated politely and processed without question to enable the visit to go ahead. The senior officer and staff appeared to have no problems with the fact that the visit was not pre-booked and the visit processing was made as comfortable as possible for the visitor.
- 4.24 Direct supervision of the visits area is conducted by officers within the visits areas; however, the monitoring of visits via camera is conducted by the control officer at the front gate. The monitoring includes that of prisoners of various risk ratings and often numerous prisoners at once. There are issues with this system as the control officer is monitoring the visits at one of the busiest times of the day for that position. Visitors and other persons are entering and exiting the prison requiring the control officer to open and close the doors thus taking away from the monitoring of the prisoners.
- 4.25 There are two rooms available for prisoners of risk ratings that require separation and an additional room is utilised for non-contact visits. There are often more prisoners with a risk rating that would normally require separation (or close monitoring) than the number of rooms available. Some of these prisoners are denied visits from children because of their specific risk rating, yet they are co-located in the general visits area where children may be in attendance. It is vital that both the control officer and staff on the visits floor actively monitor these prisoners.

- 4.26 The front gate control officer is only aware of a prisoner's security or risk rating when the visits officer calls. The officer advises which prisoners, with what ratings, are placed where, in the visits area. Prior information and arrangements being available to the control officer may assist to improve monitoring of these prisoners. The division of and management of prisoners by their risk ratings was handled exceptionally well by staff on the day that the inspection team attended. There was good communication between the gate and the visits staff which helped deflect problems that might otherwise arise from the poor procedures mentioned above.
- 4.27 Prisoners and visitors spoken to by the inspection team said that they were happy with the way the visits were conducted and stated that staff are generally polite to visitors. Visitors and prisoners spoken to also stated that visits are generally conducted in a timely manner with little waiting time. There is a room provided outside the perimeter fence where visitors can sit and wait prior to entering the prison. This is of a reasonable size and has toilet facilities and lockers for visitors to store belongings that are not permitted in the prison.
- 4.28 It was noted by the inspection team that there was no bus service from Port Hedland to Roebourne Regional Prison even though it is a major catchment area for the prison. This Office urges the prison to engage with local Port Hedland Aboriginal organisations to examine coach transport options for visitors. These should be organised on a regular basis with set times and schedules and promoted through the prison and through relevant agencies and community groups in the Port Hedland area.

LIBRARY, RECREATION AND CANTEEN

- 4.29 The library is a small but well-patronised part of the prison. It has a pleasing sense of both calm and active engagement by prisoners. It is clearly a space that prisoners like and it is especially popular in the hotter weather since it is air-conditioned. However, the collection of books and other materials is very limited. There is little or no access to relevant and contemporary legal materials and the printed copies of legislation are unacceptably out of date. Since the prison population is predominantly Aboriginal there needs to be appropriate reading material that carries local and other news about Aboriginal people. However, the Koori Mail, the Indigenous Times and other Aboriginal-targeted publications were not available. There was also a distinct lack of computers for prisoner access. There was only one computer in the library which was in constant use during the recreation times.
- 4.30 The recreation observed during the inspection was structured and had good participation from many of the prisoners. The women prisoners were permitted to mix with the men during recreation. The quadrangle in which recreation was carried out was small for the amount of activities taking place but would suffice normally had the oval not been closed. The oval had been out of commission for months leading up to the inspection. This closure was attributed to the need for returfing, replacement of reticulation and top dressing.

- 4.31 The prison experienced funding cuts after restoration work on the oval had begun, which led to further delay. While the reticulation problems have now been solved the oval still requires top dressing above the height of the sprinklers. The oval is an important part of recreation at Roebourne Regional Prison and the Department should prioritise the necessary works to enable its use.
- 4.32 Leading up to the inspection there were lengthy periods in which the prison had no recreation officers. Because of this, recreation had slipped from its normal delivery standard. The relatively recent appointment of recreation officers had resulted in the reintroduction of swimming parties for both men and women and participation in a football carnival external to the prison. The recreation officers anticipated that there will be more opportunities for participation in external sport and recreation activities in the future.
- 4.33 Prisoners raised concerns that the canteen had little variety but these claims were not borne out upon inspection. The canteen officer appeared willing to assess prisoners' requests for new canteen lines and to stock them accordingly (assuming there was sufficient demand). One area that could be expanded concerned items for the women prisoners. This is another area where the presence of a women's support officer would benefit the prison and the prisoners alike. It was disappointing that there were no Aboriginal workers in the canteen.

Chapter 5

WOMEN AT ROEBOURNE REGIONAL PRISON

HISTORY

- 5.1 Regional prisons generally face a significant challenge in the provision of adequate and equal services for women prisoners. Women represent only a very small proportion of the wider population of regional prisons and their equal access to facilities and services within the prison is often hampered by the need to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- 5.2 Past inspections have found the overall service provision to women held at Roebourne Regional Prison to be inadequate.⁶² Although services were found to have marginally improved by the inspection in 2004,⁶³ they had stalled by the inspection in 2006.⁶⁴
- 5.3 The focus of many of the recommendations about women prisoners in the 2006 inspection report was the inequality of access to services for women in Roebourne as compared to their counterparts in Perth. The report referenced the services available to women prisoners at Bandyup Women's Prison and highlighted the need for the Department to provide education, intervention programs and accommodation on a comparable basis to women prisoners at Roebourne Regional Prison. To further promote the position of women within the prison, it was recommended that the role of the Roebourne's Women Support Officer be increased to a full-time position.
- 5.4 Unfortunately, the 2010 inspection revealed that little progress had been made for women prisoners at Roebourne over the past ten years. Despite some improvements to departmental policies for women prisoners in the regions, the services available to women at Roebourne Regional Prison remain impoverished.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND POLICY SETTING

Women's Way Forward – a Strategic Plan for Women

- 5.5 In 2002 the Department created the strategic senior management position of Director of Women's Corrective Services. This position represented a significant advance in advocacy for women prisoners in Western Australia and it was disappointing that the position was abolished in January 2010. Nonetheless, a number of important achievements were made during the tenure of the position, including the establishment of an overall departmental plan for the management of women prisoners entitled *Women's Way Forward*.
- 5.6 The *Women's Way Forward* plan recognises a number of important principles that should influence the way all prisons (including Roebourne) provide services to women prisoners and outlines the high level strategic direction for the management of women prisoners. This includes the principles that 'Aboriginal women are the most victimised group in our community'⁶⁵ and that 'women prisoners are a distinct and unique cohort'.⁶⁶

62 See eg, the initial inspection of Roebourne: OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 14 (April 2002) 40-41 and Recommendation 3.

63 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 24 (October 2004) 20.

64 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 15-17.

65 DCS, *Women's Way Forward: Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009-2012* (July 2009) 4.

66 *Ibid.*, 5.

- 5.7 The document also specifies a series of points that enable evaluation of whether the plan has been successfully implemented.⁶⁷ For example, indicators of successful service delivery to women prisoners included that women in regional prisons are provided services commensurate with those in metropolitan facilities and that an increased number of women are participating in education, employment and training.⁶⁸
- 5.8 A focus of the current inspection was to assess how the Department was progressing against the strategic objectives found in its *Women's Way Forward* plan. However, while Roebourne management was aware of *Women's Way Forward* only limited demonstrable progress had been made towards its outcomes.

Women's Precinct Plan for Roebourne Regional Prison

- 5.9 One significant step that had been taken to more proactively manage women prisoners according to their different needs was the recent development of a Women's Precinct Management Plan (the plan), specifically for Roebourne. The plan was in draft form at the time of the inspection and had been distributed to staff for comment.
- 5.10 While the plan itself was only a draft at the time of the inspection, its intention was to reflect the current operational practice within the women's precinct, and how Roebourne was functioning to reflect the objectives of the Department's overall strategic plan (*Women's Way Forward*). Its stated intent was 'to provide a detailed description of how the Women's Precinct operates [and] to ensure women prisoners are managed by a women's centred management philosophy that is based on consistent and equitable decision making and rules'.⁶⁹ It references the Department's overall strategic plan (*Women's Way Forward*) and acknowledges the 'often marginalised' position of women.⁷⁰
- 5.11 The development of the plan is, of itself, a very positive step for Roebourne Regional Prison. It acknowledges the deficiencies that have existed and directs staff about the provision of services to women prisoners and about their treatment within the prison.
- 5.12 The inspection sought to assess whether the outcomes of the plan were being achieved. It was found that in a number of service areas practice was not reflecting the plan. In some cases current resources do not permit for the outcomes to be achieved. In other cases, rules have been put in place that do not facilitate their achievement. The ongoing liaison scheme facilitated by the Office will be monitoring the implementation and progress of the plan.

Women's Support Officer

- 5.13 Another significant achievement of the Director of Women's Corrective Services was the creation of part-time Women's Support Officer (WSO) positions at all of Western Australia's regional prisons that accommodate women prisoners. In early 2004 Roebourne created a part-time (0.4 FTE) WSO position.

67 Ibid., 6.

68 Ibid.

69 Roebourne Regional Prison, *Women's Precinct Management Plan – Draft* (September 2010) 1.

70 Ibid.

- 5.14 The WSOs play a vital role for women prisoners throughout regional prisons and Roebourne is no exception. The WSO has strongly advocated for women prisoners at Roebourne, ensuring that their interests are represented in the planning and decision-making at the prison.
- 5.15 While at the time of the 2006 inspection women's services within Roebourne were found to be inadequate, the position of WSO had impacted positively, both through advocacy and through the provision of coordinated activities for women prisoners. Significantly limiting its impact was the part-time nature of the WSO role and consequently the Office recommended that the position be increased to full-time.⁷¹ The Department responded that a full-time WSO was not required, but that it would consider increasing the number of hours allocated to the position.
- 5.16 This has not occurred and the position had in fact deteriorated by the time of the inspection. Although the 0.4 FTE position remained it had been vacant for seven months at the time of the inspection. While it was clear that the incumbent was unlikely to return, there had been no formal resignation, which precluded the Department from advertising for a substantive replacement. Nonetheless, the Department had done nothing to fill the position on either an acting or contractual basis.
- 5.17 The WSO had been a consistent contact for women prisoners and acted as a liaison between the women and the other staff as well as providing advice and information about prison procedures and services. Many of the women prisoners at Roebourne are from a traditional Aboriginal background and find it difficult to approach staff members (in particular, male staff) with problems or questions. As a result of the WSO position remaining vacant, the women had no consistent understanding of services available to them at the prison. This problem was acknowledged by prison management.
- 5.18 The Office was informed that the Department would soon advertise for a new WSO. It was also told that a business case had been submitted for increased on-site presence for the position. Approval of this proposal is fundamental to the achievement of the goals for women prisoners within the overall strategic plan. It is evident that two days per week is insufficient to facilitate the range of services required by the now higher number of women prisoners at Roebourne.

Recommendation 12:

- (a) *Ensure that the Women's Support Officer position has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison (including coverage for any lengthy absence).*
- (b) *Increase the Women's Support Officer position to a full-time position.*

71 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 16.

WOMEN'S PROFILE

- 5.19 During this Inspection there were 18 women accommodated in the women's unit at Roebourne Regional Prison. Of these 18 women, 16 were Aboriginal. Sixteen of the women were either from the Pilbara region or had family in the Pilbara region. Twelve of the women were classified as medium-security and six as minimum-security. No women were classified as maximum-security, although three were on remand.
- 5.20 At the time of the previous inspection, Roebourne held only nine women prisoners. While only comparatively small numbers compared to the male population, the population of women has nonetheless doubled at the prison over four years. This is reflective of the expansion of the female prisoner population across the system.
- 5.21 Female prisoner numbers have increased at a rate much faster than men (from 5 per cent of prisoners in 1993 to 8.7 per cent in 2010). This trend has been especially evident since mid-2008, since which time the male population has increased by around 20 per cent while women have increased by 47 per cent.⁷² The failure to provide adequate accommodation and services to women prisoners in regional prisons demonstrates that the Department had not adequately planned for this increase.

SERVICES⁷³

- 5.22 Women prisoners' access to a variety of services at Roebourne has long been the subject of criticism by the Office.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, this inspection found that the situation had not substantially changed. During the tenure of the WSO, prisoners and staff reported an increased level of activity for women. However, from the time of the position becoming vacant, service levels had reverted to unacceptable. This is contrary to the statement in *Women's Way Forward* that women in regional prisons should be afforded services commensurate with those in metropolitan facilities.⁷⁵
- 5.23 This Office recognises that a number of individuals have made genuine efforts to improve the lives of the women within the prison; however, such efforts have usually been ad hoc and not implemented in a systematic way as part of an overall strategic plan for women. Programs, courses, activities and classes have been delivered irregularly and without adequate coordination, evaluation and integration.

Recommendation 13:

Provide services for women in Roebourne Regional Prison that are commensurate with those provided in metropolitan facilities.

72 Based on Department of Corrective Services, Weekly Offender Reports (12 August 2010) and provided by the Inspector to the Community Development and Justice Committee, Making our Prisons Work inquiry (18 August 2010).

73 Women prisoners' access to health services is discussed in Chapter 6.

74 See, eg, OICS, *Directed Review of the Management of Offenders in Custody*, Report No. 30 (November 2005) 173; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 15.

75 DCS, *Women's Way Forward: Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009-2012* (July 2009) 4.

Accommodation

- 5.24 The women reside in a dedicated wing in unit two consisting of 12 cells centred on an enclosed courtyard area. The courtyard is the main communal area and contains tables and chairs and some exercise equipment. The wing also contains a dayroom, food preparation area and laundry.
- 5.25 The official bedding configurations consist of six single cells, one double cell, and one four bed cell. Other cells that are utilised when needed consist of one observation cell which has one bed; two punishment cells which have one bed each; and one mother and child cell which can have two beds if no child is in residence. All cells are frequently used for general prisoner accommodation, creating up to 17 beds within the wing.
- 5.26 At the time of the inspection there were 18 women in residence. Two women were sleeping on mattresses on the floor as the mother child cell which would normally house two women, was being utilised for one woman who had mental issues and needed to be housed by herself. The women interviewed were adamant that their preference was to sleep on the floor rather than being transferred to a prison out of country. Whilst the prison is happy to accommodate this where possible, safety issues during the cyclone season require all prisoners to be accommodated in beds, so the number of prisoners able to be accommodated at that time is strictly limited by the wing's formal design capacity.
- 5.27 Although, like the rest of the prison, the physical structure of the building is old and in need of some repair, the women's unit was quite clean. Much has been achieved aesthetically since the 2006 inspection, with wooden decking covering the 'pit' area (referred to in past reports) and returning the area to a single level.⁷⁶ Potted shrubs and palms have been added, but the roof remains caged and the overall appearance is of a concrete box. Air-conditioning in the women's cells constitutes a significant improvement for the wing since 2006. The limitations placed on women's access to other air-conditioned areas within the prison justify its installation.
- 5.28 Adjacent to the unit, an outside garden area with access to a demountable multi-purpose room has been added. This is a significant improvement, however, it had not long been open at the time of the inspection and the nature and extent of its use was yet to be established. Concerns were raised that women's access to services outside the wing might be further restricted as a result of the availability of the new multi-purpose room. The Office stresses that the full range of services required to be provided to women prisoners cannot be contained in a single multi-purpose room and that equitable access to services located outside the wing must be offered.
- 5.29 According to the Roebourne Women's Precinct Management Plan, the women have 'the option of preparing their own meal' in the kitchen within the wing or having meals sent from the kitchen. Under the plan, all women are required to agree on the same option. Earlier in 2010 women were preparing their own meals, but at the time of the inspection all meals were sourced from the main kitchen. The Office was informed that prisoners were no longer allowed to use the kitchen for cooking because they had failed to keep it clean and the women were

76 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 24 (October 2004) 19.

in disagreement about workloads. The plan also requires in-wing cooking to occur ‘with the assistance of the WSO’.⁷⁷ Because there was no WSO at the time of the inspection (or for the previous seven months), in-wing cooking could not occur in any event.

- 5.30 Rather than removing the option of women to self-cater, the situation could have been managed by provision of instruction and training in food handling practices or mediation with the prisoners in relation to distribution of workloads. The opportunity for the prisoners to improve their cooking skills, nutrition and hygiene had been lost as a result. These issues are routinely managed in other women’s prisons and could have been similarly dealt with at Roebourne.

Access

- 5.31 The grill door to the women’s wing is usually left open during the day unless there is a maximum-security prisoner in residence (in which case it remains locked). Access to the staff in the unit two pod is simple when the grill is open (the women simply approach the pod), but when locked it prevents direct access to staff. To attract the attention of officers the women must shout or bang on the grill. This presents a significant risk in the case of an emergency within the wing.
- 5.32 Although an officer is assigned each day to the women’s unit, the unit has been left unmanned in cases of staff shortages. When the grill is locked this can mean that women have very infrequent contact with officers. In these circumstances the safety and wellbeing of the women cannot be assured, especially without a WSO on site.

Structured Day: Education, Employment and Recreation

- 5.33 Education services are and have been consistently available to the women in Roebourne Regional Prison, but there are limits to participation. While in theory women can participate in any course offered by the education centre, in practice this is not always the case. Supervision in the education centre is considered by administration to be adequate to allow mixed gender classes to be conducted; however, as noted in the 2006 inspection report, cultural rules dictate that Aboriginal women cannot mix with men from different families or skin groups. In practice this means that if an ‘inappropriate’ male is in the education centre, the women will not attend.⁷⁸
- 5.34 Education centres in all regional prisons are somewhat reliant on external providers for the delivery of courses. When the external provider has difficulty retaining staff, services to the prison are affected, either by reduction or the withdrawal of service. Externally provided education services were affected at Roebourne on two occasions in 2010, resulting in the withdrawal of the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) and a CALM program.
- 5.35 The education manager reported that the loss of the WSO had also impacted on the participation of the women in education at Roebourne. The WSO had been active in encouraging the women to participate in education and the education centre has found that it does not have sufficient human resources to actively engage with the women in the

⁷⁷ Roebourne Regional Prison, *Women’s Precinct Management Plan – Draft* (September 2010) 5.

⁷⁸ OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 16.

same way. Education for women is now effectively confined to courses recommended in the women's Individual Management Plans. Staff believe there is a demand for more engagement, but claim that resources are not sufficient to provide dedicated courses for the women. Roebourne Regional Prison does not, therefore, meet the standards set out in the Department's *Women's Way Forward* document: that women in regional prisons should have equal opportunity of access to services as their counterparts in metropolitan prisons.

- 5.36 The Roebourne Prison Women's Precinct Management Plan states that '[W]omen...are able to be employed internal and external to the prison in line with their security rating... [S]upervision limitations prohibit women prisoners from being employed in the kitchen and laundry areas generally'.⁷⁹ The plan identifies positions available to women, with all but four positions being inside the wing. The inspection found that the women had limited opportunities for employment with only three working external to the accommodation wing at the time of the inspection.
- 5.37 It was apparent during the inspection that many work areas do not have sufficient supervision to enable the mixing of genders (particularly in light of frequent staff shortages) and therefore women are restricted from accessing employment in these areas. Women have also not participated in section 95 external work activities for many months and are no longer permitted to participate in the deservedly lauded DECCA Work Ready program.⁸⁰ There is no comparable program available to the women.
- 5.38 As mentioned earlier, the women's wing contains a small selection of gym equipment and there is also a grassed area located at the rear of the unit (although it is not large enough to undertake active recreation or sports). There is no dedicated recreation plan for women, only a generic prison recreation regime for all prisoners.⁸¹ However, many women expressed reservations about participating in any form of physical recreation where they could be seen by the men.
- 5.39 While women have access to the main oval (when open), the library and to structured activities such as bingo, this access is only permitted at specified times and when sufficient staff supervision is available. If the prison is short staffed, women's access to these recreational activities is generally withdrawn.
- 5.40 During the inspection, the women were seen to be participating in recreational activities in the quadrangle, mixing with the men on the Sunday afternoon. Women were seen walking around the verandas, participating in various sports and sitting talking with male prisoners. This was a refreshing sight, but such mixed recreation appears to be in doubt given that the plan foreshadows the development of a 'recreation plan for women prisoners ... to reduce the level of recreation interaction'.⁸²

79 Roebourne Regional Prison, *Women's Precinct Management Plan – Draft* (September 2010) 16.

80 Rio Tinto Work Ready is a program for indigenous prisoners to be able to gain certificates and skills that will increase their ability to gain employment particularly through the mining industry. While two women had accessed the program in the past, it had been decided that supervision and facilities were not suitable and so access was withdrawn.

81 The prison's Women's Precinct Management Plan commits itself to the development of a dedicated plan at some stage in the future.

82 Roebourne Regional Prison, *Women's Precinct Management Plan – Draft* (September 2010) 4.

- 5.41 Women are not permitted to participate in section 95 recreation. Male prisoners approved for section 95 recreation have access to external activities such as ocean swimming and fishing. We were told that women had been permitted to participate in the past, but when an incident of inappropriate behaviour occurred, female access was banned. Though the behaviour in question is not condoned by this Office, it need not have resulted in the exclusion of women from all section 95 recreation activities. The prison could put in place risk minimisation measures, such as separate outings, to enable equitable access to section 95 recreation for women. Indeed, this is obliged by the Department's strategic plan for women.⁸³ Access to section 95 recreation is particularly important in light of the restricted recreation opportunities for women within the prison and the further restriction of their movement foreshadowed in the precinct plan.⁸⁴

Intervention Programs and Re-entry

- 5.42 As documented elsewhere in this report, intervention programs at Roebourne are generally limited and the position is no different for the women prisoners. Documents received prior to the inspection indicated that few intervention programs had been delivered and the only program that incorporated women for the time period requested was an eight-day Substance Use Program.⁸⁵ A search of the Total Offender Management System (TOMS) indicated that there was no intervention programs listed for delivery to women in 2011.
- 5.43 However, demand for intervention programs among the women prisoners was not high. Of the 18 women accommodated at Roebourne during the inspection, only three had been identified as requiring program intervention. Although the WSO position had been vacant for some time, access to re-entry and other non-intervention programs had been preserved through the efforts of certain individuals in the prison. However, as these programs were being initiated by individuals working outside their position's official mandate, the programs had been run on an ad hoc basis and without a central point of coordination.
- 5.44 The documents supplied by the prison prior to the inspection indicated that a number of non-intervention programs had run for the women up until March 2010, with the last course being held not long after the departure of the WSO. This decline in services since the departure of the WSO is a clear indication of the importance of this position.

83 DCS, *Women's Way Forward: Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009-2012* (July 2009).

84 Roebourne Regional Prison, *Women's Precinct Management Plan – Draft* (September 2010) 4.

85 OICS Document Request for Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison for period 01/07/2009-30/06/2010.

Children

- 5.45 According to the precinct plan, women can apply for visits with their own children outside of the designated visit times.⁸⁶ There is also recognition of caregiver relationships and thus women can apply for visits with children with whom they can show a relationship. Given that children are raised not only by the mother but by other family members in Aboriginal communities, this is seen as a very important recognition of Aboriginal culture.
- 5.46 The women's wing at Roebourne has one mother and child cell which is slightly larger than the single cells and contains a bunk bed, toilet, shower, fridge, sink, hot water urn and its own crockery and cutlery. This allows the cell to be isolated from the main cell area to provide privacy for the mother and child. In turn, it also provides safety for the child and meets the Department's policy on Prisoner Mothers/Primary Carers and their Children.⁸⁷
- 5.47 Over the past two years this cell has been used on only one occasion for approximately four weeks and women accommodated at Roebourne during the inspection appeared to be unaware that they could apply for these visits. However, most women also commented that they would probably not like to have their babies in the prison.
- 5.48 Interestingly, similar sentiments were expressed during a meeting between the Inspector and members of Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC).⁸⁸ They expressed the view that imprisonment has been such a negative and destructive force for their culture that they would prefer that facilities be set up for children to visit those housed in the prison outside the prison fence. The Office expresses no specific view on this matter, but encourages the Department to explore such alternative accommodation options when planning the construction of prisons and work camps around the state.

86 Roebourne Regional Prison *Women's Precinct Management Plan – Draft* (September 2010) 14-15.

87 DCS, Policy Directive 10.

88 Consultation with KALACC, Fitzroy Crossing (7 September 2010).

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo of a typical bunk bed utilised at Roebourne Regional Prison. Note that there is no ladder to get to the top bunk and no rail to prevent persons from rolling out of bed. In most cases prisoners use the railings at the end of the bed to climb up and down. Note also the sheet of wood over the slats on the bottom of the bed to support the mattress.



Welding that has been added to re-attach the rails on the end of the bed as they had broken away from the bed frame due to being used as a ladder to get up and down.

PHOTOGRAPHS



A sheet of wood covers the slats of the bed. Note the missing slats.



Confidential mail box located in the day room. Note the camera in the top right corner.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Evidence of rodent activity in the form of mouse droppings.



A hole in a flyscreen of a cell and mouse droppings outside on the window ledge.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Rust hole in the bottom of a steel support. This support was deteriorating from the inside out.



New female recreation / program building and veranda space.

Chapter 6

HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 Health has been an area on which this Office has always placed a strong focus. This chapter goes into considerable detail for two reasons. First, the issue of how best to deliver health services in custodial settings has come to the fore within government as a whole and within the Department in recent months.⁸⁹ Secondly, Roebourne is an Aboriginal prison with a predominantly Pilbara population and a health centre that is generally functioning well. It therefore provided an opportunity for the Inspectorate to examine the extent to which it was meeting the needs of its particular population and the goals set by the Department itself.
- 6.2 Historically, Roebourne's health service has performed better than most other service areas of the prison. At the last inspection in January 2008 the service appeared to be 'in balance with demand' and there was a level of optimism that long-standing staffing issues would soon be resolved.⁹⁰ Pleasingly, this inspection found that the health service is now fully staffed with the majority of nursing staff holding substantive positions.
- 6.3 However, it is not clear that prisoners' health needs are being identified and adequately met. Factors contributing to the Inspectorate's concerns about the provision of health care to prisoners at Roebourne include:
- A failure to develop and implement an Aboriginal and women-centred health care strategy suited to the needs of a prisoner population from the Pilbara;
 - A lack of Aboriginal health care staff;
 - A lack of culturally and locally relevant health-care need assessment tools;
 - A lack of cultural awareness training for health staff; and
 - Deficiencies in the provision of transport of prisoners to external medical, allied health and dental appointments.

CONTEXT

- 6.4 As a starting point in exploring the extent to which the prison was meeting the cultural and health needs of its prisoner population, the Office was keen to gain an understanding of its progress in implementing the Department's own policy documents. These include *Strategic Directions in Health Care for Women and Girls 2008-2012* and the health component of *Reducing Aboriginal Disadvantage March 2010*. Disappointingly, none of the health service staff reported ever having seen or been made aware of these documents.⁹¹ Consequently, there was no Aboriginal (and, where appropriate, women-centred) strategy that drew on these documents to guide the delivery of health care at Roebourne.

89 See Department of Corrective Services, *Assessment of Clinical Service Provision of Health Services of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services* (2010): http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/about-us/statistics-publications/students-researchers/hs-assessment-report.pdf.

90 Harding R, *Roebourne Regional Prison Inspection Exit Debrief* (22 January 2008).

91 The Aboriginal Services Committee was reinvigorated immediately prior to the inspection, with its first meeting since July 2009 being held on 1 September 2010. Despite the fact that the document *Reducing Aboriginal Disadvantage: A Guide for Aboriginal Services Committees Within Australian Prisons March 2010* includes a specific health objective, none of the prison's health service staff was invited to the meeting.

HEALTH

- 6.5 The inspection team also found that women prisoners were not being sufficiently engaged in respect of health-related issues. Health promotion generally does not occur at the prison and this was particularly evident in relation to women's health issues. Mammograms, menopause, contraception and other related topics were not routinely discussed with the women.⁹² This may be due to the fact that no nurse had been delegated the portfolio of 'women's health'. If this were to occur it would encourage more proactive involvement with the women and provide a better standard of health services to that group.

STAFFING

- 6.6 This inspection found that long-standing staffing issues had been resolved. There were no staff vacancies, and all positions, with the exception of one, had been made substantive shortly before the commencement of the inspection.⁹³ However, the staffing complement did not reflect the demographic needs of the prisoner population. The Inspectorate acknowledges that there are difficulties in recruiting Aboriginal staff and makes no criticism of existing staff but it is disappointing that, at an Aboriginal prison, there were no Aboriginal health or medical staff and no female general practitioners.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the only male staff were the two GPs, who between them attended for a total of seven and a half hours per week (three, two and a half hour sessions).
- 6.7 At the time of the inspection the closure of the medical centre in nearby Wickham, from which one of the prison's GPs was sourced, was imminent. This would have reduced the number of GP sessions per week at the prison to one, and it was anticipated that this would continue to be provided by Marwarnkarra Health Centre.⁹⁵ In order to address the shortfall, the Department instituted a fly-in, fly-out service by a Health Services Directorate GP. The number of GP hours per fortnight has dropped, but in terms of identifying opportunities for service improvement, there may also be some benefits in the directorate having an on-site presence.⁹⁶

92 For example, none of the women knew what dental dams were or how to use them. Furthermore, all the contraceptive (condom and dental dam) machines in the prison were empty. Neither officer nor health service staff were aware of any responsibility to educate prisoners in their use or to maintain the stocks of the machines.

93 The staff team currently comprises a full-time Nurse Manager, a full-time Clinical Nurse, one part-time Clinical Nurse (48 hours per fortnight), and one part-time Co-morbidity / PAST Clinical Nurse (48 hours per fortnight), a part-time (temporary) Enrolled Nurse (36.5 hours per fortnight) and a full-time medical receptionist. Efforts to recruit a part-time Clinical Nurse have proved unsuccessful to date. This position has been temporarily filled by the Enrolled Nurse on a renewable contract basis for the last two and a half years. Her current contract is due to expire in November 2010 and none of the staff knew whether it was to be renewed. Rather than both losing her and having no Clinical Nurse to replace her, a sensible compromise would seem to be to retain the Enrolled Nurse in a substantive capacity.

94 The GP arrangements have subsequently changed and at the time of writing a female GP was providing a fly-in, fly-out service: see para 6.8.

95 The Marwarnkarra Health Service Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1985 with support from the then Department of Aboriginal Affairs and others. It is an independent Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation set up to provide a comprehensive, integrated and culturally appropriate primary health care service to the Aboriginal people of Roebourne and related communities of the West Pilbara.

96 OICS has tracked developments following the closure of Wickham's medical centre and after the inspection. At the time of writing – 8 December 2010 – GP support has been arranged as follows: a Health Services Directorate GP from Perth provides four, two and a half hour sessions over two days every fortnight, and the existing Marwarnkarra GP now provides one, two and a half-hour session per fortnight. The total is 12.5 hours per fortnight compared with 15 hours per fortnight previously.

HEALTH

- 6.8 Nursing staff commented that female prisoners were significantly disadvantaged because of the lack of a female GP and were sometimes reluctant to seek consultation from the male GPs.⁹⁷ They also reported that male prisoners would often seek out male officers in preference to the female nursing staff,⁹⁸ and that it was not unusual for prisoners to be unable to speak or read/write in English.
- 6.9 With such a high number of Aboriginal prisoners from the Pilbara region, coupled with the length of time the prison has been without other Aboriginal service staff (such as AVS, WSO and PSO staff) the need for suitably qualified professionals with a good understanding of relevant cultural issues has become acute. The Inspectorate understands that there is a shortage of such staff within the community. However, there is no evidence that the Department has actively sought to recruit Aboriginal health services staff at the prison.
- 6.10 All health staff with whom the inspection team met demonstrated a high level of commitment and sensitivity to the prisoner group. Overall, they felt they had sufficient staff to provide an adequate service. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that because of the lack of Aboriginal staff, coupled with culturally blind assessment tools (see below) the extent to which Aboriginal prisoners' needs are being comprehensively identified and met and the extent to which Aboriginal prisoners can truly give informed consent, is questionable.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 6.11 Staff reported that training and development opportunities had improved in recent times. They explained that the newly installed video-conferencing facilities in the health centre have positively enhanced training possibilities, with a session recently run from head office about clinical governance issues.
- 6.12 Nonetheless, despite the lack of Aboriginal health staff, there was a paucity of training in the provision of culturally sensitive health care. It is widely accepted that Aboriginal prisoners have a different perception, understanding, and response to health issues compared with their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Staff reported that they learned by experience rather than being provided with training and they were showing considerable initiative. However, there needs to be more by way of central planning, resourcing and coordination.⁹⁹

ACCESS

- 6.13 The health centre operates between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm seven days a week. Outside of these hours, custodial staff refer emergency cases to the hospital in Karratha. Although an unofficial part of the service, nursing staff reported that officers call them for advice at home on occasions.

97 Nursing staff believe that not having a female doctor available affects the take-up rates of Pap smear testing.

98 Culturally, it is difficult for Aboriginal male prisoners to talk to female staff about certain matters.

99 In their respective portfolio holder capacities, and in the absence of suitable resources and system-wide support, the clinical nurses had made efforts to personally source culturally suitable educational tools and aids for use with their patients.

HEALTH

- 6.14 At the time of the inspection, and as a temporary measure to cover for two staff on leave, a new shift pattern had been introduced, effectively shortening the hours of operation of the health centre.¹⁰⁰ It was unclear whether shifts would revert to previous patterns upon the return of the Nurse Manager, although staff indicated that in the long-term the aim is to operate along similar lines to a community-based health centre.
- 6.15 References to the notion of ‘community’ and ‘community standards’ are common in debates about prison health services and can be misleading. In a non-prison environment the term ‘community standard’ reflects and averages out the service needs of the worst and the best segments of the population in a designated ‘community’. Thus, if those people whose health is most compromised are concentrated in one place, the notion of ‘community standard’ should refer to the level of service those people need and would receive if they were scattered as individuals through the wider community.
- 6.16 It follows therefore that the ‘community standard’ for prisoners should be needs based and that this is different from a community standard that reflects random distributions in the general community. Meeting a ‘community standard’ for a prisoner population therefore involves a far greater disposition of resources than would be the case for a cross-section of people across the state, and a different set of performance measures. The Inspectorate would therefore be concerned if the health centre’s operating hours were shortened on a permanent basis, particularly given prisoner population levels and needs.
- 6.17 On reception, each prisoner is provided with a personalised medical card. When the prisoner wishes to see a health care provider (in non-emergency circumstances), he or she places this card into a medical appointments box located in each unit. A nurse clears the boxes on a daily basis. If she is aware of the particular condition details of individual prisoners, she may advise the medical receptionist regarding the priority to be given to the scheduling of their ‘triage’ appointment with the nurse. In general, however, prisoners are prioritised in the order that the cards were received. The appointment system is, therefore, very much managed on a ‘first come, first served’ rather than on a needs basis. As such, it carries potential risks because reception staff are not clinically qualified and do not know which cases should be prioritised.
- 6.18 The prisoner-patient’s first opportunity to explain their health needs occurs when they see the nurse. The nurse then makes a decision about next steps. This could include making an appointment for the prisoner-patient to see the doctor or dentist.
- 6.19 The inspection team found through interviews with some prisoner-patients that the timeliness of the initial triage appointment was a source of frustration. Further, the pre-inspection prisoner survey findings indicated a drop in prisoners’ level of satisfaction with access to medical specialists, dental and psychiatric care, and medications compared with survey findings in 2006.¹⁰¹ These are matters that should be explored by the Health Services Directorate.

100 Previously there had been two shifts per day: 7.30 am–4.00 pm and 9.30 am–6.00 pm. At the time of the inspection, both shifts finished at 4.00 pm

101 Satisfaction levels regarding access to medical specialists dropped by 18 per cent, access to dental care by 24 per cent, access to psychiatric care by 34 per cent, and access to medications by six per cent.

DENTAL, EXTERNAL SPECIALIST AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

- 6.20 A dentist visits Marwarnkarra Health Service in Roebourne town once a month. On average, six appointments are reserved for prisoners, and the contracted transport service (provided by G4S) is booked accordingly.
- 6.21 Unfortunately, court or emergency medical requirements take priority for G4S and the inspection found that dental and other scheduled appointments are frequently cancelled. During the inspection itself, the monthly dental service and the podiatrist were visiting the town, but a medical emergency presented and prisoners' dental and podiatry appointments had to be cancelled. To date in 2010, of 187 external medical appointments, G4S successfully transported prisoners to scheduled dental, external specialist, hospital and allied health appointments on 139 occasions. Twenty-three appointments had to be cancelled because G4S was unable to provide the transport.¹⁰²
- 6.22 Prisoners told the Inspectorate that they had been advised by nursing staff of an 18-month wait for dental care. Arguably, therefore, prisoners' low satisfaction rates with the quality of medical specialist, dental and psychiatric care as expressed in the pre-inspection survey may be more attributable to their lack of access to such services than to their actual quality.¹⁰³

Recommendation 14:

Ensure that the new contractual arrangements relating to prisoner transport that will come into force in 2011 result in a better service with respect to external medical, allied health and dental appointments.

ASSESSMENT AND CARE PLANNING

- 6.23 The DCS Health Services Directorate's service delivery model recognises that prisoners have much the same range of health conditions as the general community. Standardised nursing assessments, which are carried out within 72 hours of reception at Roebourne, routinely screen for chronic disease conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, kidney, and cardiovascular disease. In addition, there are certain conditions recognised as being much more prevalent amongst prisoners than in the general community. Routine screening of mental health conditions, blood-borne viral disease (mainly Hepatitis C), and drug and alcohol addiction is therefore also conducted.
- 6.24 At Roebourne, as in the rest of the prison system, these conditions prompt the development of a specific care plan and the clinical nurses respectively hold portfolio responsibility for Co-morbidity/Alcohol and Substance Use, Blood-borne Viruses (BBV) and Chronic Disease Management (CDM).

102 Figures provided by Roebourne Regional Prison Health Centre 9 December 2010 on Excel spreadsheet. Other reasons for cancellations included prisoners refusing to attend, prisoners being discharged, and the clinics initiating the cancellation.

103 Satisfaction rates with these services ranged between 30 and 38 per cent (of a sample of 92 prisoners).

-
-
- 6.25 However, screening for other conditions, which bring potential communication, behaviour and coping problems, such as acquired brain injury, intellectual disability, or disorders on the autistic spectrum, does not occur.¹⁰⁴ Detection of these conditions depends upon informal pick-up by the assessing doctor or nurse. It is likely that many go undetected, and as a result, prisoners may not necessarily be supported in their relative dysfunction, and associated behaviour issues may be misunderstood.
- 6.26 Furthermore, the assessment tools take no account of the predominance amongst different cultural/regional groups of conditions such as ear disease, hearing loss and dementia,¹⁰⁵ which also bring communication, coping, and behaviour problems. The prevalence of ear disease and hearing loss among Indigenous people is well established, with particularly high levels among people living in rural and remote communities.¹⁰⁶ Despite the fact that over 20 years ago the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody noted that there may be a connection between hearing loss and criminal behaviour, auditory testing and function does not yet form part of routine screening processes in Western Australian prisons, let alone in those prisons considered to be ‘Aboriginal prisons’.¹⁰⁷
- 6.27 One of the visiting GPs explained to the inspection team that he frequently treats for ear infection. Furthermore, he reported that chronic dry perforations and hearing loss proliferate. However, he went on to say that if prisoners were routinely screened for ear disease, this would be problematic because of the lack of end-stage treatment available in the region. An ear, nose and throat specialist only visits Port Hedland hospital four times a year and the waiting list is considerable. The GP acknowledged, though, that routine screening for ear disease would at the very least enable an evaluation of the actual extent of the problem, and in turn, could assist the development of a substantive case for extra resources.

104 This has also earlier been highlighted in OICS, *Report of An Announced Inspection of Casuarina Prison* Report No. 68 (September 2010) 71.

105 The incidence of dementia among Indigenous people in Western Australia is 12.4 per cent. The Australia-wide rate for people over 45 years in 2008 was 2.4 per cent: *Aboriginal Health Overview*, <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/health/>.

106 The overall frequency of ear disease among Indigenous people in WA is not known, but the 2004–2005 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey found that one in eight Indigenous people reported ear diseases and/or hearing problems. Ten times more Indigenous people suffer from ear disease and hearing loss than non-Indigenous people: ‘Injustices Linked to Poor Hearing’, *Koori Mail No 476*, 9. Furthermore, 93 per cent of Aboriginal children suffer from middle ear infections in early childhood. In remote Northern Territory communities, this ranges from eight to 50 per cent. The World Health Organisation regards four per cent as a ‘massive public health problem’. See *Aboriginal Health – Australian Aboriginal Health Issues*, <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/health/>.

107 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, *National Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, Volume 2 (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991).

- 6.28 From the Inspectorate’s point of view, the most important point is that testing should be carried out so that prisoners’ understanding is improved and their responses and behaviour can be better understood and managed.

Recommendation 15:

Develop and implement an Aboriginal health care strategy at Roebourne Regional Prison Health Centre that recognises the cultural and differing gendered needs of the local prisoner population.

This strategy should include details of and commitment to:

- *actively recruiting Aboriginal health staff as vacancies occur;*
- *developing and implementing culturally appropriate clinical assessment tools;*
- *actively engaging Aboriginal health care organisations to provide in-reach services to the prison; and*
- *providing training in the delivery of culturally sensitive health care.*

A PORTFOLIO APPROACH TO CLINICAL CARE

- 6.29 Those conditions recognised as much more prevalent among the prisoner population are managed on a portfolio basis across the prison estate. In practice and subject to available resources, clinical nurses hold individual and specific responsibility for the management of mental health, co-morbidity, and alcohol and substance abuse; chronic diseases,¹⁰⁸ and blood-borne viruses.

Mental Health, Co-morbidity, and Alcohol and Substance Abuse

- 6.30 A part-time (three days a week) clinical nurse manages this portfolio at Roebourne. She works closely with the Prison Counselling Service and as an active member of the Prisoner Risk Assessment Group to ensure the prevention of self-harm and suicide.
- 6.31 At the time of the inspection, she was actively working with 16 prisoner-patients, who were variously categorised as having mental health, depression, or co-morbidity issues. There were no prisoners currently on a pharmacological substitution (Methodone) program.
- 6.32 A Perth-based psychiatrist is supposed to visit the prison quarterly although such visits do not always occur as scheduled. The nurse reported that this was not necessarily a problem because the mental health needs of the population fluctuate and do not present to order. In this regard, the newly installed video-conferencing facility should prove a positive means of enabling timely psychiatric assessment and review. Perth-based psychiatric staff need to be advised of its availability as a priority.
- 6.33 This same nurse was also actively working with two prisoner-patients who were withdrawing from alcohol/drugs, and also runs a rolling, once a week, 10-week ‘Stages of Change’ program for 10 prisoners at any one time.

¹⁰⁸ At the time of the inspection, base-line assessments of prisoners’ chronic disease status were not being conducted. Therefore, only those prisoners already with a diagnosis were being followed up by the chronic disease management portfolio holder. Potentially, therefore, prisoners with a chronic disease were going undetected and untreated. As per telephone advice provided by the Health Services Directorate GP (9 December 2010), this has since changed and all prisoners are now being screened for chronic diseases on reception.

HEALTH

- 6.34 An estimated 100 per cent of prisoners at Roebourne have or have had alcohol and/or drug problems. The nurse expressed the view, nonetheless, that her workload was manageable because culturally, many prisoners are not prepared to talk to her and therefore she is not reaching all those in need of her service. In other words, the absence of Aboriginal health staff may serve to camouflage the real level of health need among Aboriginal prisoners. Interestingly, the portfolio holders for chronic disease management and blood-borne viruses expressed similar views about the extent to which they were reaching those in need in their particular area of specialisation.

Chronic Disease Management

- 6.35 A part-time (three days a week) clinical nurse manages this portfolio. At the time of the inspection there were 35 prisoners with diabetes, eight with asthma, and a small number with renal issues. Each has a specific care plan developed which is reviewed on a three-monthly basis. Recently, the GP attending from Marwarnkarra Health Service has been able to specifically concentrate on chronic disease management. If his input in this area continues, bearing in mind the imminent loss of the two other weekly GP sessions, the prospects for prisoners' health status being maintained upon re-entry into the community will be significantly enhanced.¹⁰⁹

Blood-borne Virus (BBV) Management

- 6.36 A full-time clinical nurse holds the BBV portfolio. On reception, all prisoners are offered BBV screening. If a prisoner refuses, the nurse offers them another opportunity a few weeks later.
- 6.37 No prisoners are currently on the Interferon Hepatitis C treatment program at Roebourne.¹¹⁰ The BBV nurse explained that the Department prefers to offer such treatment to those prisoners who are likely to be in prison for the entire course of treatment (that is, 18 months). If their sentence is of insufficient length, they are likely to be considered ineligible for the program. Few prisoners have such long sentences at Roebourne, but they are provided with advice about the way in which they can follow up on treatment upon re-entry.
- 6.38 Specific BBV care plans are developed for all those who return positive BBV tests. The portfolio holder provides one-on-one education every three months for those prisoners not in receipt of treatment.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

- 6.39 A recent initiative has been the introduction of on-person medication for those prisoners deemed suitable according to custodial staff's risk assessments. These prisoners are provided with a week's blister-packed medication to self-administer at specified times. At the end of each week, and to the extent it can be, prisoners' compliance with their medication regime and with safety is monitored by way of return of the (empty) blister pack. This initiative has reduced the length of time that each of the three daily medication rounds now takes, thereby freeing up officer and nursing staff to concentrate on other matters.

109 As of 10 December 2010, staff at the health centre advised that the reduction in GP input has resulted in this GP reverting back to providing a generic service.

110 As of 9 December 2010 TOMS information indicated that four prisoners at Roebourne have a blood-borne virus.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- 6.40 In October 2009, the electronic health information system (EcHO) was rolled out across the prison health services. Health professionals expressed high levels of frustration with the system. They complained about its sluggish response, its limited functioning in terms of the number of simultaneous users allowed, and the absence of health information pre-dating the EcHO implementation.
- 6.41 At the time of this inspection, however, staff were extremely positive about the recent upgrades to the system and commented that these had eliminated many of their previous frustrations. Nonetheless, the lack of interface with TOMS is a continuing problem. The obligation on health staff to operate two systems and duplicate information in order to ensure custodial staff are provided with essential information is inefficient and increases the potential for error.

THE WAY FORWARD

- 6.42 Significant progress has been made with regard to ensuring a stable health centre team at Roebourne with most positions now substantive. Furthermore, staff interviewed throughout the inspection demonstrated a high level of sensitivity to the particular needs of the prisoner group. High quality health services and health education are likely to lead to healthier lifestyles on release and there is a good base on which to build. Implementation of the recommendations outlined above should help to provide a stronger sense of direction and more systemic and strategic support. They should also assist in addressing the structural constraints which have hampered staff efforts in meeting prisoners' needs.

Chapter 7

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

ASSESSMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 A Management and Placement Plan (MAP) is prepared for all remandees and short-term sentenced prisoners admitted to Roebourne Regional Prison, and an Individual Management Plan (IMP) is prepared for sentenced prisoners likely to stay over 12 months. The latter are also case managed by an allocated prison officer, who is required to meet with the prisoner every six months to discuss their IMP progress and complete a contact report. Various other assessments, applications and reports may be needed during a prisoner's stay, including for participation in external activities and for parole reports.
- 7.2 The main staff member responsible for preparing these plans is the Assessment and Integrated Prison Regime (AIPR) writer. This position reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent Prison Management (ASPM) and is filled by a prison officer on a three monthly secondment. As the Department's assessment system is complex and requires considerable skills and knowledge, the expertise required to fulfil this position could only be partly acquired during such a short secondment. The AIPR writer is reliant on advice, supervision and training from the ASPM. However, the ASPM has many other responsibilities and is not in a position to devote the necessary time for the continued development of staff rotating through this position. Providing custodial staff with the opportunity to act as the AIPR writer is appropriate, but the term should be extended (possibly up to 12 months) to increase the opportunity of the writer to gain confidence, expertise, continuity, quality and efficiency in their reports. It was therefore positive that the AIPR writer at the time of the inspection had been appointed for a second three-month acting period.
- 7.3 Local management consider that a second AIPR writer is required to make the area of AIPR writing more manageable and to assist the Movements Officer both in the management of court video links and the management of bail. Other prisons in Western Australia have a Manager Assessments or at least a Senior Officer Assessments, who develop and maintain a much higher level of expertise. Should a second AIPR writer be attained, there is a case for at least one of these positions to be a full-time non-rotational position at a senior officer level.

PROGRAMS

- 7.4 Programs in the first instance, refers to a particular set of rehabilitative programs for prisoners to address their offending issues identified through the assessment process. Four checklists for these programs are administered to prisoners with sentences that require at least a 12 months custodial stay: Cognitive Skills, Violence, Substance Use and (if indicated by their offences) Sex Offending.¹¹¹ Whilst there are many factors that determine the need and ability for a prisoner to complete a program, previous inspection reports raised concerns about the delivery and sustainability of programs but noted that efforts were being made to establish a three-pronged approach to program facilitation involving some fly-in, fly-out, local staffing and contracted external resources.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Educational and vocational training checklists are also undertaken as part of the IMP assessments.

¹¹² OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 10.

7.5 The following table shows approved local offender services staff provision, their respective roles and the status of these positions at the time of the inspection.

Position	Role	Status
Prison Counsellor/Senior Programs Officer (1.5 FTE)	Risk management Counselling Treatment assessment Program facilitation	One position filled 0.5 position vacant
Senior Programs Officer	Treatment assessment Program facilitation Team support	Position filled
Aboriginal Programs Facilitator	Program facilitation Program development	Position filled but at the time of the inspection the ABF was not in attendance
Prison Support Officer	Prisoner support Peer support program	Position filled but incumbent absent due to unresolved issues

7.6 Earlier in the year, the presence of the Senior Programs Officer (SPO) and Aboriginal Programs Facilitator (APF) had helped put offender programs on a strong footing at Roebourne. However, at the time of the inspection the APF was not in attendance and it was unknown as to when or if she would return to Roebourne. The 0.5 FTE for the Prison Counselling Service (PCS)/Senior Programs Officer position had yet to be advertised.

7.7 The Department acknowledges that attracting a person willing to take on such a part-time position without provision of accommodation is likely to be difficult. In addition, external agency facilitation in substance use programs was no longer available, so Offender Management has increasingly become dependant on fly-in, fly-out program facilitators. There have also been issues with training and securing prison officers to co-facilitate the cognitive skills program (Building on Aboriginal Skills), but these were expected to be resolved.

7.8 Notwithstanding the staffing issues, there is much to commend the quality and stability of program delivery at Roebourne compared to that encountered in earlier inspections. The following provides a table of programs provided in 2009-2010 at Roebourne, and those scheduled for 2010-2011. All of the programs have been developed or adapted for Indigenous prisoners, and women have benefited from an annual substance use program and the occasional cognitive skills (Building on Aboriginal Skills) program.

Program	Run in 09/10	Completions	Booked 10/11
Building on Aboriginal Skills	3	29	4
Women's Substance Use	2	12	2
Indigenous Men Managing Anger/Substance Use	4	47	3
Indigenous Family Violence	2	25	2

7.9 This is not to say, however, that program needs are being fully met at Roebourne. The table below represents a snapshot of the assessed program needs and program booking status of all prisoners whose effective prison stay is 12 months or more as at 5 October 2010. The numbers who have actually completed programs ('Done') or actually booked for a program due to finish prior to their earliest date of release ('Booked') represents those assessed needs that will potentially be met through scheduled programs ('Success').

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

- 7.10 In this table, prisoners whose programs have been booked for a time after their earliest date of release ('Booked Over'), have been identified as needing a program but it has not been possible to provide a program ('Identified and 'Not available'), have refused to engage in a program ('Refused') or commenced and withdrawn ('Withdrawn'), are all deemed unsuccessful for the purposes of this table.

Assessed Needs and Program Bookings

Offending Issue	Risk Level	Done	Booked	Booked Over	Identified	Not available	Refused	Withdrawn	Total	Success	Percent
Cog skills	Medium	2	4	0	2	12	6	0	26	6	23.1%
Substance Use	Medium	24	2	1	0	5	0	2	34	26	76.5%
Substance Use	High	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	66.7%
Violence	Low	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0.0%
Violence	Medium	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0.0%
Violence	Domestic	12	1	5	0	7	2	0	27	13	48.1%
Sex Offending	Medium	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	66.7%
Sex Offending	High	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0.0%
ALL ISSUES	ALL LEVELS	41	8	7	2	27	11	2	98	49	50.0%

Sentenced Prisoners with 12 or more months to serve in Roebourne Regional Prison as at 5 December 2010.¹¹³

- 7.11 This snapshot suggests that only half of Roebourne's medium- and long-term sentenced prisoners can expect to have their assessed program needs met prior to their earliest date of release. The other half can expect a negative reflection in relation to their completion of programs in their parole report, irrespective of whether they are considered at fault (through refusal or withdrawal), or the system is considered at fault (by not providing adequate program opportunities). To add to the sense of injustice, a prisoner will commonly complete one or two programs as required, but find it has not been possible to schedule the one program they are assessed as needing before they apply for parole.
- 7.12 In responding to this situation, the dilemma is whether more programs should be delivered or the assessment system reformed to prioritise and determine what gains are achievable in the time available for each prisoner. Either way, it is improper for so many prisoners to be penalised for failing to complete programs in circumstances where there is limited prospect of completion. This is a system-wide issue.

¹¹³ This snapshot does not include prisoners received at Roebourne but subsequently sent to other prisons. Some of the offending issues at certain risk levels can only be addressed by programs available at other facilities.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 7.13 The education centre at Roebourne provides an effective service not only within the prison, but externally as a partner in the DECCA program. The inspection team was informed that 281 prisoners including 253 Aboriginal prisoners participated in 1359 units of education or training in 2009-2010, of which 804 units were completed.
- 7.14 A Prison Education Coordinator, Indigenous Education Worker and five sessional tutors provided a core teaching program in general education, business studies, driver training, art, the New Opportunities for Women course and the Keep Your Culture Keep Your Job program. Unfortunately, at the time of the inspection, the Indigenous Education Worker had recently left and had not yet been replaced. The quality of participation by students in classes observed by the inspection team was high and feedback from prisoners was positive.
- 7.15 The Campus Manager has also organised a range of vocational training programs, mainly at DECCA, for which Pilbara TAFE had effectively assigned a full-time tutor, with further tutorial assistance provided for certain short courses. DECCA operates an industrial skills/building and construction program on an ongoing basis, and the Rio Tinto Work Ready program on a regular basis. It is anticipated that other regional companies will also utilise DECCA for similar work-preparation programs, possibly developing a generic Work Ready program for the mining industry.
- 7.16 Participants have accessed certificate courses and short courses such as the White Card and Blue Card safety induction, First Aid, Skid Steer (Bobcat), Forklift, Chainsaw, Small Engine Maintenance, Dogging, Construction, Scaffolding, Mining Operations, Resource Infrastructure and Transport and Logistics.
- 7.17 At the prison, the education centre continues to provide the Foodcents food safety program for kitchen workers (25 participants) and horticulture for garden workers (4 participants). It has further engaged three prisoners in the statewide certificate programs in Laundry Operations and Assets Maintenance (Cleaning). However, the workshops are under-sized, under-equipped and lack a strong training orientation, so opportunities for vocational training within the prison for those unable to access DECCA are limited. It is hoped that horticulture will be extended to support a partnership with Dampier Port Authority in engaging prisoners in collecting and propagating seed for rehabilitation work and in weed-spraying. It could also be a meaningful activity for women prisoners.
- 7.18 The Campus Manager, DECCA Vocational Support Officer, Employment Coordinator and prison management are continuing to build new corporate and government alliances in the Pilbara to develop new opportunities for training and work experience by prisoners. For example, discussions are underway with the National Heritage Council involving prisoners refurbishing stone heritage buildings in Roebourne.

REPARATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- 7.19 Prisoner employment has long been considered an effective prisoner management strategy, a way of preventing potential discord, bullying and dissent, especially in the residential units where unemployed and under-employed prisoners are left without any meaningful activity. The system of prisoner employment, together with participation in education and other recognised programs provides a basis on which to pay prisoner gratuities. The higher gratuity levels paid to those demonstrating greater industry, responsibility or skills in their work, helps to provide a general incentive to good behaviour.
- 7.20 Prisoner employment is commonly used to reduce the cost of imprisonment to society, in the first instance through the provision of services in prisons such as cooking, cleaning, gardening and maintenance, and secondly through making items such as clothing and footwear and through growing and processing foods for consumption within the prison system. Prisoner employment is also utilised to provide more direct benefits to the community for example through making items for donations to charity or for installation in community settings. Some prisoners can actually be out-posted during the day, either individually to agencies in the community or as groups working on a project to benefit an agency or service.
- 7.21 At Roebourne, prisoners are utilised in cooking, cleaning, gardening and maintenance activities, but only marginally in other productive activities that could be said to reduce the costs of their imprisonment. The involvement of DECCA prisoners in manufacturing smoking shelters for installation in the prison, and of others working in the workshop and maintenance areas in completing and installing them was a notable example.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

7.22 However, horticulture at Roebourne provides a negligible contribution toward prisoner food. The workshops generally are small and under-equipped and really only able to support maintenance and minor construction activities within the prison. The following table depicts worker assignments and numbers paid at each gratuity level on a day during the inspection.

Employment Areas by Gratuity Levels as at 23 September 2010

Work Area	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Total
Industry Workers	6	1	2	1	0	10
Kitchen	4	7	4	0	0	15
Laundry	1	0	9	0	0	10
Gardens	5	4	1	0	0	10
Project/Paint Workers	1	0	1	0	0	2
Rubbish Gang	0	0	6	0	0	6
Unit Workers	1	2	22	7	0	32
Special Helpers & Cleaners	3	4	1	0	0	8
Peer Support	3	0	0	0	0	3
Education Full-Time	0	1	6	0	0	7
External (section 95)	1	7	0	0	0	8
External (DECCA)	16	0	0	0	0	16
External (Work Camp)	7	0	0	0	0	7
No Job/Miscellaneous	0	0	5	2	24	31
Total	48	28	58	10	24	168

Key: Grey - employment requiring only a short work time; Light Blue - no workers required on this day (in the case of industry workers, only 4 of 10 were required on the day). Note: Work Camp prisoners receive an additional component to their gratuity.

7.23 On the day in question, the gardens vocational support officer had been redeployed to cover a prison officer shift position, so no prisoners were required in that area. Another VSO was on leave without being replaced, and only four out of 10 of the industry workers were required. There were no special projects or painting projects. Nine prisoners officially had no job and another 22 were classed as miscellaneous workers, but again their services were not required.

7.24 Thus, on the day, only 119 of 168 workers had any work to do, and a number of these had roles which required only short periods of effort, such as unit workers, rubbish gang and peer supporters. Even those who held substantive work roles within the prison such as in the kitchen, laundry or education centre were sent back to their units for one and a half hours at lunchtime, significantly reducing their productivity. Many fall asleep in their bunks and fail to return to work or study in the afternoon.

- 7.25 External work was a strength at Roebourne, with seven prisoners placed at Millstream Work Camp, 16 at DECCA and eight involved in section 95 work. Although DECCA is an excellent work placement primarily for the benefit of the prisoners themselves, the work is not reparative. In contrast, the efforts of the work camp and section 95 prisoners are reparative, with the former continuing to contribute solidly to maintaining and enhancing facilities in the Millstream-Chichester National Park and the latter working with the Roebourne Shire picking up rubbish and weeding on roadsides.
- 7.26 The section 95 program was in much poorer health at Roebourne than observed in previous inspections. In the past a number of individuals were out-posted every day at community agencies and facilities in Roebourne town such as the police station and the community pool, or in Cossack at the (now closed) art workshop or tourist facilities. During this inspection only one prisoner was out-posted. Prisoners also did some great projects in the community or participated in the art program when it was running at Cossack. While there are two section 95 VSOs at Roebourne, only one team was being sent out on a daily basis at the time of the inspection (because of the lack of staff available in the prison) and only to do basic rubbish cleanup work for the Shire.¹¹⁴ It is clear that management has focused on DECCA at the expense of the section 95 program and the benefits it can bring to the community. The situation is especially regrettable as less than half of prisoners rated minimum-security, were currently involved in section 95 activities.
- 7.27 While the number of prisoners employed in positions outside the prison through DECCA, section 95 and the work camp are a strength at Roebourne, the majority of prisoners (59%) with a medium- or maximum-security rating remain inside the prison and have a very limited range of meaningful work roles. Further, many of those with positions within the prison are considerably under-employed. This results in a high proportion of 'employed' prisoners with no meaningful activity during the day. This is ameliorated to some degree by prisoners undertaking part-time education, offender programs or other personal development or re-entry programs that may be available.
- 7.28 This Office understands the difficulties associated with prisoner employment and in Roebourne's case the lack of workshop space, lack of resources, staffing issues and the climate combine to make the employment of prisoners in a meaningful position for a time span appropriate for the gratuities paid, a difficult task to achieve. However, this should not deter the prison from continual exploration of ideas to combat this problem. If full employment is not achievable, then suitable alternatives to work should be offered such as other structured activities (eg, recreation and art), which could be conducted upon the completion of the assigned tasks for the day.

114 If there is a shortage of officers on duty on any given day the prison utilises officers from the workshops, gardens and section 95 to fill in the vacant positions created, thus effectively closing that area.

EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION

7.29 For prisoners, prison employment can provide an opportunity to engage in meaningful activity which can be rewarding in itself and provide a small monetary award that can be spent in the canteen or saved. It can also provide opportunities through work experience and training that may enhance employability post-release and contribute to the prisoners' rehabilitation. From this perspective, Roebourne Regional Prison offers little to the majority of prisoners unable to engage in external work. Industrial work opportunities are extremely limited, and while employment is available in traditional mainstays of the kitchen, laundry, cleaning and garden, little is made of this in terms of accredited training. The education centre has managed to provide some short courses within the prison, such as skid-steer, white card, driver training and chainsaw operation; however, most are conducted external to the prison at DECCA or the work camp.

DECCA Station

7.30 DECCA is where minimum-security prisoners can enjoy a far more extensive preparation for work, either through the mainstream industrial and construction skills program or the Rio Tinto Work Ready program. DECCA was originally proposed as the site of a second work camp in 2004. It was piloted in 2006 as a work skills project, with a focus on renovation of some of the buildings, enabling prisoners to gain skills in equipment restoration, site maintenance, construction and fencing. It faltered later that year when funding ran out, but its continued development was supported by the Inspector in the November 2006 inspection of Roebourne Prison.¹¹⁵

7.31 Only limited progress was made in the subsequent period to the January 2008 inspection and indeed the site had been allowed to run down and was found to have significant asbestos contamination.¹¹⁶ In the absence of significant investment and remedial work by the Department, it was recommended by this Office that DECCA be closed and its resources transferred back to Roebourne Prison site where more prisoners could access training.¹¹⁷

7.32 However, since then, the Department has invested in cleaning up the asbestos contamination and strong partnerships with a number of agencies have leveraged considerable resources that dramatically progressed renovation of the site including the creation of classroom facilities; the installation of industrial equipment in workshops; and improved access to machinery, scaffolding and other materials. This has enabled an ongoing training system to effectively skill prisoners for future employment. It is acknowledged that local management, the DECCA Coordinator, the Education Campus Manager, the Education and Vocational Training Unit (EVTU) in Perth and the Employment Coordinator, together with certain external partners have worked tirelessly to make the program successful.¹¹⁸

115 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 48 (March 2008) 19-20.

116 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 52 (April 2008) 13.

117 *Ibid.*, 15.

118 External partners included Rio Tinto; Pilbara College of TAFE; Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; Pilbara Development Commission; Pilbara College of TAFE; and Ngarlinyarndu Bindi Aboriginal Corporation.

- 7.33 A significant indicator of this success is the number of prisoners who have obtained and continued in work since leaving prison, having participated either in the general program at DECCA, or in the Rio Tinto Work Ready program for Indigenous prisoners. The Prisoner Employment Coordinator has played an especially important role both in linking these prisoners to employers and in providing post-placement support following their release. The coordinator has helped forge close links with a broad range of employers in the region including various resources companies, local contractors, Aboriginal corporations and the Shire.
- 7.34 The coordinator liaises closely with individual former prisoners and their employers monitoring the placement and intervening if issues arise. Such intervention often requires an after-hours home visit. This degree of post release support for ex-prisoners does not seem to be understood by some of the other staff at Roebourne prison, yet the experience of job network practitioners shows that such support is essential for persons of any disadvantaged group when entering employment. At the time of the inspection, 68 prisoners were listed as having commenced employment and received post-placement support since December 2008.
- 7.35 About half of these prisoners were employed by Rio Tinto, a number following commencement of the Work Ready program at DECCA which provides essential safety induction training, coaching in literacy and numeracy, and some relevant practical training. The company is keen to employ the services of Aboriginal prisoners prior to their release, which it is hoped will improve their chances at gaining continued employment post-release. Information provided in July indicated that two prisoners had commenced on the Prisoner Employment Program and that four more applications were being processed. Unfortunately, at the time of the inspection two of these applications had been rejected because the applicants had not completed all of their required offender programs.
- 7.36 On the basis of the performance of DECCA and the progress attained since the last inspection in 2008 this Office withdraws its recommendation to close DECCA. Nonetheless, DECCA requires further development and the Department should fund it appropriately to ensure that the level of service currently provided increases over the coming years.
- 7.37 The strength of Roebourne – the efforts and enthusiasm of a handful of staff – is also Roebourne’s weakness. It is difficult for senior management to maintain the partner relationships necessary to leverage resources and goods at the same time as managing a prison. Only one VSO is provided to DECCA, despite having up to 20 prisoners on site. There is no formal relief arrangement for that position.

Recommendation 16:

Fund and provide staffing and other resources to DECCA to increase the level of service provided to prisoners, the prison and the community.

Prisoner Employment Program (PEP)

7.38 The Inspectorate has previously expressed strong concerns about the unwarranted time taken to process PEP applications and also recommended that:

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.¹¹⁹

7.39 The requirement that courses be completed is apparently a new one, but logical if it means a prisoner is unlikely to be paroled for that reason or the nature of the employment and treatment need is such that the risk to the community is genuinely elevated. However, it is difficult to see how failure to complete a Family Violence Program, for example, might elevate the risk to the community of a prisoner who could be working at an iron ore loading facility. Indeed, one may speculate that a prisoner in secure employment post-release might be less likely to be under the kind of stress that triggered his previous offending.

7.40 In the case of these PEP applications, there appeared to be a 'perfect storm' of communication issues, short staffing in certain areas, management distractions and policy deliberations that added to known procedural issues with PEP. It is extremely concerning that the Department is risking cooperation with one of its major employers of released prisoners when an interest is being shown by other companies in the Work Ready program and PEP as a pathway for prisoner employment not only in the Pilbara, but in other regions.

7.41 Employment support services at Roebourne include referrals for job searching, work experience placements on release and work preparation. April 2010 saw Roebourne's first Service Providers' Expo which included a number of local employer, training and job seeker agencies. However, no further services are specifically available under the PEP program. For example, in other prisons, prisoners can apply to become a job seeker visiting an employment agency outside the prison, and undertaking work experience or other external work in preparation for post-release employment. Roebourne does not permit this because the need for staff supervision and transport may leave the prison short staffed.

7.42 The work preparation afforded through the DECCA program at Roebourne, the pathways to employment established with Rio Tinto through the Work Ready stream and other employment opportunities offered through the Employment Coordinator (who provides post-placement support to all gaining employment) is the best available in the Western Australian prison system. No other prison approaches the number of placements into paid employment achieved at Roebourne.

Recommendation 17:

Ensure that the approval processes and eligibility criteria for the Prisoner Employment Program make it accessible to as many prisoners as possible.

119 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 67 (July 2010) 38.

Millstream Work Camp

- 7.43 The Millstream Work Camp was established in February 2000 and was a joint venture between the former Ministry of Justice and the agency formerly known as Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Successor agencies of course are the Department of Corrective Services and the Department of Environment and Conservation.
- 7.44 Although Millstream Work Camp is located in a verdant pocket in an otherwise arid landscape, the climatic conditions make physical labour extremely challenging. During the dry season, prisoners are usually required to begin work early in the morning so as to avoid the oppressive heat of the middle of the day. During the cooler months, prisoners work long hours, often from dawn to dusk. Although the hours of physical labour are erratic and somewhat controlled by the climatic conditions, the prisoners are often given projects that can be completed on site at the work camp. These include the manufacturing of items required for future projects, which often require planning, drawing and manufacturing skills (such as welding) to complete. The officers at the camp regularly assist the prisoners in acquiring the necessary skills to complete these projects. Maintenance of the camp is also undertaken during these times.
- 7.45 Isolation from Roebourne and Karratha coupled with short-term sentences has resulted in few real opportunities for the prisoners to undertake lengthy certificated courses through TAFE. For this reason, it would be beneficial if prisoners were offered more Aboriginal short courses where they can learn skills that will improve their employment prospects upon release and help them develop confidence to undertake minor projects within their own communities.¹²⁰ This would, in turn, promote self-esteem among Millstream prisoners.
- 7.46 Millstream has been under-resourced from its inception. Like most Western Australian work camps, Millstream was not purpose built; however, compared to other established work camps Millstream suffers from a distinct lack of resources. The impoverished state of the Millstream Work Camp was recognised in a recent report of the Western Australian Parliament's Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, which noted 'an indicative failure to fully capitalise on existing sustainability opportunities' as well as 'a reliance on cast off plant, some in a poor state of repair, to support training initiatives'.¹²¹ Investment and resourcing is urgently required to enable Millstream Work Camp to fulfil its objectives of reparation and to enable it to better prepare prisoners for release.
- 7.47 To date, the capacity of Millstream Work Camp has been constrained by the lack of a suitable vehicle to transport a larger number of prisoners. However, the prison had recently sourced a second-hand vehicle which, if it proves reliable, will enable the work camp to increase its capacity to 12. Although this is welcome news, because of the vehicle's age and mileage this can only be considered a short-term solution. It is incumbent on the Department to supply Millstream with a vehicle that is reliable and appropriate to the work camp's conditions and requirements.

120 Courses that have been run in the past at Millstream include skid-steer, welding, chainsaw, small engine maintenance and repair, white card and fencing. It is intended to offer the Foodsense course in the future.

121 Parliament of Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, *Making Our Prisons Work: An Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Prisoner Education, Training and Employment Strategies*, Report 4 (Interim Report, June 2010) 88.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

- 7.48 An aspect of Millstream that is very important is that it reunites the Aboriginal prisoners from the Pilbara region with the land. Most prisoners at the work camp during the inspection were from the Pilbara region. However, the inspection team found that prisoners from the local area of Roebourne are often reluctant to attend the work camp because it is too far from the prison to receive regular visits from families based in Roebourne.

RESETTLEMENT

- 7.49 The following table summarises activities relevant to resettlement activities for prisoners at Roebourne Regional Prison during their custodial stay. The system is partly dependent on the position of Transitional Manager to provide information to make an initial assessment of prisoner needs and address some of them before referrals are made to re-entry providers. Unfortunately, there have been difficulties in staffing arrangements for this position over an extended period, with no-one acting in this position since mid-July. Although a new Transitional Manager was due to commence in early October 2010, at the time of the inspection the Movement Officer or Case Management Coordinator was required to pass on referral information to re-entry officers.

Outline of Resettlement Activity at Roebourne Regional Prison for Sentenced Prisoners

Resettlement-related Activity	Agent Providing Assistance
Resettlement needs identified	Transitional Manager (checklist on entry)
Preparing a parole plan/application	Peer support
Preparing parole reports	AIPR Writer & Community Corrections Officer
Resettlement needs identified	Pre-Release Re-entry Officer (from 6 months prior to anticipated release)
Resettlement information sessions and other pre-release programs	Re-entry Lifeskills Officer, Transitional Manager, Women's Support Officer & others
Release planning (general)	Post-release Re-entry Officer (1 month prior to expected release)
Transport home planning	Transitional Manager issues request to TOPS Transport Officer
Employment placement	Employment Coordinator
Assistance with referrals, IDs, fines, family and relationship issues and other practical issues	Pre-Release and/or Post-Release Re-entry Officer (birth certificates, Medicare cards, Centrelink release payment, licensing/18 + card, opening bank account, settling fines, referral to addiction support agencies, etc)
Assistance with accommodation	Post-release Re-entry Officer (Nil TAS housing in Pilbara, applications for Homeswest priority housing)
Transport home on release	Transport Options Officers, Prison Officers or prisoner's family or friend
Resettlement support on release	Post-release Re-entry Officer (usually up to 6 months post-release)
Offender supervision on release	Community Corrections Officer
Employment placement support	Employment Coordinator

- 7.50 The Department has five re-entry contracts with KDM Corporation, a family-run local service provider: remand re-entry service (not included in above table), pre-release re-entry service, post-release re-entry service, re-entry life skills, and the Transport Options Program (TOPS). The staff impressed with their dedication and knowledge, and its records and limited anecdotal evidence appeared to indicate good service provision, at least in the pre-release phase. KDM had recently lost staff but had moved quickly to appoint new staff.
- 7.51 Re-entry staff visit prisoners at Millstream once a month. However, while the TOPS program does return people released from custody to remote towns and communities, post-release re-entry support was largely confined to those living in larger towns such as Port Hedland, Roebourne and Karratha or those with reliable phone contact.
- 7.52 As with most prisons, the Transitional Manager at Roebourne has initiated and coordinated various outside agencies in providing information sessions and programs for prisoners. Over the previous 12-18 months, these have included:
- information sessions from the re-entry and TOPS program providers, Pilbara Legal Services, Department of Planning, Sheriff Development Officer, Homeswest, Centrelink, Child Support Agency and others;
 - sessions on women's hygiene and men's health from Marwarnkarra Health Service;
 - delivery of the Nuts & Bolts (men's sexual health) and Health in Prison/Health Out of Prison programs by Family Planning WA;
 - delivery of the Strong Fathers Help Make Strong Families program by Acacia Support Services;
 - delivery of the Growing Strong Children program by Yaandina (for women prisoners);
 - driver training sessions (sponsored by the prison's education centre);
 - family relationships sessions from Kinway;
 - delivery of the Healing Project program by the Pilbara Women's Advisory Council;
 - sessions on anger management and relationships from Pilbara Population Health; and
 - the Service Providers Expo (hosted by Roebourne Regional Prison in May 2010).
- 7.53 Unfortunately, because of staff shortages, only a few of these programs had been delivered during the months leading up to the inspection, but they were generally appreciated by prisoners and certainly made an important contribution not only to practical aspects of re-entry, but to broader rehabilitative goals such as rebuilding and strengthening family relationships. During the inspection, the prison took delivery of the printed copies of the Service Providers Directory, which was developed by one of the former acting Transitional Managers at Roebourne Regional Prison. The directory is intended for re-entry and other support staff to assist them with preparing prisoners for release and providing them with post-release support. This was an excellent initiative which will undoubtedly become an invaluable resource.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

- 7.54 In general, some good resources are available to support prisoner resettlement for those leaving Roebourne although there are some obvious cautions, gaps, and concerns we need to note. The caution is that this Office has little capacity to review actual performance of persons involved in post-release support of prisoners, whether re-entry support, employment support or offender supervision.
- 7.55 The most significant gap is in finding accommodation for released prisoners. The Department in some areas contracts to external agencies such as Transitional Accommodation Service (TAS), which provides support accommodation through Homeswest to released prisoners. No such service exists in the Pilbara and with private rentals in major towns very difficult to find (and prohibitively expensive), few prisoners can look forward to changed circumstances on their release. The re-entry provider has recently succeeded in assisting two prisoners and their families with successful priority housing applications with Homeswest, which is deserving of praise.
- 7.56 Another gap appears to be in the addictions area. Most prisons provide the HIP/HOP program (a basic harm minimisation program) at least monthly to all new prisoners, and those due for release. This was last provided in November 2009 which is less than adequate. Of course, addictions are also addressed for a minority of prisoners through participation in the Indigenous Men Managing Anger and Substance Abuse (IMMASU) or the Women's Substance Use (WSU) programs, but there does not appear to be any funded addictions agencies engaging with prisoners prior to their release and providing post-release support. It is left to the re-entry provider to attempt to engage prisoners with mainstream alcohol and other drug services (if in a major town) after their release.
- 7.57 The area of potential concern is that, in reality, a number of separate systems are involved in prisoner resettlement that are not necessarily well integrated with each other. In brief, these include the:
- AIPR/case management system;
 - parole and community corrections system;
 - transitional management and re-entry services system;
 - employment placement system; and
 - health system.
- 7.58 The transitional management and re-entry systems are simply case management systems focussed more directly on the needs of prisoners, especially in preparation for their release. It is not clear to the Office why these systems are not integrated with the traditional case management system. It is assumed that parole plans and re-entry release plans are integrated, but until now there has been no process of harmonising these. The KDM Corporation coordinator informed the Office that this will be a requirement of new contractual arrangements, but that local Community and Youth Justice would not implement the requirement until new contractual arrangements are implemented.

- 7.59 Prisoners applying for parole have little support from their Community Corrections Officer or from anyone within the prison and this is not a formal part of the re-entry contractor's role. Sometimes prisoners will receive assistance from a peer supporter and access to the computer in the library or a school computer to prepare their plan and write their application or appeal letter. The Inspectorate has found these kinds of ad hoc arrangements in most prisons and it seems to be a system-wide deficiency. Prisoners should be properly advised and assisted in preparing their parole plans and applications by a suitable staff member, including access to necessary resources to facilitate this.
- 7.60 We have already noted with approval the extensive post-placement support provided to most prisoners released from Roebourne, but there have been some issues with lack of integration with parole supervision requirements. Finally, the health system was included in the list of systems involved in prisoner resettlement, but there was no evidence of systematic processes to support continuity of physical or mental health care following release from prison.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 7.61 Community relations have long been a priority for the administration at Roebourne Regional Prison, with the section 95 program, the Millstream Work Camp and DECCA all requiring major input from the Shire, Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, corporations and community representatives. In the last two years or so – following engagement of re-entry contractors and creation of positions like the Women's Support Officer, Employment Coordinator and Transitional Manager – there has also been a much more diverse involvement from a range of community agencies in short courses, information session and client contact with prisoners at Roebourne.
- 7.62 While the prison relates directly to various agencies, its community involvement has also been mediated to a significant degree by participation in a range of broader groupings such as the Pilbara Aboriginal Justice Agreement forum, Pilbara Aboriginal Women's Council gatherings, and various inter-agency networks and industry forums. The prison's own Aboriginal Advisory Group worked well for an extended period but had been in abeyance for some time at the time of the inspection. The Superintendent expressed a commitment to reviving the Advisory Group which in any case has been made a priority by Adult Custodial for all prisons.
- 7.63 A difficulty was apparent, however, in the prisons' relations to external stakeholders due to a lack of consistency in representation in its relations with many of these agencies or forums. Community groups told us, for example, that the prison had not been represented at the previous two Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) Regional Forum meetings. This is partly due to prison managers having to address other priorities, attend meetings in Perth or take their annual leave. It is also due to a lack of communication and coordination at times within the prison. Most of these meetings should be attended by two people from the prison ensuring one can deputise for the other when unavailable.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

- 7.64 There were also some issues for community agencies attending the prison that need to be carefully monitored and addressed. On the one hand, some confided that they had not always felt welcome when coming through the gate; on occasions they have been confronted with quite negative views from gate staff about their work and the people they are working with. While this was addressed by management when raised, customer service training for gate staff should be considered. Agency staff had also experienced lengthy and unexplained delays in access to prisoners. Staffing issues within the prison appear also to have impacted on program delivery at times.
- 7.65 A number of community representatives were discomforted by the loss of a number of support staff over the last 12 months, and were particularly concerned about the loss of the Prisoner Support Officer and the lack of Aboriginal Visitors. While management cannot divulge details of individual staff management issues to people outside the prison system, it can listen and respond positively to such concerns through continued participation in forums such as the AJA and its own Advisory Group.

Appendix 1

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
Future Planning 1. Develop a Pilbara Custodial Plan in consultation with relevant community organisations and stakeholders. As part of this plan, give consideration to establishing a new facility in the Port Hedland region and constructing a replacement prison at Roebourne.	Supported in Principle The Department will review the need for the development of a Pilbara Custodial Plan and any future plans for the replacement or expansion of the prison as part of an overall State approach.
Future Planning 2. Keep under active review the option of constructing, in the short term, a minimum-security area outside the current perimeter fence.	Supported The Department is actively reviewing this option as evidenced by the Business Case submitted as part of the 2011/2012 State budget process, whereby it has sought additional funding for the construction of a minimum security facility to service the Roebourne community.
Physical Condition and Maintenance Deficits 3. Implement a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan.	Supported – existing Departmental Initiative Roebourne Regional Prison currently has a comprehensive maintenance plan which is reviewed annually in conjunction with the prison, the Facilities Manager (BMW) and the Strategic Asset Services Directorate. Maintenance is carried out in accordance with the approved priorities and budget.

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>Bunk Beds</p> <p>4. (a) At Roebourne Regional Prison and across the system as a whole, replace or modify beds that do not comply with appropriate safety standards.</p> <p>(b) Provide custodial officers across the state with training in removing people from top bunks in the event of medical or other emergencies.</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>The Department has implemented a new policy (PD 73: Prisoner Bed Installation, Removal and Recording) to effectively manage prisoner accommodation. The Department also maintains a database to record the number of beds in prison and work camps. An audit process is in place to identify beds which do not comply with safety standards. These identified beds will be addressed.</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>The revised policy requires a risk assessment to be undertaken to assess prisoners who should be placed in the top bunk. (PD 73 refers.) The circumstances of removal of an individual prisoner will depend on the nature of the intervention required and training/instruction will be provided to staff.</p>
<p>Climate Control</p> <p>5. (a) Install suitable climatic controls to reduce air temperatures and to increase cool air circulation in prisoners' cells at Roebourne Regional Prison.</p> <p>(b) Explore and implement other management measures to reduce the impact of the harsh climate.</p>	<p>Supported in Principle</p> <p>Various options are continually being explored and will be implemented within available budget resources.</p>
<p>Workshops and Stores</p> <p>6. Expand industries and vocational skills and training programs on site and relocate the store to facilitate this expansion.</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>The Department is currently assessing state-wide employment demands with a view to aligning prison industries with current and emerging post-release employment opportunities. As highlighted in Recommendation Two, the Department is seeking to establish a minimum security facility which, if approved, will enhance prison industries and vocational training.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>Management of Staff</p> <p>7. Develop and implement strategies at both departmental and prison levels to stabilise and harmonise the leadership team at Roebourne, develop good processes for communication and cooperation, and build up peoples' sense of commitment to their colleagues, their managers and their work.</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>The Department is working closely with the Roebourne management team to address current issues and enhance management, leadership, communications and teamwork capabilities. Training, team building, change management and leadership development is part of an overall program to enhance capabilities, management stability and harmonisation within the team.</p>
<p>Communication with Visitors</p> <p>8. Provide more extensive training at Roebourne with respect to:</p> <p>(i) cultural awareness (using local Aboriginal providers if possible); and</p> <p>(ii) customer service techniques.</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>All probationary officers posted to Roebourne have taken part in the Cultural Awareness training provided at the Academy as part of the Entry Level Training Program (ELTP). Cultural Awareness training is also scheduled 4 times per year on the Academy's general calendar, and more will be scheduled if waitlists occur. In addition, Cultural Awareness training is available by request to the Academy, via the local Satellite Trainer, who will source local providers to deliver the training at the requested site. The same holds true for a request for customer service training if a local provider can be sourced the Academy will facilitate the provision of the training. If not, attendance can be arranged for the nominated person/people to attend training which may be scheduled at the Academy or from an external provider in a location other than local.</p>
<p>Aboriginal Visitor Scheme</p> <p>9. Ensure that the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison and also at all other prisons (including coverage for any lengthy absence).</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>The AVS has recently recruited a person to commence shortly. Recruitment for AVS staff state-wide for prisons is ongoing.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>Prison Support Officer 10. Ensure that the Prison Support Officer position has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison (including coverage for any lengthy absence).</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative The Department anticipates that the PSO position at Roebourne Regional Prison will be filled on a full time, temporary basis by a culturally appropriate candidate by the end of January 2011. It is anticipated that this will be a short term solution while a more appropriate long term strategy is being actively developed.</p>
<p>Food 11. (a) For the vast majority of prisoners, use the dining room for all meals. (b) In the case of prisoners who are required to eat their meals in the units, provide suitable facilities including chairs, tables and washing facilities.</p>	<p>Supported Subject to operational requirements and in keeping with required health standards, the dining room will be used wherever possible. If prisoners are required to eat their meals in their units, appropriate facilities will be provided.</p>
<p>Women's Support Officer 12. (a) Ensure that the WSO position has a consistent and effective presence at Roebourne Regional Prison (including coverage for any lengthy absence). (b) Increase the WSO position to a full FTE.</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative The WSO position at Roebourne Regional Prison is currently going through the selection process. A Business Case is being prepared to increase the position to full time. This will increase the service delivery to women prisoners. In the absence of a WSO, support positions such as the Transitional Manager have provided extra support/mentorship as a matter of necessity.</p>
<p>Services 13. Provide services for women in Roebourne Regional Prison that are commensurate with those provided in metropolitan facilities</p>	<p>Supported Taking into account the regional environment and associated constraints, work is already underway to review the services to women at all prisons across the State, including Roebourne, in keeping with the standards established within the Management of Women in Custody Policy.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>Dental, External Specialist and Allied Health Services</p> <p>14. Ensure that the new contractual arrangements relating to prisoner transport that will come into force in 2011 result in a better service with respect to external medical, allied health and dental appointments.</p>	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>A comprehensive procurement process is underway and will be in place for the new contract commencing July 2011. There was an exhaustive consultation process prior to and during the development of the business case and tender document.</p>
<p>Assessment and Care Planning</p> <p>15. Develop and implement an Aboriginal health care strategy at Roebourne Regional Prison Health Centre that recognises the cultural and differing gendered needs of the local prisoner population.</p> <p>This strategy should include details of and commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actively recruiting Aboriginal health staff as vacancies occur; • developing and implementing culturally appropriate clinical assessment tools; • actively engaging Aboriginal health care organisations to provide in-reach services to the prison; and • providing training in the delivery of culturally sensitive health care. 	<p>Supported – existing Departmental Initiative</p> <p>The Department understands, and is awaiting confirmation, that the local Marwarnkarra Health Service has been funded to send Aboriginal Health Workers into Roebourne Regional Prison twice weekly for a period of 12 months. Based on the outcome of these visits the Health Service Directorate will determine its future strategy for employing Aboriginal Health Workers. Marwarnkarra is also presently used as the preferred external health care provider for Roebourne Regional Prison and provides a half-day in-reach service to the prison weekly. The above is in addition to the Health Service Directorate which in addition to the onsite nursing services currently provides general practitioner services two days per fortnight.</p>
<p>DECCA Station</p> <p>16. Fund and provide staffing and other resources to DECCA to increase the level of service provided to prisoners, the prison and the community.</p>	<p>Supported in Principle</p> <p>The Department supports this recommendation in principle and is currently exploring a number of initiatives to increase the number of staffing and other resources at DECCA.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>Prisoner Employment Program (PEP)</p> <p>17. Ensure that the approval processes and eligibility criteria for the PEP program make it accessible to as many prisoners as possible</p>	<p>Not Supported</p> <p>The Department continues 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. Policy Directive 68 (Prisoner Employment Program) is currently being reviewed with a draft PD having been circulated to prisons for feedback/consultation. It is anticipated that the revised PD 68 will be operational by May 2011.</p>

Appendix 2

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No.	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
1.	<p>Report No. 52, <i>Report of an Announced Follow-up Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison.</i></p> <p><i>The Department should develop vocational skills and training programs for prisoners on-site at Roebourne Regional Prison equivalent to those that were intended to occur at the DECCA Station and fund them appropriately. DECCA Station should be closed.</i></p>	•				
		RECOMMENDATION RESCINDED				

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No.	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration Report No. 48, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison.</i>	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
1.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services should update and implement its philosophy and strategies for managing Aboriginal prisoners wherever they are held.	•				
2.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services commence the process of developing an integrated philosophy for the management of "Aboriginal Prisons".	•				
3.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services take immediate action to increase the level of custodial and non-custodial staffing at Roebourne Regional Prison, with a view to ensuring that the prison is optimally staffed comparable to other similar prisons.				•	
4.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services investigate further incentives to offset the scarcity and high cost of accommodating staff in the region.				•	
5.	It is recommended that a review be completed of the workload and classification level of the Business Manager and Security Manager position at Roebourne Regional Prison.				•	
6.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services expedite the filling of a Senior Officer Trainer position at Roebourne Regional Prison.				•	
7.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services examine the cultural awareness training developed and implemented at Roebourne Regional Prison for its relevance to broader cultural awareness training programs across all services.		•			

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No.	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration Report No. 48, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison.</i>	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
8.	It is recommended that the Roebourne Regional Prison offer targeted training to staff to address skills deficits in the Prison Officer group funded separately from the existing prison budget.		•			
9.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services immediately take action to cease the use of mattresses on the floor during periods of overcrowding.		•			
10.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services when planning for a new regional prison establish a community reference group and part of their consideration is to determine the best location of the prison.		•			
11.	It is recommended that climatic controls (such as shade, or even fans where appropriate) are installed in recreation areas, along with suitable climatic controls to reduce air temperatures and increase air circulation in prisoner day rooms, work areas and cells at Roebourne Regional Prison.	•				
12.	It is recommended that the Roebourne Regional Prison management undertake a review of the impact of daylight saving upon the prison time table, with a particular view to minimising any increased heat stress on prisoners when locked in cell.			•		
13.	It is recommended that the Roebourne Regional Prison implement later lock-down security procedures for minimum-security prisoners that reflect lock-down practices for minimum-security prisoners in other Western Australian prisons.		•			
14.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services as a matter of priority increase the resource levels of the Prison Counseling Service at Roebourne Regional Prison to service the needs of the prisoner population.			•		

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006
RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>Recommendation No.</i>	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration	<i>Assessment of the Department's Implementations</i>				
		<i>Poor</i>	<i>Less than acceptable</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>More than acceptable</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
	Report No. 48, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison.</i>					
15.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services audit the needs of the prisoner population with a view to introducing at Roebourne Prison the range and frequency of offender programs appropriate to the population's needs.			•		
16.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services undertake a review of the need for onsite PAST support for prisoners at Roebourne Regional Prison.		•			
17.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison provide greater support to the Prison Support Officer and increased resources to enhance the quality of support Prisoner Peer Support group provide to prisoners.	•				
18.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison provide greater support to the activities of the Aboriginal Visitor Service.		•			
19.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services fund Roebourne Regional Prison to deliver offender programs and education services to the women prisoners at a comparable standard to Bandyup Women's Prison.		•			
20.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services implement strategies to raise the standard of accommodation in the women's unit at Roebourne Regional Prison to a comparable standard of Bandyup Women's Prison.			•		
21.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services review the position of the Women's Support Officer at Roebourne Regional Prison and increase the position from 0.4 FTE to one FTE.		•			

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No.	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration Report No. 48, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison.</i>	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
22.	It is recommended that the Roebourne Regional Prison review existing processes and improve the practice of disseminating information to prisoners, in particular about gratuities; inter prison telephone calls and the grievance process.		•			
23.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services give immediate priority to for Roebourne Regional Prison to fund an off-road vehicle with the capacity to transport at least 12 prisoners and one prison Officer.			•		
24.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison immediately cease the practice of reducing the gratuity level of prisoners employed at the work camp while the prisoner is at the prison to have a social visit.				•	
25.	It is recommended that the Roebourne Regional Prison develop and submit to the Department of Corrective Services a business case to offer visits for prisoners employed at the Millstream Work Camp.			•		
26.	It is recommended the use of work camps at Roebourne Regional Prison be expanded as a pre-release program for a larger proportion of the prison population. To achieve this objective it will be necessary for the Department of Corrective Services to finance and develop the concept of work camps beyond its current forms to include a range of innovative, pre-release centres and out stations. A range of improved incentives for prisoners will be required.		•			

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No.	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration Report No. 48, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison.</i>	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
27.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services give a commitment to provide Roebourne Regional Prison with the required level of recurrent funding to support the operation of the DECCA Station as an ongoing training facility.			•		
28.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison develop a training plan for DECCA Station for the next triennium.					•
29.	It is recommended that the visits facilities at Roebourne Regional Prison be reviewed and efforts made to improve facilities including mechanisms for increasing prisoners' access to visits.			•		
30.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services approve a recurrent budget allocation to Roebourne Regional Prison to provide a weekly visitor bus service between the prison, South Hedland and Karratha.		•			
31.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison examine the options of providing short stay accommodation for visitors travelling from long distances to visit a prisoner at the Prison.		•			
32.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services immediately review the telephone call subsidy for out-of-country prisoners in Roebourne Regional Prison to ensure they receive comparable telephone subsidies as out-of-country prisoners in metropolitan prisons.				•	
33.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services immediately remove the \$4 fee charged to prisoners at the Roebourne Regional Prison for use of video visit facilities.	•				
34.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison develop improved processes to promote and assist prisoners to use the video visit system.	•				

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006
RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>Recommendation No.</i>	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration Report No. 48, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of</i> <i>Roebourne Regional Prison.</i>	<i>Assessment of the Department's</i> <i>Implementations</i>				
		<i>Poor</i>	<i>Less than</i> <i>acceptable</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>More than</i> <i>acceptable</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
35.	It is recommended that the Roebourne Regional Prison in consultation with the Department of Corrective Services develop and implement strategies to increase the access to additional functional space for the Education Centre.			•		
36.	It is recommended that the management of Roebourne Regional Prison consult its Education Centre staff to resolve the Centre's access to running water.		•			
37.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison implement strategies to provide protection for prisoners from the elements when using the external areas of the Education Centre.			•		
38.	It is recommended that if there is a moratorium on the deliver of Education programs at any time during 2007, the Department of Corrective Services exempt Roebourne Regional Prison and programs continue uninterrupted.			•		
39.	It is recommended that the Department of Corrective Services support staff employed in the Education Centre at Roebourne Regional Prison to participate in relevant opportunities for professional development in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations.			•		
40.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison review the overall training requirements of the Vocational Support Officers at the prison and support them to complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104).		•			
41.	It is recommended that Roebourne Regional Prison review and enhance the resources and internal budget arrangement for the Vocational Support Officers.		•			

Appendix 3

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Professor Neil Morgan	Inspector
Natalie Gibson	Director of Operations
Jim Bryden	Inspections and Research Officer
Cliff Holdom	Inspections and Research Officer
Janina Surma	Inspections and Research Officer
Joseph Wallam	Community Liaison Officer
Shanna Satya	Expert advisor/Aboriginal Consultant, Aboriginal Legal Service
Jaala Downes	Environmental Health specialist, Health Department

Appendix 4

KEY DATES

Formal notification of announced inspection	09 June 2010
Pre-inspection community consultation	11 August 2010
Start of on-site phase	19 September 2010
Completion of on-site phase	24 September 2010
Inspection exit debrief	24 September 2010
Draft Report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	22 December 2010
Draft report returned by the Department of Corrective Services	25 January 2011
Declaration of Prepared Report	7 February 2011



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

www.oics.wa.gov.au

Level 27, 197 St George's Terrace, Perth, Western Australia, Australia 6000
Telephone: +61 8 9212 6200 Facsimile: +61 8 9226 4616