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Report No.



Report of an Announced Inspection  
of  
Karnet Prison Farm

April/May 2001



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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# The Inspector's Overview

## KARNET: A MODEST PROFILE MASKS A GOOD PERFORMANCE

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### THE CHALLENGE OF BEING BOTH A PRISON AND A FARM

Karnet Prison Farm is a good prison and an excellent farm. Inspecting it was an enjoyable experience. The staff attitudes are for the most part good<sup>1</sup>; the prisoners are on the whole well-motivated; and everyone seems prepared to 'make do' with the available resources. That is not to say that the prison is without blemish or free from problems. However, if a prison is functioning well, these can readily be tackled - as long as the Department of Justice positively supports local management in their efforts to do so.

A key aspect of Karnet is that it is the most important contributor to the prison system's food chain. Refrigerated trucks move from Karnet throughout the metropolitan area and the State carrying beef, small goods, pork, lamb, eggs, vegetables and milk to other prisons. Farm productivity at Karnet lowers the cash cost-base for running each of those prisons. So important is Karnet to the prison system food chain, therefore, we had initially feared that the correctional purposes of the institution might have become subjugated to its farming objectives. Slaughtering cattle, packing meat, milking cows, watering vegetables, collecting eggs, maintaining machinery and carrying out general farm activities each demand continuous attention and are labour-intensive. Correctional programs, education, cultural activities and the like can, by contrast, more easily be temporarily postponed. At times of stress, the correctional needs of the best farm workers might have to take second place.

This fear turned out to be groundless. This was for a variety of reasons: that farm work was well tied in with TAFE programs; that prisoners could be and were moved in and out of work as rehabilitative program opportunities arose; generally, that reparation merged with rehabilitation.

In this regard, an outstanding aspect of the Inspection was the contribution made by consultants from the Department of Agriculture. I am most grateful to the CEO, Dr Graeme Robertson, for agreeing so readily to make Dr Greg Sawyer and his colleagues available to my Office. They have produced a cogent report on the farming characteristics and performance of Karnet that lays the groundwork for the development and implementation of a total farm plan. The body of this report is set out as Appendix 2 to the main Report, and the full text (including the technical data that formed Appendices to their own report) can be found on the website of this Office<sup>2</sup>. As well as addressing technical agricultural matters, the consultants also adopted and applied our own criterion - asking the question whether farming activities were getting in the way of correctional objectives. It was reassuring that, from their own different perspective, their conclusion mirrored our own - that, on the contrary, each was enhanced by the other.

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<sup>1</sup> Three officers were identified by both staff and prisoners as being out of line, with their more punitive and rule-orientated approach. However, the overall culture was able to absorb this, rather than being adversely affected by it.

<sup>2</sup> [www.custodialinspector.wa.gov.au](http://www.custodialinspector.wa.gov.au)

## THE VALUE OF FARMING ACTIVITIES

The Department of Agriculture experts estimated that the nett contribution of Karnet's farm produce to the prison system as a whole was of the order of \$4 million per annum. The figure attributed by the Department of Justice was considerably less than this – somewhere around \$2.0 to 2.5 million. This disparity arose because of outmoded price transfer mechanisms used by the Department. In other words, the 'retained revenue' available to Karnet according to Department of Justice accounting practices, was under-estimated by at least \$1.5 million. Karnet is cross-subsidising the remainder of the prison system by that amount.

From a correctional point of view, this is a significant insight. For relatively little capital expenditure<sup>3</sup>, Karnet could become an even more successful minimum-security or resettlement prison<sup>4</sup>. In the competition for capital, it would seem sensible to put some resources into improving a good prison, as well as the very considerable amounts that the Department has to put into propping up failing prisons. This is particularly so when it is understood that the prison, uniquely within the WA system<sup>5</sup>, is virtually paying its own way. Rewards for performance are surely no less appropriate than rewards for non-performance.

## IMPROVING BOTH THE PRISON AND THE FARM

This transformation, or at any rate improvement, could be achieved in the following ways. First, the productivity of both the dairy and the abattoir could be markedly increased. In the case of the dairy, this would involve some capital investment; with the abattoir, more cattle and longer slaughter hours. In each case, there would be additional labour requirements, i.e., prisoner time. Second, the prison – being a resettlement prison – should develop a much more significant community work presence, by way of Section 94 activities and/or through the establishment of a work camp. These developments also would involve more prisoner labour. Third, educational activities are somewhat under-done; more prisoners should be spending longer time in these. Fourth, Karnet would seem to be a good venue for non-intensive sex offender treatment programs<sup>6</sup>, and more prisoners could be placed into these or other programs<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> In comparison, say, to \$15 million for the current renovations to Bandyup or \$40 million for the recent consolidation of Canning Vale and the C.W. Campbell prisons into Hakea Prison, or \$80 million for construction of the new 750-bed Acacia Prison.

<sup>4</sup> A premise for the argument that follows is that the Department of Justice would have developed a projection of prisoner numbers and profiles and a program for re-development, construction or closure of prisons that justified the continuation of a minimum-security prison of the Karnet type. The Department is currently addressing the likely impact of a reduction of the prison populations in the publicly managed part of the total WA prison system. Given its place in the food chain and its importance as a minimum-security prison, it is highly unlikely that Karnet would be in the forefront of plans to reduce the prisoner population radically, let alone to close it. In its formal response to the draft Report, the Department has confirmed that Karnet prison remains an integral part of its rehabilitation strategy.

<sup>5</sup> When a comparable exercise is done in relation to Pardelup Prison Farm, this too may fall within this category.

<sup>6</sup> These programs run for four months and require attendance for two days a week. The intensive programs run for nine months at four days a week.

<sup>7</sup> Like many other WA prisons, Karnet has a significant number of prisoners who have gone past their earliest release date because of the fact that they have been held back from doing the required pre-release programs.

## KARNET: A MODEST PROFILE MASKS A GOOD PERFORMANCE

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It follows that the most cost-effective and correctionally efficient profile for Karnet would arguably involve accommodating not fewer but more prisoners – perhaps as many as 240 rather than the current 190. With this kind of increase, the farm would have sufficient manpower to continue to function well, whilst focus upon more traditional correctional activities leading to resettlement, including Section 94 programs, would be sharpened.

This observation is made in full awareness of the fact that the prison population in the public sector prisons can be expected to decrease during 2001/2002, as the privately managed Acacia Prison takes up its full complement of 750 prisoners. In addition, this trend is likely to continue during 2002/2003, as the Government's announced strategy of reducing the rate of imprisonment starts to bite. However, minimum-security beds are still in under-supply across the system as a whole; and the reduction in the public prison population is likely to impact most upon maximum and medium security prisons. Correctional strategy should be putting more emphasis on the role of re-settlement prisons, such as Karnet.

If accommodation were increased, it would not simply be a question of adding one unit. The existing Unit 1 is sub-standard and requires closure as soon as practicable. Thus, 60 replacement beds would be required as well as about 60 new ones – a total of 120. Two accommodation blocks, or one block plus more self-care units, would need to be built. This would not be a huge expense, remembering that internal security standards between rooms would basically be at domestic housing levels. In addition, Unit 1 could be re-furbished into much-needed program space<sup>8</sup>.

It is not the business of this Office to try to estimate development costs. But it would be surprising if these outlays, plus the two or three other capital investments urgently needed on the site<sup>9</sup>, would cost a great deal more than at the very most two years' contribution by Karnet to the cost of running the WA prison system.

### HEAD OFFICE RIGIDITY AND THE BENEFITS OF A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Whether and when Karnet is re-developed, its place and performance within the total prison system is significant for another reason. The private prison in this State, Acacia Prison, is managed according to the terms of a contract. Department of Justice personnel monitor contract compliance, and the Director-General's Rules set the broad standards within which the contractor must operate. Ever since the possibility of privatisation was first mooted – about five years ago – it has been contemplated that the public sector managed prisons would eventually move to a parallel model of management, to be known as 'service level agreements'. The Smith Report into the Casuarina Riot of Christmas Day 1998 had also recommended this (see Recommendation 9.2.5.1.). The hope and expectation was that both financial and general management authority would be substantially devolved to the local superintendent and his management team, subject to Director-General's Rules and to monitoring either on-site or through service review teams.

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<sup>8</sup> In its formal response to the draft Report, the Department affirmed its commitment in general terms to these suggested developments, other than that of increasing the total population.

<sup>9</sup> These include improving the effluent system and the water supply, bringing the oval up to a useable standard, investing in some better farm machinery and upgrading aspects of the farming operations. The existing lease has only two years to run, however, and it is essential that the Department commit itself to the place of Karnet in the total prison system by negotiating a continuation.

Unfortunately, this has not come about. Several factors underlie this, including difficulties in bedding down the purchaser/provider split within the Department<sup>10</sup> and the more or less constant issue of general budgetary constraints that seem to make it never a good time at which to start innovative processes<sup>11</sup>. More generally, commitment to the notion of devolving authority and decision-making powers seems to have diminished at the higher echelons of a bureaucracy that is, by any measure, rigid and over-centralised. At every Western Australian prison, including Karnet, the power of local management to make significant decisions has been eroded in the last decade, and this in turn has deleterious effects upon relationships between superintendents and their management groups, management groups and officers, and officers and prisoners. Over-centralised management is bad for the core business of corrections, which is essentially a human service best delivered taking account of local factors.

In its formal response to the draft Report, the Department challenged the view that there is insufficient delegation of decision-making. It was stated: 'The fact is that superintendents have substantial delegated legal and financial authority as is appropriate to their positions'.

As to the related issue of alienation of local prison staff and management from Head Office – discussed also in the 2001 Annual Report of this Office – the formal response asserted that 'very little tangible evidence has been provided, apart from some fairly subjective reporting. At a working level the relationship between Prisons Division management and prisons is seen to be generally constructive, with frequent engagement of superintendents by senior management and a positive willingness by superintendents to contribute to broader management issues.'

It is the invariable practice of the Inspectorate when conducting an inspection to distribute questionnaires to staff as formal surveys, to hold informal discussions and to discuss issues with prison management. The surveys are collated and analysed; contemporaneous notes are made of the discussions. The composite effect of these arrangements goes well beyond 'subjective reporting'. Standard techniques for triangulating information determine the credence to which such testimony is prima facie entitled. In the case of Karnet, the credibility level was high.

The same story, with varying degrees of intensity, is heard wherever we go. As stated in the 2001 Annual Report, the Office is keenly aware that almost all outlying agencies in virtually any public or private sector enterprise feels some resentment about centralised control and direction. Nevertheless, allowing for this factor, in the Department of Justice the degree of alienation does seem to go well beyond the predictable range. For its part, Head Office appears to be in a state of 'denial' about this; and whilst this is so there is unlikely to be any improvement.

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<sup>10</sup> It was intended that the Executive Director Offender Management would be the purchaser of prison services and the General Manager Prison Services the provider. But neither internal budgetary arrangements nor informal power allocations have accorded with this notional split.

<sup>11</sup> Actually, the very best time at which to devolve financial authority is during financial stringency. Cost control can be implemented in more realistic ways down the line than by way of abstract edicts emanating from Head Office that produce differential effects and anomalies.

It was not my intention, as Inspector, to make this a prominent aspect of my Overview. In doing so, I risk possibly diverting attention from the achievements and challenges of Karnet prison itself. However, the Department reacted so strongly to this minor aspect of the Report that further explication and explanation appears to be desirable.

The Department has to come to grips with the fact that, where a perception is widely held, this in itself becomes a factor that has to be addressed in managing prisons effectively. It is simply not to the point to go on insisting that those who hold that perception are wrong or misguided or just do not understand.

Karnet would be an ideal prison at which to begin reversing this process of marginalisation and excessive centralisation. This process could commence by piloting service level agreements on site. Karnet's local needs are specialised and of a kind that Head Office standard procedures sometimes find difficult to accommodate. Yet its outlays within the overall system are quite modest, so that the dangers of a substantial financial blow-out are minimal. Karnet would be a low-risk, high potential return location for creating and implementing the Department's first service level agreement.

The creation of such an agreement would enable many decisions to be made at the local level more rapidly and appropriately. Four examples spring to mind. First, there was the situation where the main cutting blade in the abattoir broke and had to be replaced. The cost was about \$12,000. The purchasing system of Head Office was not adapted to this kind of one-off request, and even though local management knew exactly where and at what price to secure a blade there was a delay of several days before authorisation was granted. During this time, that aspect of the abattoir production line was in abeyance, causing valuable production loss.

Next, there was the situation with the fire fighting equipment. Karnet, in common with all farming properties in the area, is required to have fire-fighting equipment not only to deal with its own bush fires but also to participate in bush fire control in the surrounding area. At the time of our Inspection, the Karnet vehicle was very old, to the point where spare parts were virtually unobtainable and had to be manufactured in the Karnet workshop. Recently, a major mechanical failure had put the fire engine out of operation for several months. During this time, opportunities arose to purchase newer vehicles, one for as little as \$30,000. The existing one would not have been wasted as, once repaired, it could have been used as a general farm truck - its life expectancy thus being increased markedly by the removal of the very heavy water tank and pumping equipment from the tray. Head Office would not agree with this long-term investment proposal.

A third example relates to visiting arrangements. At Karnet, for many years these have worked rather informally, and worked well. If visitors turned up, they were permitted to visit their friend or relative. The paperwork was manageable, the system welcoming - appropriate to a resettlement prison. However, in the name of standardisation, Head Office has changed this to a system of booked visits only. Local management estimate that this requires half the time of one staff member - a nett decrease in productivity for no good reason. Working under local self-government, with a service level agreement that focuses on outputs and outcomes rather than processes, this rule would never have been introduced.



Finally, there is the example of the oval, referred to in detail in the main Report. A Head Office decision as to TAFE links, made without adequate reference to the specific needs of Karnet, has unnecessarily delayed completion of a crucial component of prisoner conditions.

#### PROGRAMS, PAROLE BOARD REQUIREMENTS AND RELEASE

In the Riverbank Report, reference was made to the lack of fit between program availability within the Department, Parole Board requirements and prisoner needs. As of July 2001, 141 prisoners in the Western Australian system have already passed their earliest eligibility date (EED). This is enough to fill up a small prison. Most of them have had their cases rejected or deferred by the Parole Board, because of the fact that they have not taken the programs considered as prerequisites to parole<sup>12</sup>. Yet this is often for reasons beyond their own control. This is a system-wide problem. Naturally, Karnet, being a programs prison, has its share of prisoners that fall into this category – about 12 at the July count. The main body of this Report covers several of these cases in detail. I would add only one: that of a current Karnet prisoner, past his EED, who had been three weeks short of completing his prerequisite Violent Offenders Treatment Program at Hakea when he tested positive to marijuana use. He was charged immediately with a disciplinary offence, and then placed under a punishment regime, so that his program participation was terminated.

From his point of view, his EED was thus indefinitely deferred, until such time as another place in another program became available (it had not done so at the time of the Inspection). From the Department's point of view, it meant that a scarce resource – program time – had been wasted, with the consequence that an expensive prison place would thereafter be occupied unnecessarily for an indeterminate period. From a strategic point of view, it was evident that the predominance of the custodial culture – requiring that prisoners be disciplined immediately – over rehabilitative objectives went against the public interest.

Now that magistrates have taken over the disciplinary hearings in some prisons<sup>13</sup>, a practice is developing of deferring cases so that a significant event can take place before a punishment is imposed – for example, baby visits to mothers at Bandyup. In suitable cases, prison superintendents should follow a similar approach. It is in the public interest that program participation should not just be thrown away, as in the case cited.

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<sup>12</sup> A small number have taken the programs but have not completed them successfully. It should be emphasised that the completion of such programs is not a legal prerequisite, and the Chairman of the Parole Board has assured the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services that the Board does not treat it as such. Whilst accepting this assurance unreservedly, it should nevertheless be said that the perception amongst prisoners, officers, program staff and management is that non-completion constitutes a significant hurdle.

<sup>13</sup> Bandyup, Casuarina and Hakea.

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### SUMMARY

Karnet has ‘made do’ admirably. It has been doing a good job. This has been under-appreciated in Head Office<sup>14</sup>. Barriers have, deliberately or unwittingly, been placed in its way. Its natural place, in strategic and management terms, is within the Regional Prisons directorate rather than that of Metropolitan Prisons. Possibly, on account of its similarity in many respects with some other regional prisons, its position and achievements may have been better understood there and organisational support have been stronger<sup>15</sup>.

However, the prison needs capital investment, re-furbishment and re-development. The requisite changes could be achieved with capital injections that are quite minimal, in terms of overall Departmental outlays. The Department’s response to this suggestion is simply to invoke the fact that Forward Estimates lock in overall budgets and one prison can only be favoured at the expense of others. That is true, as far as it goes. But the Department needs to put its business case more cogently to Treasury. The adoption of devolutionary processes that ultimately would be cost-effective, even though involving some initial additional expenditure, should be explored as part of that business case. There does seem to have been some passivity in this regard – too much thinking within a square rather than laterally.

Potentially, Karnet could become Western Australia’s model resettlement prison, one that gives ground for optimism about correctional practice and administration. It is up to the Department of Justice to seize this opportunity.

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<sup>14</sup> The Department of Justice has recently adopted a routine of auditing services at a prison a short time (two or three months) before the announced Inspections conducted by this Office. Karnet was the subject of a rather negative Service Review Audit by the Department shortly before our own Inspection. One can only surmise that the audit team was on this occasion looking for the wrong thing – precise conformity with Head Office edicts and expectations.

<sup>15</sup> A comparable argument can be made with regard to Wooroloo Prison. However, an even more cogent possibility may be to divide the prison estate into resettlement prisons and secure prisons – looking to function rather than location as the denominator.

# Chapter 1

## KARNET PRISON FARM IN CONTEXT

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### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Karnet Prison is located approximately 80 kilometres south of Perth in a pleasant rural farming environment on 400 hectares of hilly land in the Keysbrook State Forest. It is one of two male minimum-security facilities in the metropolitan area, and is the major supplier of fresh meat and produce for Western Australia's adult and juvenile custodial centres.
- 1.2 On Sunday 29 April 2001, the Inspector of Custodial Services commenced an announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm. The Inspection was carried out over a period of five days, and covered all facets of the prison's activities. The composition of the Inspection Team is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The Inspection of the prison was based upon a multi-faceted approach, incorporating structured questionnaires to prisoners and staff, interviews with prisoners, staff and other key stakeholders, reviews of available literature and data and personal observation. Three weeks before the Inspection, in accordance with the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services' (the Office) standard practice, the Department of Justice (the Department) was requested to provide specific documentation and information considered relevant to the successful Inspection of the prison. A formal briefing session detailing strategic issues relating to Karnet was also provided.
- 1.4 The participation by prison staff in the Inspection process was an important feature. The response rate to the survey questionnaire was not particularly high (about 30%) but this was on a par with other prisons. Apart from the usual reasons why people choose not to respond to questionnaires, staff rosters and availability limit the number who can access the forms within the limited time-frame. Apart from this, we were told that staff still felt, on the basis of the Department's own recent Internal Service Review, that a group of outsiders, such as the Inspection Team, might be out to 'get' them – an unflattering comment on their perception of the Department's own processes but one which to some extent spilled over to our own Inspection.
- 1.5 However, during the Inspection itself, the staff were courteous and very approachable. We extended an invitation to the staff to meet with us either individually or in groups. On the penultimate day of the Inspection we met with a diverse group of 26 – amounting to approximately 80 per cent of the staff at the prison at the time. This indicates that, by the end of the Inspection period and as its purpose became apparent, staff interest in contributing to the Inspection process was high.

### PRISON INFRASTRUCTURE

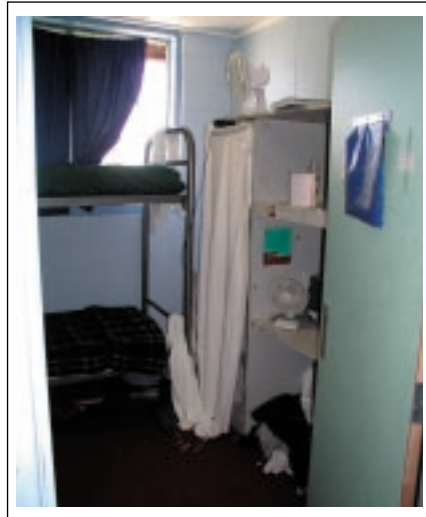
- 1.6 The appearance of the prison is that of a small village in a very pleasant rural setting. There is a disparate collection of offices, dormitory-style accommodation, workshops and farm buildings. The external boundaries of the prison are delineated by a standard farm fence, which makes it difficult to distinguish it from other farms in the vicinity. Karnet had been commissioned as a prison in 1963, on a site that was originally developed for

## KARNET PRISON FARM IN CONTEXT

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the rehabilitation of alcoholics. The majority of the buildings date from that era and are now approaching the end of their life span. Other buildings have been progressively added, without any sense of formal strategic planning or their having been 'built for purpose'. There are offices, three accommodation units (including the new self-care units), a health centre, chapel, abattoir, dairy, battery chicken shed, farm workshops and so on. Many of these buildings have been somewhat refurbished, to facilitate different functions from those for which they were originally planned.

- 1.7 The prisoners are housed in three accommodation sectors under a hierarchical system. The older, dilapidated Units 1 and 2 generally house the new receivals, and as prisoners progress through the system they move to the modern self-care accommodation of Unit 3.



*Unit cell — a typical accommodation for newly received prisoners.*

- 1.8 Unit 1 is a large building constructed of grey cement blocks, the bleakness of which is redeemed somewhat by attractive flowerbeds set against the external walls. The central foyer area has a pool table, three telephone booths and an enclosed office, which serves as the Unit central control area. Attached to Unit 1 is the Prison dining room, which seats approximately 120 prisoners. There is a large kitchen area, which during the Inspection was clean and well kept. However, the accommodation area was dirty and prisoners advised that the cells were cold, particularly at night or during the winter. Supposedly, \$1.8m has been allocated to construct a new wing to replace Unit 1<sup>16</sup>. Given the age of the building and its dilapidated state, this expenditure should be a priority. It was proposed that the Unit would then be gutted and fitted out for programs and educational purposes. Unit 2 is of a similar age and layout, though it is not quite as dilapidated as Unit 1.

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<sup>16</sup> Local management tends to be sceptical as to whether this will actually happen. They claim that funds earmarked for Karnet in the past have been clawed back for such expenditures as the construction of a new and highly secure minimum-security wing at Greenough Prison and for the fencing in of the six main accommodation Units at Casuarina following the 1998 riot.

## KARNET PRISON FARM IN CONTEXT

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- 1.9 The new self care complex, Unit 3, surrounds a grassed courtyard. Prisoners progress to this Unit is based on their good conduct and the length of sentence they have remaining. They are responsible for their own cooking and share domestic duties.
- 1.10 The Prison has 18 houses on site for officer accommodation, only half of which are occupied. If suitably modified, these could be used for prisoner services, such as programs, but so far, this has not been done. The office administration block is old and cramped. While it is adequate for current usage, it will need to be replaced or refurbished in the next few years. Both the Chapel (multi-denominational) and the Indigenous (Gnoonies) meeting place are new premises. Each was constructed using prison labour, thus creating an opportunity for some prisoners to gain accredited experience in the building trade.
- 1.11 The farm and production buildings include mechanical workshops, dairy, abattoir, battery hen shed and various farming support buildings. The abattoir and the dairy are key production areas for the farm; they are well maintained and viable despite their age. The prison is not on the mains water supply scheme, and the dam on the farm supplies all of the water for the prison and farm. There have been difficulties in the past, with water stocks running dangerously low. However, the dam has recently been upgraded, and it is anticipated that it should adequately cope with the current demand<sup>17</sup>. There have also been problems with the effluent dispersal system; this needs substantial upgrading to comply with environmental health requirements.



*The dam.*

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<sup>17</sup> At the time of writing, the Department announced that there will nevertheless be difficulties in the forthcoming summer of 2001/2002.

### KARNET AS A FARMING ENTERPRISE

- 1.12 The WA prison system as a whole is very much dependent on supplies produced at Karnet. Earlier observations made by the Inspector and by Inspections Officers had raised some concern that the focus of the prison might possibly be too much on the farming side and not enough on the correctional and resettlement side of its activities. Trying to evaluate this fairly would inevitably be a key aspect of the Inspection. The broad conclusion we reached was *that farming activities were carried out in a way that promotes essential work and life skills and generally allows the opportunity for program involvement*. In other words, Karnet was being managed in such a way that these activities were mutually reinforcing. That is an important conclusion.
- 1.13 Appendix 2 of this Report contains a comprehensive review of the agricultural activities of the farm. This review was undertaken by experts from the Department of Agriculture. The farm operations are run effectively and, considering the diversity of enterprises and the nature of the site, do surprisingly well at achieving best practice for those industries. The review identifies in detail potential improvements to overall efficiency and opportunities for productive expansion of some enterprises. Unfortunately, it emerged from the Inspection that the Superintendent and the Farm Manager do not possess the resources or decision-making capacity that a normal commercial enterprise would take for granted.
- 1.14 In this context, a significant issue was an anomaly in the costing/pricing mechanism used to account for abattoir inputs and outputs (value of production). Wholesale prices set in 1988 are the reference point for all produce shipped *from* the abattoir, yet at least 75 per cent of cattle and all of the other stock (lambs, pigs) are priced at current (2001) market rates. Even livestock transferred internally<sup>18</sup> are valued for input purposes at the current market price. It is likely that the true value of abattoir production (wholesale prices) is above \$3.0 million and the notional 'profit' of the enterprise (i.e., farming costs as against savings in external food purchases) runs at around \$2.0 million. Thus, the overall value of the farm to the Department of Justice – abattoir, dairy, eggs, vegetables – is of the order of \$4 million or more per annum and the 'profit' about \$2.5 million<sup>19</sup>. This should be a key observation when considering the question of capital investment priorities and claims.
- 1.15 Overall, the farming activities are constructive and efficient, and they seem to foster good staff/prisoner interaction and opportunities for skilling and self-esteem, and they are melded reasonably well with the correctional needs of a resettlement prison.

<sup>18</sup> Some cattle are bred and fattened at Pardelup Prison Farm and/or agisted at Wooroloo Prison Farm before being sent to Karnet for slaughter.

<sup>19</sup> In its response to the draft of this Report dated 29 October 2001, the Department of Justice agreed that an anomaly does exist and that costings need to reflect current values. It stated that action will be taken.

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THE PRISONERS

1.16 The Prison has a design capacity of 172, and at the time of our Inspection had a population of 188. Predominantly, these were non-Aboriginal Australians. However, 21 (11 per cent) were Aboriginal prisoners<sup>20</sup>, and the remainder were Asian, European or Middle Eastern in origin. Karnet has traditionally been a short-stay prison and, although this is changing, the average stay for the current population is approximately 4.7 months. There are more longer-term prisoners, however, with several current prisoners having spent 3.5 years there at Karnet. The average age is 37, with approximately 60 per cent being in the 20-40 year age range. The majority of prisoners (70 per cent) come from the metropolitan area and the local region.

1.17 At the time of the Inspection, the prisoner population had the following offence profile:

• Sexual offences against children	38
• Other sexual offences	19
• Drug offences	30
• (Non sex-related) Offences against the person	47
• Property offences	38
• Motor vehicle offences	14
• Other offences	2

1.18 Karnet is sometimes compared to Wooroloo Prison, because of the prisons shared role as farms and as resettlement prisons. However, the Department made a commitment to the Wooroloo community that sex offenders would never be placed there. Accordingly, most such prisoners of that security rating are held at Karnet. This population profile creates additional management pressures and responsibilities to ensure that the sex offender sub-population<sup>21</sup> is appropriately managed for their own and community safety. The team heard some anecdotes of bullying, but they were fairly non-specific. On balance, this aspect of the prison regime seems to be reasonably satisfactory.

1.19 Each year about 300 prisoners are released from Karnet into the community. The prison must, accordingly, assist them to maximise their potential to reintegrate successfully into the community – it is a ‘resettlement’ prison. The Inspection Team was impressed by what was apparently positive interplay between work, programs and education. Prisoners seem for the most part to be productively occupied; they have the chance to develop employment and life-skills, as well as improved self-esteem.

<sup>20</sup> It is not possible to confidently explain this. What is certain is that Aboriginals are under-represented in a prison that is one of the best in the State from the point of view of learning life and employment skills.

<sup>21</sup> Note that it was about 32 per cent at the time of our Inspection. In previous years, it has been as high as 50 per cent.

## KARNET PRISON FARM IN CONTEXT

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- 1.20 In this regard, the recidivism figures (26 per cent) quoted by the Department in relation to prisoners exiting the system via Karnet are encouraging when compared to the Department's overall recidivism rate of 51 per cent. They require further analysis to determine whether they have been sustained over a statistically significant period, whether the sample is comparable to that for the other exit prisons, and what other factors impact upon this result. Of course, Karnet cannot claim exclusive ownership of these results, inasmuch as its input comes at the back end of the sentence. The Department should conduct a properly structured piece of research in relation to this issue.

### THE STAFF

- 1.21 On the date of the Inspection, the Prison had 71 staff, comprising: seven management and one administrative personnel, 41 uniformed officers, 22 industrial officers, and a farm manager. There were only four female officers and no Indigenous officers amongst the disciplinary staff of Karnet<sup>22</sup>. This staff profile can impact negatively upon the delivery of some services, such as the searching of women visitors and the willingness of Indigenous prisoners to engage in particular activities.
- 1.22 Just as prisoners described life at Karnet as being relaxed and lacking in tension, so too did many staff. They felt comfortable in the minimum-security environment and were confident that they were doing the best job they could, given the constraints within which they worked.
- 1.23 However, training and development was an issue of concern for staff. In the past, training has mostly concentrated on security factors such as restraints and use of chemical agents, which are rarely needed in a minimum-security institution. There is a recognisable tendency in many Western Australian prisons for this aspect of staff training to become more prominent in recent years. In the view of staff, and also the Inspector, far more attention should be given to training in report writing and case management issues: matters in which all staff are to varying degrees involved (see paragraph 3.1 below).
- 1.24 Industrial officers play a very significant role at Karnet – more so, probably, than at any other prison in the State. They are in daily contact with the majority of prisoners, and this has a bearing on the staff-prisoner interactions generally and the prison culture as a whole. The Inspection team noted that there was positive interaction between industrial staff and prisoners. The staff and the prisoners were working in a relaxed collegial manner, the prisoners seemed eager to learn, and the staff provided their input in a manner appropriate to dealing with adult employees.

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<sup>22</sup> The Department of Justice has informed the Inspector that as a result of anticipated prison population reductions in public prisons, staff recruitment is expected to cease for 12 months. This will further decrease the opportunities to address this imbalance.



### PRISON SECURITY

- 1.25 The aim of a minimum-security prison should be to allow prisoners to live in an environment that replicates life outside prison as closely as possible. The outer perimeter of Karnet has no security fencing and it is surrounded by large areas of bush. This is an obvious but unavoidable security risk. Security has to be based, therefore, on interaction with prisoners rather than physical barriers – i.e., dynamic rather than static security.
- 1.26 There have apparently been instances of prisoners going outside the perimeter fence to engage in sexual activities, drug taking and alcohol use, as well as collecting contraband goods. The open environment is a major temptation; there were eleven escapes for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. In a well-publicised incident occurring in June 2001, after the completion of the Inspection, three long-term serious offenders escaped from Karnet. The Minister responded to this incident by ordering the Department to review the classification system. Consequently, a number of longer-term prisoners have been transferred out of Karnet to higher security prisons.

### RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

- 1.27 As a rural prison, Karnet must be prepared to act in a number of emergencies to fulfil duty of care obligations to prisoners, employees and the local community. One example of this is the ability to contribute to the fighting of bush fires in the local area. However, there are significant problems as the prison's fire fighting truck is over 30 years old and dangerous to use. There are also ongoing problems with brakes and continuing mechanical failures. Replacement parts are not available, and have to be scavenged from wreckers and rubbish tips or engineered within the workshop.
- 1.28 The Department must take responsibility for this deficit in its emergency response capacity. The prison has an active management strategy which involves training selected staff and prisoners each September before the commencement of the bush fire season in an accredited bush fire-fighting program. However, if appropriate equipment is not available, staff, prisoners and the local community may be placed in hazardous situations.
- 1.29 The prison's capacity to respond to medical emergencies is also limited because of its isolation and, outside normal working hours, by the shortage of staff. This situation is exacerbated by the isolation of the prison from mainstream services. Armadale Hospital is 40 kilometres away and has only limited services and restricted hours of access, while Fremantle, which has a comprehensive range of services and 24 hours accessibility, is 70 kilometres away. The services available on site are only appropriate for minor injuries, and there is only one ambulance located close by.

### MARKING TIME

- 1.30 Karnet possesses many positive features. Its attractive natural setting, the lack of tension, the positive relationship between staff and prisoners and the significant contribution provided by meaningful work, all combine to make Karnet a place where many prisoners can begin to adjust their thinking to how they will manage their lives upon release. The prison has managed to achieve, despite significant imposed limitations, something unusual in the Department of Justice's prison hierarchy - a good balance between the Department's four cornerstones of Custody and Containment, Care and Well Being, Reparation, and Rehabilitation and Reintegration.
- 1.31 However, despite these positive features, there are some aspects that require urgent attention, particularly in relationship to the strategic planning for Karnet's future. The most important is securing the lease on the property, which is due to expire within two years<sup>23</sup>. It is not easy to understand why this has apparently been allowed to drift. An earlier Director-General of the Department had formed the view that all prison farms should be shut down, but this view is so egregiously wrong that it is certainly to be hoped that the delay is not a hangover from that period. Until the lease is renewed, the infrastructure issues that need urgent attention and action - particularly effluent management, obtaining a secure water supply, and improvements, both to the accommodation Units and the centres for programs and education - will almost inevitably be left somewhat up in the air<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> The owner of the land is the Department of Conservation and Land Management. However, even leases from other Government Departments must be properly negotiated and implemented. In the Department of Justice response to the draft of this Report it was stated that the expiry date of the lease was 31 August 2001, only four months away at the date of Inspection.

<sup>24</sup> The Department advised the Inspector in its response to the draft of this Report that effluent management will not be improved until the 2002-2003 financial year as a part of its strategic infrastructure backlog program.

## Chapter 2

### LIFE FOR PRISONERS AT KARNET

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- 2.1 As Karnet's principal role is as a pre-release or resettlement prison, life for prisoners there usually takes on a greater sense of urgency as release becomes imminent. Issues such as program participation, gaining work skills and developing links into the community are crucial. If the prison can successfully meet these needs, prisoners' chances of successful reintegration into the community will be improved. In responding to the written questionnaires, prisoners identified their capacity to rebuild their lives and make progress towards returning to the community as being some of the better things about being at Karnet. For some prisoners, particularly those who have spent a long period in a secure prison, the transition to the relaxed atmosphere of an open prison can be difficult to manage, and they require assistance to do so. Prison is rarely a place where a person can meet their social, personal and work needs. However, Karnet does attempt to put some balance into these often-competing needs for prisoners.

### LIFE IN THE UNITS

- 2.2 At the completion of the day, prisoners tend to gravitate back to the accommodation units. Some go off to football or other active pursuits, chat with friends or just move into their cell to read or engage in other passive activities. The Units, particularly 1 and 2, can become noisy at this time, with almost everyone having their own stereo-systems that are inevitably playing different music from those of their neighbours. Some of the more mature prisoners in Units 1 and 2 find the noise irritating, and this is clearly a source of minor tension. Unit 2 holds a significant number of sex offenders, and the average age of the residents is usually higher than in Unit 1. The age difference as well as the offence category can serve to exacerbate tension.
- 2.3 Unit 3 (self care) accommodates prisoners (including some sex offenders) who have demonstrated the capacity to cope and their ability to take responsibility. They have often gone to great lengths to personalise their cells and can demonstrate an amazing capacity to fit a significant number of essential items into a very small area. Some of the longer-term prisoners very much resent the presence of the short-term prisoners passing through the prison. They seem to have a better relationship with specific officers than they do with the short-term prisoners who, they say, 'trash the place' and do not respect it. They view Karnet as their home, and do not appreciate those who will disturb the equilibrium. These sorts of observation are true for some prisoners in most prisons across the State.

### PEER SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS

- 2.4 The Peer Support Group features prominently in the lives of prisoners, and the group is apparently active and industrious. It usually meets with the Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Management (ASPM) and the other senior managers of the prison on a monthly basis, though at the time of the Inspection it had not met for over six weeks. One of the reasons given for this was the workload caused by the imminence of the Inspection, but for such a key function in staff-prisoner relations that seems to be an inadequate excuse.

- 2.5 At the time of the Inspection, there were nine prisoners in the Peer Support Group. It was difficult to determine how representative they were of their peers. The Peer Support Officer coordinates the Group. When a vacancy occurs, the Peer Support Officer posts notices around the Prison asking for applications or nominations. The existing peer support team then votes, and the name of the favoured candidate is submitted to the ASPM. He has the power of veto over the selection, as well as the right to remove prisoners from the team.
- 2.6 Karnet has not conducted a Peer Support training course, but many of its prisoners have attended courses previously at Hakea or Casuarina Prisons. Negotiations are now supposedly under way to run a shortened version of the training course at Karnet. The object will be to provide the course for up to 20 long-term prisoners from which group the future Peer Support Group members will be drawn.
- 2.7 It seems that senior management and custodial officers rely on this group to manage issues between prisoners, such as bullying and racism. Members stated that they feel under pressure in this regard, and believed that the prison's administration should in fact deal more directly with these problems<sup>25</sup>. In other words, there was over-reliance on a group that, ultimately, does not possess sufficient authority to settle the most difficult of these problems and correspondingly a degree of opting out by management. It is difficult to know whether this comment is justified, but it is one that the Inspection team has encountered at other prisons, including Riverbank and Bandyup. This would seem to suggest that the role of these groups needs some re-thinking across the prison system<sup>26</sup>. On the one hand, prisoner self-management is to be welcomed; on the other, senior personnel must accept the responsibility for management matters.

## SAFETY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

- 2.8 Personal safety for staff and prisoners is a key factor in determining how well a prison is operating. If prisoners do not feel safe, they will often resort to such coping strategies as pre-emptive or retaliatory measures, excessive use of drugs, self-harm and in some instances escape. One death occurred at Karnet in the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001; to date there has been no coronial inquest and so the cause of death has not been formally determined. The prison's Incident Reports seem to show a low level of self-harm. As for bullying and intimidation, anecdotally and from questionnaire responses it seemed clear that there is some, mostly towards sex offenders, but that it is neither systemic nor widespread. By and large, prisoners felt reasonably safe and secure.

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<sup>25</sup> It should also be noted that some prisoners specifically stated that they felt comfortable in approaching staff about incidents of bullying and were generally satisfied with the responses they received and the investigations that followed. It is a complex picture, but one that still raises the questions identified in the text.

<sup>26</sup> The Department of Justice has advised that independent consultants have been engaged to conduct a prison-wide review of the Forensic Case Management Team, which includes the Peer Support Group.

- 2.9 Those prisoners who are identified as being at risk of self-harm are referred to the prison's Prisoner At-Risk Management Group (PRAG). The PRAG will assess the prisoner's situation and develop an appropriate management strategy. This strategy is articulated in the prisoner's At Risk Management System (ARMS) file. The Forensic Case Management Team (FCMT) officer provides psychological counselling and support for prisoners experiencing distress or trauma.
- 2.10 The FCMT officer visits Karnet one day per week. This is quite inadequate for the demands on the service<sup>27</sup>. The conditions of care are also inadequate. There is no dedicated office, and the officer often has to use the two-bed ward in the medical centre for interviews – an inappropriate way in which to interview vulnerable prisoners. The officer also 'doubles' as the mental health nurse to interview prisoners who may have to be referred to the visiting psychiatrist. This is time-consuming and sometimes quite unproductive. The visiting patterns of rostered psychiatrists are, apparently, unreliable, and scheduled visits often have to be cancelled. This is indicative of the broader factor of inadequate mental health services across the prison system as a whole.
- 2.11 At the time of our Inspection, fifteen prisoners were listed for FCMT appointments. This group consisted of those who are currently on the PRAG, new receptions into Karnet, and new referrals from staff. The prisoners who are on PRAG take priority, and then the officer must evaluate the remaining names to prioritise them. Often some prisoners on the list may not be seen during that particular week and may even not be seen the following visit should the new list contain higher priority cases. Part of this problem is caused by the delay in receiving listed prisoners from the workshops after they have been called. This issue could readily be resolved by better liaison between the respective parties.
- 2.12 The Inspection Team examined the ARMS files of five prisoners and their corresponding unit files. This revealed that prisoners who are assessed as low risk of self-harm continue to be managed successfully at Karnet. More complicated cases require the assistance of other parts of the system. For example, one prisoner who had a psychiatric illness and whose mental condition fluctuated from time to time (relating to non-compliance with medication) had to be transferred back to the Casuarina infirmary for stabilization purposes, but was then able to be returned to Karnet. Generally, entries in the files appeared to be in accordance with the ARMS manual. However, prison officers' daily entries relating to observations of at-risk prisoners were short, basic, and uninformative about the prisoners' states of mind. Brief notations, such as 'seen at muster', gave no confidence that there had actually been any form of interaction between the officer and the prisoner<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> The Department agreed that the current arrangements for FCMT are inadequate in its response to the draft of this Report.

<sup>28</sup> The Department of Justice response to the draft of this Report stated that some of these records had been initiated at prisons other than Karnet, with the file moving with the prisoner upon transfer. This avoided the point made about the adequacy of information on the record and raises a further concern as staff at Karnet may not be able to interpret the vague comments made by staff from other prisons.

- 2.13 Generally, the FCMT appears to err on the side of caution by retaining some names on file for many months. There is a Catch-22 here. If prisoners' names remain on the list and the FCMT officer thus has too large a caseload, she cannot spend enough time with each prisoner to obtain the information that would enable her to remove him from the list. Yet, if their names are not removed, the workload continues to escalate and those who may require intervention may not receive it.
- 2.14 With regard to sex offenders, their particular vulnerability to bullying, even in a relatively relaxed prison environment, is to some extent a function of whether there is a sufficient critical mass of such prisoners. Observational, if not scientific, evidence suggests that where 50 per cent or so of a prison's population consists of sex offenders, the prevailing culture from both staff and prisoners is reasonably tolerant and benign. This proportion was approximately met at Karnet for several years, but had slipped at the time of the Inspection to about 32 per cent. Our observation that, despite this, bullying was at a low level probably reflects the accommodation arrangements whereby the majority of such offenders live in Unit 2, plus the fact that the work environment is a positive one with the result that interactions occur also in a more positive context. Even so, some sex offenders do feel intimidated; they said that they cope with this by congregating in numbers when travelling to dinner or other destinations. If the ratio of sex offenders within the total population continues to decline, their management may well require additional vigilance and active management.

## ACCESS TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- 2.15 The illicit use of alcohol and drugs is a major problem in most prison systems. The open environment of Karnet means that it is virtually impossible to fully restrict the introduction of drugs and/or alcohol into the prison. The local management has introduced what is, in effect, a 'containment policy'. This allows management and staff to judge each case of 'dirty urine' on its merits<sup>29</sup>. Loss of privileges within the minimum-security environment remains an available sanction. Whilst this Office in no way condones drug use in the general community or in prisons, this policy nevertheless seems realistic and sensible, and appropriate to the operation of a resettlement prison.
- 2.16 The feedback from prisoners and staff actually suggests that there is a relatively low level of illicit drug use at Karnet – a fact that, if true, lends some credence to the 'containment policy'. Low usage was attributed to the lack of tension at Karnet, the fact that most prisoners are close to release and thus unwilling to compromise their positions, and the presence of meaningful employment.

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<sup>29</sup> Department of Justice policy in relation to prisoners returning positive drug tests is contained in Director General's Rule 13(9.6). It states that a minimum security prisoner convicted of a drug or alcohol offence will have their security rating upgraded unless it is cannabis related. In that instance, a security upgrade will only occur in a second or subsequent offence. Within the construct of this policy, staff at Karnet use their discretion to appropriately manage individual cases of drug usage.

## HEALTH CARE

2.17 As at all prisons, the health of prisoners is a key issue. Many, or most, prisoners have previously led high-risk life-styles that have resulted in poor standards of mental, as well as physical, health. Others, such as elderly prisoners or those who have diagnosed medical ailments, will have specific health or medical needs. For these prisoners the standard and availability of health services will be of great importance. Our review of the Karnet health services <sup>30</sup> found:

- The Health service appears to be professionally led, with an appropriate focus on the care of prisoners. It is apparent that local practice is not necessarily aligned with policies and procedures. Where this is the case, the intent is to improve care for the prisoner and reflect local conditions.
- Some significant health policies have not been updated since 1995, including those relating to Hepatitis C, the procedure for medical transfer to Graylands Hospital, and through-care arrangements for prisoners about to be released to freedom.
- The service is run by experienced staff, and they are committed to providing a good health service.
- The reception and assessment process for prisoners entering Karnet is well organised and appeared comprehensive.
- Care is well organised, with reasonable wait times for clinics. Referrals for specialist services are arranged when appropriate, individual care plans are developed, and effective systems are in place for treatment, follow-up and recalls.
- Medical on-site coverage is standard for this type and size of prison, and nursing coverage was reasonable with extended hours appropriate to a remote locality. However, on-call after-hours nursing and medical coverage is minimal in practice and a cause for concern<sup>31</sup>.
- The health facility itself does not afford staff sufficient security or privacy.
- While the health facility is basic and clean, it was unlikely to meet the licensing requirements expected of a private health facility. Both on-site and on-call medical and nursing services are basic and in some instances incomplete. In particular, there are long waits for dental services, the visiting psychiatric services are ad-hoc, and there are long travel times for off-site services.
- The medication distribution system works well.

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 3 for full Report.

<sup>31</sup> In its response to this Report, the Department of Justice stated that it was not concerned about the level of after hours coverage because it considered it comparable with “small country health centres”. This is inappropriate as prisoners are in the custody and care of the Department of Justice, which creates a higher level of responsibility than if the prisoners were living freely in the community and could exercise personal choices.

- There is a well-organised system of health management including medical records.
- The Health service does not seem responsive to the cultural needs of prisoners, in particular Aboriginals<sup>32</sup>.
- Despite our relatively favourable assessment, there is no quality control system in place<sup>33</sup>.

2.18 For the majority of prisoners the provision of health services was not a matter for complaint. They commented that they thought the services were either ‘alright’ or ‘good’. Some referred to the caring attitude of the staff. The major issue for many was the delays in getting to see specialist services and, then having to travel long distances to do so. An example given by a number of prisoners was that of having to wait to see the dentist and then having to travel to a maximum-security prison (usually Hakea) for the appointment. For minimum-security prisoners this appears as an unnecessary regressive step.

2.19 A related concern was that the prisoner transport contractor, AIMS Corporation, had recently adopted a practice of handcuffing most prisoners for medical escorts, despite their minimum-security status. Also, there were concerns about the conditions of transport, particularly that some of the vehicles were very cramped and others claustrophobic. We received evidence that some prisoners preferred not to have the required treatment at all rather than travel in these conditions. These concerns are not specific to Karnet, and are dealt with comprehensively in the Report of the Inspection into Prisoner Transportation Services<sup>34</sup>.

## CATERING AND CANTEEN SERVICES

2.20 The prisoner questionnaire elicited mixed responses about food and catering. While some of the prisoners thought that generally food at Karnet was fresh, well prepared and served in sufficient quantities, others said it was below standard. Food is such an important issue at prisons that these kinds of conflicting views often occur. Our own observations were that the menus showed a good variety of meals, and fruit and vegetables were in good supply. The availability of special diets caused some concern, however, with two prisoners informing us that they were not available. A major issue in many prisons is that of special diets required for health reasons – e.g., low fat or low sugar. Department of Justice Policy Directive 15 provides for prison health personnel to order special dietary requirements for a medical condition as appropriate. These requests do not require subsequent approval by prison management. In contrast to at least one

<sup>32</sup> The Department of Justice acknowledged this shortfall across the prison service generally, and stated it has developed specific strategies to improve cultural appropriateness in health services in all prisons.

<sup>33</sup> In its original response to this Report, the Department claimed that this statement was factually incorrect. It stated that the Director of Nursing exercises quality control via regular (3 monthly) audits of prisoner medical records and medication distribution. However, when directly asked about audits of medical records at Karnet Prison, it was revealed that no audits had occurred at Karnet in the three months before the Inspection.

<sup>34</sup> Report Number 3, Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, November 2001.



other prison that we have recently inspected, we believe, based on the information received from the kitchen staff, that medical requests for special diets were being complied with. We also received direct testimony from a prisoner that at least one religious special diet (kosher food) is regularly supplied. Prison management, rather than health personnel deal with requests for diets not related to health issues.

- 2.21 Several prisoners reported that food and drink were allowed into cells. There is a formal rule that prohibits this, but it appears to be selectively enforced. Food, particularly fruit and canteen purchases, was in evidence in some units. It appears that two or three officers invoke the Local Rule as a means of asserting their custodial authority within the prison. The Rule should be reviewed and appropriately amended<sup>35</sup>.
- 2.22 The canteen provides supplementary food and other items for prisoners to purchase with their 'spends'. The area was clean and well lit, with ample shelf space for prisoners to view what was on sale. The cost of the various items compared favourably with shop prices in the community.
- 2.23 There is no liaison between the canteen and the prison's store. By purchasing only small quantities, the canteen has little scope for buying at discount. The store, however, purchases various items in bulk quantities and is able to access discounts. Prison management should explore this with a view to obtaining better prices for canteen items and passing the savings on to prisoners<sup>36</sup>.

## SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

- 2.24 Visits are one of the most important features in prison life. On the day we inspected the visits area, the weather was fine, and there were 64 prisoners receiving 170 visitors. In other words, about 37 per cent of prisoners were receiving visits. A problem with the current system is that only prisoners, not the visitors themselves, can book visits<sup>37</sup>. This might be workable when there is regular contact between prisoners and visitors, but in cases where contact was only sporadic, the prisoner had no way of knowing when a visitor might want to visit. Prisoners indicated that even if family or friends fail to book

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<sup>35</sup> The Department acknowledged that two contradictory rules apply to the issue of allowing food in cells. Local Order 3 allows food purchased in the prison canteen to be taken into cells, however foodstuffs from the kitchen or dining areas is not permitted in cells without the permission of the Superintendent under Standing Order 17. Consistency in rules is required, based on good hygiene practices, and these two rules must be reconciled.

<sup>36</sup> The Department of Justice have subsequently notified the Inspector of a central purchasing system that is being introduced to Western Australian prisons that may result in some bulk purchasing benefits.

<sup>37</sup> The explanation for prisoners being required to book was that there were insufficient staff (i.e., a dedicated officer) to take the incoming calls, as well as insufficient telephone lines. However, staff also complained about the workload caused by the present booking system. Because prisoners were often uncertain who would actually be visiting on the weekend, some prisoners would book up to twenty family members for a visit even though only a few might actually turn up. Staff, however, would then have to do the computer data entry for all twenty people, as well as having to record the failed visit on the computer for those who did not turn up. All of this is a very time-consuming process, for very little perceived benefit.

a visit, staff still process them through and allow the visit to take place<sup>38</sup>. The prisoners we interviewed stated that Karnet had the most liberal visits system they had experienced, and this helps to relieve some of the stress of prison life. This is a strong point of Karnet management, bringing in flexibility at the local level in the face of Head Office rigidity.

- 2.25 On Sundays Karnet provides a 22-seater bus from Armadale train station to transport visitors who cannot get to the prison by other means. A service was also introduced on Saturdays for a trial period, but was withdrawn due to insufficient patronage. Visitors could not pre-book the bus (this system was tried in the past but proved unsuccessful) and thus there was no reliable way of predicting the likely numbers. Nevertheless, a longer trial period may well have seen demand settle down into more predictable patterns, and there may be a case for re-introducing this service. With regard to the Sunday service, sometimes the bus is under-utilised while on others some visitors are refused transport due to insufficient seats, thus missing their visit.
- 2.26 The visits centre is a new, well constructed building with lots of natural light and a pleasant atmosphere. Both prisoners and visitors commented favourably on it. People had a choice of sitting inside the visits centre, outside under shelter, or in the open air. Overall, prisoners and their visitors spoke positively about staff. Staff recognised the importance of visits and the need for prisoners and their families to maintain contact, and were adaptable to special circumstances, as illustrated by the willingness to allow one family that had recently suffered a bereavement to conduct their visit in a private area. In discussions with the Superintendent and the management team, the same attitude was evident.
- 2.27 On the day of our Inspection no visitors were searched. Staff stated that searches are not a regular occurrence. Given that it would be less risky to drop contraband at a pre-designated point along the prison's fence line than to try to hand it over at visits, it is appropriate that visitor searches are rightly not rated as high a priority as they are in secure prisons.
- 2.28 Outcare is a non-government community organisation funded by the Department to provide support, welfare and counselling services to prisoners and their families. At Karnet, the Outcare staff were well regarded by prisoners and their visitors in terms of how considerate and helpful they were. Apart from assisting visitors prior to visits commencing (while they waited in the queue), the two Outcare staff on duty assisted with child-care during visits. It is evident from inspections conducted to date that the Department is very much dependent upon the non-government sector for the organisation of visits, and that both Outcare and Kindred perform invaluable services in this regard.

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<sup>38</sup> Obviously, the Departmental requirement for all visits to be booked was thereby breached. The primary rationale for this requirement relates to security, so that the Department's Intelligence Unit could know in advance who was visiting each prisoner and target that visitor for a search if necessary. The other rationale was so that a record existed of prisoners' visits. However, this record would still exist if visits were not pre-booked, but the data simply entered at the time of the visit.

- 2.29 An issue with visits concerns the Department's duty of care obligations to the children who visit the Prison. Following an incident at Bunbury Regional Prison in 1996 when three prisoners molested a child, the Department issued policies to ensure the safety of children when visiting friends or relatives in prison. In the light of its prisoner population profile (32% sex offenders), these measures would seem to have particular relevance to the visits protocols at Karnet. However, no strategic supervision of sex offenders appears to be in place in the open visits area<sup>39</sup>. Thus, although the Prison has a system whereby an updated list is maintained as to which prisoner may receive certain categories of children on a visit, (male/female; age; relationship)<sup>40</sup>, there is no application of any separation policy<sup>41</sup>.



*The visits centre — sprawling indoor and outdoor settings require good supervision.*

- 2.30 The confused arrangements that have emerged through the newly introduced booked visit system distract staff from attending to the important duty of providing safe visiting arrangements for children. Better controls should be enforced to ensure the screening and separation of visitors and prisoners.
- 2.31 The mail system at Karnet operates in accordance with the *Director General's Rules 5 F*. Prisoners did not raise any concerns or complaints about it. Prisoners have proper access to confidential mail envelopes to contact agencies such as the Inspector of Custodial Services, the Ombudsman and the Office of Health Review.

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<sup>39</sup> In its response to this Report, the Department stated that to prevent child sex offenders being identified as such by other prisoners, they are not segregated during visits as this could result in those offenders refusing visits. The Superintendent will, however, issue a letter to each sex offender so they clearly understand that contact with children is not to be made and if this requirement is breached, segregated visits will be enforced. This does not provide for the proper protection of children, and the practice at Karnet should be made consistent with the Department's own policy created in response to a serious incident of sexual assault at Bunbury.

<sup>40</sup> 'Procedure for Special Category Visits Status Updates', Local Order 14 March 1997.

<sup>41</sup> A Local order of 23 May 1994 and a Standing Order of 13 June 1994 do not reflect current practice.

- 2.32 However, as at virtually every other prison in Western Australia, prisoners were most unhappy with the telephone system, known as Arunta. They complained about two main issues – namely, the cost of the calls and the fact that the system is frequently out of order. The high cost of calls seems to be attributable to the initial contract agreement with Arunta, exacerbated at Karnet by the fact that the Prison’s location is such that all calls are charged at STD rates. Compounding these factors, calls are at a fixed price and are not subject to ‘promotional specials’, as often advertised in the community. The high costs limit prisoners’ contact with family and friends.
- 2.33 The Department has supposedly been involved in extensive discussions re-negotiating the Arunta contract. The company is in a monopoly position, and the Department has an obligation to ensure that prisoners are not disadvantaged in terms of access to such an important service. If the failure to achieve better rates persists for much longer, consideration should be given to creating a compensatory system to ensure that Karnet prisoners are not significantly disadvantaged in their access to telephone services. The frequent breakdowns in the system also limit that contact. Although this is a Department-wide problem, these breakdowns apparently occur more frequently at Karnet. In recent times the phones have been out of order for over a week. In summary, the present service is below acceptable standards.

### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- 2.34 Recreational facilities at the Prison are mediocre. The library is neither well stocked nor effectively managed, and provides little in the way of stimulus for prisoners. The recreation budget is very low, working out at less than a dollar per week per prisoner. Also, there is no functioning oval at Karnet<sup>42</sup>; this has been an ongoing cause of frustration for staff and prisoners alike. Work is the dominant activity at Karnet. Some work is available to every prisoner, though some positions are part-time as they offer only two to three hours work per day. Prisoners may also be involved in full or part-time education and/or core programs.
- 2.35 There is an adequate gym; rather like many features at Karnet, it is functional and highly valued by the prisoners. In addition, a walking/jogging track was recently constructed. Prisoners can exercise there in a relatively natural environment.
- 2.36 However, there were constraints on recreation at weekends, particularly during the visits period. Because of low staffing levels in the Units during that time, no prisoner movements are permitted during visits, and all prisoners not involved in visits are restricted to their own Units. This means they are unable to access the gym or the walk track or visit prisoners in other Units. The restrictions for those prisoners who generally do not receive visits are particularly irritating. Prisoners generally felt that this was an artificial restriction that could be circumvented with better management.

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<sup>42</sup> There is a graded area that is intended to serve as an oval, but the grass has not grown and the reticulation system is defective.

- 2.37 Other recreational pursuits spoken of in positive terms were the weekly excursion to play indoor cricket in Maddington and the football at Jarrahdale. However, such excursions are restricted to 22 participants, that being the number that can travel on the bus. This restriction is not appropriate and some means must be found to increase the scope of external recreational activities for all suitable prisoners.
- 2.38 In summary, recreational opportunities could be enhanced quite considerably with relatively little change to routines and priorities. More resources are required, however. In particular, the Oval must be made functional as soon as possible. The Department should initiate a holistic review within Karnet Prison of this aspect of the regime.

#### PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IN THE PRISON

- 2.39 Compared to many other Western Australian prisons, life for prisoners at Karnet can be fulfilling, rewarding and demanding. A number of prisoners spoke with pride about how they had the ‘best job in the prison’ and the importance of their work. This reinforced questionnaire responses in which many prisoners identified work and constructive activity as some of the better things about Karnet. The instructors (industrial officers) seemed highly motivated, and they retained the respect of prisoners because of their sound knowledge and ability to teach skills and transfer knowledge.
- 2.40 Prisoners exercise a great deal of personal responsibility in many aspects of their work routines. Some prisoners have keys to their work areas and do some work outside normal working hours without direct supervision – for example, in the motor vehicle workshop. The prisoners enjoy the responsibility given to them, which is entirely appropriate in a resettlement prison. This sense of trust contributed to their ‘ownership’ of their workplaces.
- 2.41 The issue of differential access to employment based upon race or other inappropriate factors (as identified in the Department’s recent Service Review Report relating to Karnet) was not evident during our Inspection. No prisoners complained to us of inequitable practices in terms of their gaining access to desired employment. Prisoners stated that they were able to transfer positions if they followed the appropriate procedures. Prisoners could request to participate in any work area and, if no position were available, they would go on to a wait-list until one came up. It is possible that the Service Review itself had resulted in the discontinuance of earlier practices. Other prisons the Office has inspected do have covert discrimination, particularly in relation to Aboriginal prisoners. The Department must remain vigilant in relation to this matter.
- 2.42 Under Section 94 of the *Prisons Act* 1981, a Superintendent can authorise prisoners to be absent from the Prison for the purpose of engaging in community work, sport and other activities. Karnet has only one Section 94 work program. A team of six prisoners works five days a week, eight hours a day, on various community projects – for example, extensive reparation work for the local Jarrahdale-Serpentine community, restoration of historic buildings at Araluen, and development and maintenance of the Bibbulman Track. Many of the workers have been on the team for a lengthy period and this has enabled

them to build up their skills and employability levels. However, the downside of this is it has also denied others the opportunity to participate. Ideally, all prisoners should be able to access this option<sup>43</sup>.

- 2.43 This limited availability is indeed the main criticism of the Section 94 work program. Only one work team of six, out of a total prison population of 190, is not sufficient for a releasing prison. The prison administration acknowledges this as being inadequate, and asserts that they cannot sustain any more workers on Section 94 because of the lack of staff and the need for an additional vehicle. A request to Head Office for funds for a vehicle was apparently rejected<sup>44</sup>.
- 2.44 In 2000, the Department examined the feasibility of establishing a work camp in the Manjimup area as part of Karnet's Section 94 program. Although not yet formally evaluated, work camps have been a positive innovation in the Department's approach to reparation, skilling and preparation for release into the community. However, the proposal met with some resistance from the local community, and it was abandoned. The Department has a poor record in leading public opinion rather than passively following it on matters connected with the treatment of minimum-security prisoners<sup>45</sup>. The time now seems appropriate to identify another locality, try to lead public opinion through careful consultation, and establish a work camp.
- 2.45 Meanwhile, the Superintendent has received Head Office permission for the Section 94 work team to camp out overnight at more remote projects. The Superintendent has discretion over all operational aspects of the stays, including the length of stay away from the prison.
- 2.46 We spoke to many of the prisoners in their workplaces, either individually or in groups, about their experience of life at Karnet. In the kitchen, two mature prisoners complained that, no matter how hard they worked, there was no recognition or reward system for their efforts. They suggested extra remission of sentence (in addition to the automatic one-third remission) or faster progression towards the self-care unit as possible incentives. However, two younger colleagues considered that the only criterion for admission to self-care should be the length of time spent at the prison. They commented that if someone misbehaved, they would be transferred out of Karnet anyway – thus punishment rather than reward was the preferred method of operation for these younger prisoners.

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<sup>43</sup> Criteria should apply to prisoners desiring to access Section 94 work and recreation opportunities, to satisfy issues relating to trust and ability to be left unsupervised if necessary.

<sup>44</sup> The Department of Justice has stated in its response to this Report that prisoners at Karnet are not a priority for Section 94 work programs. This is because the limited budget available for these activities is targeted at prisons that do not have such high levels of prison-based employment as Karnet.

<sup>45</sup> The Department of Justice disagreed with this statement, stating that it was not prepared to establish work camps where the prisoners would not be welcomed and their contribution recognised. This is exactly the point of the Inspection Report. The Department should be proactive in persisting with the establishment of camps for all minimum-security prisoners, including those at Karnet, in the interests of prisoner rehabilitation.

- 2.47 The strategic interpretation of this may be that the gratuity system is unduly rigid and capped at too low a level. Karnet, like all prisons, has a gratuities budget that compels it to restrict the number of prisoners who can attain the higher levels of one and two, with the consequence that some very constructive work can only be rewarded at the less generous levels. Nor is there any provision for special allowances or loadings – for example, some prisoners at Pardelup constructed a new medical centre in 2000, saving the Department a six-figure sum in construction costs but could not, within the Director General’s Rules, be rewarded beyond Level one gratuities.
- 2.48 The prison gardens offer a relatively relaxed work environment. The officer-in-charge stated that, due to the generally short length of stay at Karnet, there is a high turnover of prisoner labour. The officer, who had previously been an industrial officer at Casuarina, believed that at Karnet, supervision was required for the purpose of training rather than security. He had experienced no problems with prisoners, as they were too busy working. Peer pressure and expectations is an important factor in work patterns.
- 2.49 Inspections Officers spoke to a group of about eight prisoners in the garden workshop. These prisoners work an average of four hours per day; two in the morning and two in the afternoon. These hours permit them plenty of time for recreation and to attend education. Some gardening courses carry TAFE accreditation, but prisoners stated that the time outstanding on their sentences was shorter than the length of the courses and thus there was no point in enrolling for them. Most of the work allocated to them required few specialised skills, and was unlikely to assist them with post-release employment.
- 2.50 The bicycle workshop restores bicycles for charitable organisations such as the Castlereagh Special School and is negotiating with other similar organisations in order to expand these services. It also repairs and sells bicycles for staff and prisoners. Up to ten men work in the workshop. Some of the work is apparently linked to TAFE certificates in Bicycle Mechanics and Servicing.



*The bicycle workshop.*

## LIFE FOR PRISONERS AT KARNET

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- 2.51 Members of the Inspection Team also spoke to the farm workers – nine in number. Their work involved cropping to provide feed for the animal stock and managing the sheep and cattle for the dairy and abattoir. They seemed to enjoy their jobs, and felt they had a degree of choice in job allocation. One prisoner had been a farmer all his life and was very experienced in that area. Others were learning new skills and, although they were not necessarily living in farm areas before their incarceration, they felt employability after release would be enhanced by their work experience. All workers said that they were free to attend programs and education if necessary.
- 2.52 The abattoir employs the single largest group of men in the prison. The team met with ten workers individually and in small groups. The prisoners said that the work is physically demanding and they commence work relatively early in the morning. There was a good rapport between the workers and their industrial officer. They said that work at the abattoir was very much sought-after because of the potential for acquiring valuable trade qualifications. The links with the industry accreditation and TAFE sectors are strong and facilitate continuity of education and employment opportunities upon release.



*The abattoir.*



*The dairy.*



- 2.53 The dairy workers found their employment constructive and enjoyable, despite the intermittent pattern of the work. They work two shifts a day, one commencing in the early hours of the morning and the second in the afternoon. Currently, no formal trade qualification is available through the dairy<sup>46</sup>. The Department should actively explore the possibility of linking dairy work to a TAFE or similar qualification.
- 2.54 The mechanical workshop is one of the busier work centres in the prison. It employs approximately ten men, and they can participate in accredited TAFE courses in Engineering Production and Automotive Vehicle Servicing. The workshop services the Department's vehicles (not just those of Karnet Prison itself) and the farm machinery. It is a popular workplace, because it offers practical grounding in motor vehicle mechanics and maintenance. The industrial officer was well regarded by his workers. Like most Karnet workplaces, the atmosphere seemed constructive and co-operative.
- 2.55 The predominant impression gained from speaking to the prisoners and the staff in their respective workplaces was that goals were widely, if not universally, shared. At the very least, prisoners wanted to commit themselves to their work sufficiently to avoid boredom, and many positively hoped to gain some skills and qualifications. While there may have been some areas of dissent or discontent, it was not widespread or systemic. There was optimism and a sense of achievement. This observation, made from a correctional standpoint, accords very much with the analysis of the farming activities made by the Department of Agriculture experts.

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<sup>46</sup> Negotiations are currently underway between Karnet education staff, the farm manager and dairy staff with the goal of the parties co-ordinating a certificate course or traineeship in Dairy Production.

## Chapter 3

### PROGRESSING TO FREEDOM

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- 3.1 Three discrete and critical processes are central to the smooth transition from prison to freedom. These are: reception and induction; sentence planning and sentence management; and case management. At Riverbank<sup>47</sup>, the Inspection Team had found that these terms were used loosely and seemed to generate considerable confusion. It is true to say that this seems to be so throughout the whole prison system. For clarification, the senses in which we use these terms are as follows:
- *Reception* is the process whereby the prisoner is initially received into the prison and during which information relevant to security and welfare is obtained and recorded.
  - *Orientation* provides prisoners with information as to their rights, responsibilities, and entitlements, visiting arrangements, grievance mechanisms, program opportunities, Unit routines and the disciplinary process.
  - *Sentence planning* is a component of sentence management, and focuses principally upon the identification of precise correctional and program needs, progression for placement to other prisons or within the present prison, and release preparation.
  - *Sentence management* is the framework relied upon by the Department of Justice for planning and implementing the assessment, classification and placement of prisoners within the prison system.
  - *Case management* is a process by which individual officers are responsible for assisting prisoners assigned to them to complete the requirements of their sentence plans.
  - *Assessment reports* are the various kinds of reports required to enable prisoners to be case-managed through their various milestones, such as Home Leave, Work Release, changes in security rating and applications for parole.
- 3.2 At Karnet, reception and orientation processes are the responsibility of the Reception Officer/Unit Manager; sentence planning and sentence management of the Sentence Planning Coordinator; and case management of the Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Management (ASPM). All custodial officers make assessment reports with input from industrial officers, as required. Efficient records management systems are required to ensure that these processes occur in a timely and expeditious manner. A well-structured data management system needs to be in place to track and provide a record of required reports.

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<sup>47</sup> See Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services: Inspection Report No. 2, August 2001.

## RECEPTION AND ORIENTATION

- 3.3 The team observed a number of receptions into the prison. These were carried out in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. Prisoners stated that they were satisfied with the amount of information they received about the prison before leaving the reception area. An orientation video was shown to new arrivals; it was made by prisoners for prisoners and is generally welcomed as an aid in the orientation process. A map detailing the location of all buildings and out of bounds areas was also provided. A comprehensive four page 'Orientation Checklist' that contained extensive questions for staff to ask prisoners had to be completed by both a staff member and the prisoner within 24 hours of arrival.
- 3.4 Prisoners also receive an orientation sheet drawn up by the Prisoner Peer Support Team. At the Medical Centre, prisoners receive an information sheet detailing medical parade and appointment times. The final step in the reception process is an interview between the Unit Manager and the prisoner, advising on matters specific to the Unit and completing an induction form which records the prisoner's sentence details. Several prisoners commented that it was the best orientation that they had received at any prison.
- 3.5 Karnet's success as a releasing prison depends not only on its own efforts but also on the fact that higher-security prisons have achieved certain objectives earlier in the imprisonment continuum. However, prisoners are sometimes sent to Karnet without the relevant paperwork, or before a viable sentence plan has been prepared, or before they have completed core programs required by the Parole Board. When these occur, they inevitably have to be dealt with at Karnet, with a consequent strain on its resources and undue pressure on prisoners and staff<sup>48</sup>.

## SENTENCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- 3.6 The Sentence Planning Coordinator, as his title indicates, coordinates the sentence planning function and monitors sentence details and assessment requirements for all prisoners. He then tracks the progress of the prisoner against those assessment reports, as well as the availability of and progress through the required programs.
- 3.7 The ASPM oversees the sentence management process, chairs the case conferences at which sentence-planning recommendations are developed, oversees the Leave of Absence program, and is responsible for chairing the Prisoner at Risk Support Group and the Peer Support meetings. This position thus possesses the dual roles of sentence management and prisoner management and has two reporting lines - to the Sentence Management Directorate in Head Office and to the Superintendent at Karnet. Because of report

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<sup>48</sup> The Department of Justice believes that the new prisoner assessment process, which is completed at Hakea Prison for every prisoner who receives a sentence of nine months or more, may restrict the number of prisoners who arrive at Karnet with these problems. Meanwhile, the Department must cater for the immediate needs of prisoners at this resettlement prison.

deadlines and the need for prisoner assessments to be made on time, sentence management by necessity takes precedence over the other responsibilities. This reduces the time available to manage prisoners' issues. Not surprisingly, prisoners often have difficulty in finding out information pertinent to their sentence management.

- 3.8 A Senior Community Corrections Officer works full-time on-site at Karnet; she is responsible for facilitating the case management of selected prisoners before their release into the community. These prisoners are those who are thought to be at high risk of re-offending. This officer also provides information sessions for prisoners about parole and release issues. The relationship of prison management and staff with the on-site officer seems to be positive and collegial. Prisoners spoke appreciatively of her role and how it would assist them in making the transition from prison to community successfully.
- 3.9 Case management needs are likely to increase as the Department's new assessment system becomes fully operational<sup>49</sup>. The recently introduced new assessment and classification system is likely to produce a situation where prisoners' security ratings can be reduced much earlier in their sentence than previously. Until the present time, prisoners mostly had less than two years left on their sentences after arriving at Karnet, as the earlier figures of average time spent at the Prison clearly indicate. However, at the time of the Inspection, Karnet had recently received prisoners with over four years still to serve before they were eligible for release. Although sending prisoners to minimum-security earlier in their sentence should be a positive move from the perspective of rehabilitation, it will pose some difficulties for Karnet in managing prisoners in such a setting for that long a period. Greater case management resources may be required to achieve that objective<sup>50</sup>.
- 3.10 Case conferences are usually held weekly to review cases that are due for assessment. Case conferences are chaired by the ASPM; the Sentence Planning Coordinator, the Senior Community Corrections Officer and a senior prison officer attend. After staff have discussed each case, the prisoner is called in and advised of the recommendation. He has an opportunity to make an input at this stage; in other words, there is some element of due process. The Inspection Team attended case conferences relating to three prisoners. They were conducted appropriately, with prisoners being advised of the assessment process, a review date being set, and the prisoner informed of relevant services available at Karnet and how to access them. Prisoners generally seemed reasonably satisfied with the case conference process.

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<sup>49</sup> At Hakea Prison the Department has implemented a new assessment and receipt process. 'The assessments will deal with placement and security and identify prisoner health, program, education and employment and management requirements. Unit management and case management procedures will ensure the delivery of individual management plan requirements' (Prison Services Business Plan 2000-2005).

<sup>50</sup> In its response to this Report, the Department of Justice acknowledge that this will be a challenge for Karnet. The Office of the Inspector will monitor progress and Department of Justice actions in regard to these challenges.

- 3.11 However, the Department's information and records management system in this as other areas, leaves much to be desired. The Inspection Team became aware of one case where the finalisation of a prisoner's appeal was not entered into the records, with the consequence that he was denied access to a program – the sex offenders treatment program – that was only available to convicted prisoners. The oversight only came to light by chance, but the prisoner's access to a program had been unnecessarily delayed for several months<sup>50</sup>.
- 3.12 The Inspection team accordingly carried out a review of nine prisoners' unit files to assess the quality of record-keeping. As in many prisons, the unit files relating to prisoners were poorly constructed and maintained. There was no order to the information contained in the file, some reports and assessments were missing, and others were duplicated. A prisoner's history could not readily be traced by reading the file. In sharp contrast to this was the file on a prisoner who had recently participated in the new assessment process at Hakea. The information on file was relevant, comprehensive, and placed in a logical and orderly manner. It is time for Karnet to improve its standards in this regard<sup>51</sup>.

#### PARTICIPATION IN REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

- 3.13 The purpose of program participation is to reduce the risk of re-offending by addressing the causes of offending behaviour. Although it is not a mandatory legal prerequisite, the Parole Board generally requires evidence that a prisoner has put a substantial effort into addressing the causes of his offending behaviour before it will grant the prisoner's release on parole. Nevertheless, there is an expectation that prisoners should participate if assessed as needing a program<sup>52</sup>. However, each case is considered on its individual merits, and some prisoners are released without completing core programs. Prisoners find these apparent disparities upsetting, and the Office has received quite numerous representations about this matter and the associated parole processes.
- 3.14 Prisoners may meet the Parole Board's expectations by participating in specific core programs such as the Substance Abuse, Sex Offending or Violent Offending Programs. The majority of prisoners who responded to our survey indicated that they had not encountered any difficulties in accessing the programs they required for release. However, this view was by no means unanimous. Across the State, there is a backlog of

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<sup>50</sup> The Department of Justice is of the view that this is an isolated incident. The Department should be concerned that any instances of this nature have occurred and have a quality assurance system should be established to eliminate any such incidents.

<sup>51</sup> The Superintendent of Karnet Prison has undertaken to review all unit files and address any deficiencies.

<sup>52</sup> In *Varney against the Parole Board of Western Australia* (Full Court, [2000] WASCA 393), it was held that the Parole Board was not entitled to refuse to review the parole eligibility of a convicted sex offender on the basis that he had not addressed his offending behaviour by participating in a sex offender treatment program. The Court (Ipp, J) said: "When regard is had to the variety of reasons why a prisoner might deny his guilt, it would be wrong to infer that merely because a prisoner asserts that he is not guilty (and therefore has not participated in a SOTP) he would be more than a minimum risk to the personal safety of people or particular individuals in the community."

prisoners awaiting participation in various programs, particularly the Sex Offenders and Violent Offenders programs<sup>53</sup>. Moreover, some programs are only offered at prisons that many prisoners wish to avoid – for example, Hakea, where a Violent Offenders program is available. Thus, if prisoners have progressed to a minimum-security prison such as Karnet before a program becomes available for them, they may well not take it up. Also, if a place only becomes available a considerable time after their earliest eligibility date (EED) for seeking parole, they also may decide to serve out their full time (less remission) rather than put themselves into the risk category of being a parolee<sup>54</sup>.

- 3.15 A feature of the Western Australian prison system is that programs staff work to the Head Office Programs Unit. Local superintendents have no control or authority in relation to timing, participation or content. This can, and in some prisons does, lead to some tension on site. At Karnet, however, programs staff stated that the prison management were supportive and cooperative – an important point to note in the context of our initial concern that the correctional objectives of the prison might tend to be relegated behind the farm production priorities. Programs staff are not fully integrated into the local prison system and they should be. This is demonstrated in the various unsuccessful attempts made to secure appropriate program accommodation<sup>55</sup>.
- 3.16 There was a mixed prisoner response as to the value of program participation. The variations seemed to depend to a large extent on the type of program they participated in. Prisoners currently or previously involved in the sex offender program believed that they had benefited, in terms of insight and comprehension as to their offending behaviours. However, prisoners who had participated in the Skills Training for Aggression Control (STAC) and Substance Use Resource Unit (SURU) programs were less impressed with their experiences and thought the programs were somewhat superficial<sup>56</sup>.
- 3.17 For a variety of reasons, many prisoners are reluctant to participate in programs. For some, it is a stressful experience as they begin to comprehend the impact of their behaviour on their victims. For others, there is a strong reluctance to accept that their behaviours were wrong and that a therapeutic program will be beneficial for their future. For programs to be effective, it is essential that prisoners understand the purpose and value of participation; yet, often this may only come during the program or even after it has been completed. For those who choose not to participate, it is likely that the risk of re-offending when they return to the community is not diminished.

<sup>53</sup> The Director of Operational Services subsequently advised that the rollout of new offender programs at Acacia Prison will reduce the backlog, particularly for violent offender programs. These programs will commence in early 2002. However, it is still unclear whether the total demand for programs will increase or decrease as the recently introduced Hakea assessment process has yet to become fully operational.

<sup>54</sup> This is a risk because 'breach' can be quite a technical matter, and the recent practice of the Department of Justice has been to breach parolees far too readily. This may now change in view of the Government's announced commitment to reduce the rate of imprisonment in Western Australia. Revised breach procedures and criteria are an element of this policy.

<sup>55</sup> The Department of Justice has notified its intention to devolve the Offender Programs Branch operations into the prisons as part of prison administration.

<sup>56</sup> Since the date of the Inspection, the STAC program has been withdrawn from all prisons in Western Australia.

- 3.18 However, in the absence of rigorous and well-structured evaluation, comments about effectiveness are largely based upon supposition. The Department accordingly has commissioned research to determine the effectiveness of the sex offender treatment programs<sup>57</sup>; the results should soon be available.
- 3.19 One of the key issues for prisoners and staff is to determine the stage in a sentence at which programs should be provided. There are four key factors that need to be considered to determine when a program should be run. These are: *clinical*, *administrative*, *community* and *personal*. Sometimes these factors compete with each other; at other times they are positively in contradiction:
- *Clinical issues* are those that relate to the psychological timing of the program for each individual: when is the prisoner most likely to be receptive to participation and gain the most benefit? The recalling of thoughts and processes central to the offending behaviour, the capacity to accept responsibility, and the preparedness to make changes in thinking and behaviour are important clinical issues.
  - *Personal factors* relate to a prisoner's capacity to manage the various competing issues in his life in order to successfully complete a program. If a program is delivered too early or too late in a sentence, the prisoner may not be at his or her best state of mind to focus on the program concepts.
  - *Administrative issues* relate to factors such as the location and management of staff, facilities and resources. There may be important considerations why programs are run in some institutions and not in others. The programs may also assist in prisoner management; for this reason, some programs such as the Violent Offender Treatment Program may be run earlier in the sentence. The Sex Offender Treatment Program is usually run in the latter part of a sentence, because the skills and strategies essential for remaining offence-free will be eroded if not put into practice in the community. In an ideal world, early program participation followed by a refresher course late in the sentence would be preferable.
  - *Community issues* relate to the safety and wellbeing of the community. The question is: where and at what time in the sentence is the prisoner likely to get the optimum benefit from a program and by doing so reduce the risk of re-offending? Given the open environs of Karnet, most community members would expect that violent and sexual offenders would have completed any required treatment programs before being sent there.
- 3.20 Karnet offers a limited range of core programs. There is the Pre-Release Sex Offender Treatment Program, and individual and group counselling for those with substance abuse issues. Other non-core programs offered are the Alcoholics Anonymous Program, the Holyoake Prison to Parole Program, and the Victim Mediation Unit's advisory service.

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<sup>57</sup> The evaluation report by Dr David Greenberg was due to be completed by the end of July 2001.

- 3.21 Since the Inspection, the Department has decided to terminate the STAC program, designed for prisoners with anger management problems. Given the high number of violent offenders at Karnet who have not completed a program to address this behaviour, a program of this generic kind would seem to be essential. The Department needs to identify what alternative strategy it has in place to deal with the issues.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND ACQUIRE SKILLS

- 3.22 In most prisons, education is seen as an occupation that can engage a significant number of prisoners in meaningful activity. In other words, there is an unfortunate tendency in some prisons for educational activities to be seen as a 'filler' rather than as a meaningful activity in itself. In Karnet, there is not an activity void, because of the prison's emphasis on involvement in employment. Perhaps because of this, the numbers of prisoners in full-time education are quite low. Yet many prisoners there have experienced difficulties with literacy and numeracy, so it would seem appropriate to emphasise classroom activities in these academic areas. Whilst such education is not compulsory, it is true to say that staff actively encourage prisoners to participate, particularly those with low levels of literacy/numeracy skills.
- 3.23 Of course, education can take many forms other than in the traditional classroom setting, and Karnet provides much of its education through training and skilling at work (with some classroom component). Education and job skilling is provided throughout many of the work areas, and TAFE accredited courses are provided in:
- Abattoir (Certificate II and III Meat Industries);
  - Farm (Certificate II General Agriculture);
  - Horticulture (Certificate II Parks and Gardens and Certificate II Horticultural Production);
  - Kitchen (Certificate II Food Processing and Commercial Cookery); and,
  - Section 94 (Certificate II Parks and Gardens).
- 3.24 We were extremely impressed at this range of courses, and the manner in which they were effectively melded into work activities.
- 3.25 However, in the area of 'traditional' classroom based education, opportunities at Karnet are unfortunately not as rich. There are four part-time education staff (equating to approximately one and a half full-time employees). They are professionally responsible to the central Education and Vocational Services Unit of the Department of Justice. In contrast to the arrangements with program staff, they are based at Karnet and have formed a close relationship with the prison and its management. The annual operational budget for education is \$77,000, but in 2001/2002, this is to be decreased by 10 per cent in line with across-the-board cuts to budgets from Head Office. This has serious adverse implications for the range of services that will be provided.



- 3.26 There are only fourteen full-time education places available at Karnet – a low figure. However, there are normally between 40-50 per cent of the population in part-time studies. Competition for higher gratuity levels exist between attracting prisoners to essential prison work and education, resulting in the level of gratuities available to prisoners in education being limited. At the time of the Inspection, the majority (nine prisoners) were on level three gratuities, which is the highest level the Education Officer can offer. Level four gratuities are used for the first week of enrolment to ensure that prisoners are genuine in their desire to participate (there are currently five prisoners at this level). One prisoner is on level one, as he also is the cleaner for the education area.
- 3.27 The strategic point of these observations is that the lower levels of gratuities discourage prisoners who want to study. They will be aware that they can earn more money doing relatively easy work elsewhere. This would especially act as a disincentive to illiterate prisoners, who are often reticent to come forward because of embarrassment or shame. More value must be placed on education and reflected in the gratuities offered to prisoners who elect to study full-time.
- 3.28 We were advised that, to ensure the education needs of Aboriginal prisoners are appropriately catered for, an Aboriginal Education and Training Planning Committee has been established. Its twice-yearly meetings involve a representative group of the prisoner population and a number of Aboriginal representatives from the community, who meet with education staff. This group reviews the past semester's outcomes and reflects on possible changes to future service delivery. Karnet's current educational programs for Aboriginal prisoners reflect the planning from the last meeting. Special provision had been made for Aboriginal prisoners to have industry specific training in forklift driving and welding, as recommended by the Committee. At the time of our Inspection, there were 21 Aboriginal prisoners, of whom eleven were enrolled in educational programs.

## SUMMARY

- 3.29 Karnet has some problems, particularly with regard to education programs. But overall, the mechanisms in place to assist prisoners along their path to freedom were reasonably effective.

# Chapter 4

## MAKING THE PRISON WORK FOR PRISONERS

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- 4.1 To manage successfully an entity as complex as a prison, a superintendent needs to have the following components in place:
- clear goals and objectives;
  - access to appropriate resources;
  - good staff, well trained and focussed on organisational outcomes;
  - a good working relationship between the various functions and services of the prison; and,
  - good support from the corporate services and senior administration sections of the Department.
- 4.2 Without these components, the capacity of a superintendent to exert influence over the aspects of prisoners' lives that are essential to their successful reintegration into the community is extremely limited.

## KARNET'S ROLE AND ITS RESOURCES

- 4.3 Karnet is, in the terminology adopted by the Inspectorate, a resettlement prison. That means that it should be actively preparing prisoners for release – in terms of job skills, community interaction, re-establishment and strengthening of family links, normalisation of relationships with other people in the sense of their not being too hierarchical, control over decisions affecting their own lives, and so on. Whilst the Department of Justice has not formulated the objectives of Karnet and its place in the total prison system in these sorts of terms, nevertheless these broad objectives are being met to a reasonable extent. The most notable deficiency is the paucity of Section 94 programs and opportunities.
- 4.4 With regard to budget issues, however, the Prison is not treated as a full participant in decision-making processes. These issues have been raised in the Inspector's Overview and it is unnecessary to repeat them. Karnet's budget allocation was \$5.4 million, even though its anticipated expenditure is of the order of \$5.9 million<sup>58</sup>. The allocated budget caters principally for staff salaries, and appears to be based on providing the basic essentials required to ensure that the prison is viable at a minimal level. There is no medium-term or long-term capital investment strategy for replacing farm or production equipment included in this figure. Consequently, recurrent funds must be used to maintain equipment, much of which is obsolete and in some instances dangerous.

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<sup>58</sup> This was presumably based loosely on the fact that the 1999/2000 'budget' figure had been \$5.3 million, and the actual expenditure \$5.9 million, against a requested budget of \$5.8 million.

- 4.5 For Karnet this ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ approach is even less excusable. The prison puts value of more than \$4 million per annum into the prison system as a whole. This point is developed in detail in Appendix 2 of this Report. Karnet’s input contrasts sharply with the inadequate funding provided to purchase and maintain the capital equipment essential for that production. It also contrasts with the book value put upon Karnet’s input by the Department itself – about \$2.5 million. It should also be noted that the ratio of on-site costs to off-site costs are virtually equal – at about \$70 per day per prisoner<sup>59</sup>.

### THE PRISON’S STAFF

- 4.6 Staff matters have been referred to at various points within this Report. Overall, staff represent the strongest aspect of the Karnet regime. This comment is applicable to custodial staff, industrial staff and non-uniformed staff. The level of cooperation across these groupings was effective. Consequently, prisoners move between activities in a planned manner and generally have a good comprehension of where they fit within the prison’s systems. While there are breakdowns within the internal system, these seem to be isolated and random. Even so, the Superintendent expressed some concern about the staffing levels. He is currently seeking an additional fifteen positions – five in the administration and support areas and ten custodial staff. If this request were successful (unlikely in the current financial climate), the Inspectorate believes that there would be a real danger of distorting the balance between custodial and industrial officers. It was evident that a significant factor in the achievement of such a positive culture at Karnet was that the percentage of industrial officers in the uniformed officer group was unusually high.
- 4.7 Unlike a number of other Western Australian prisons, Karnet has been left relatively untouched by the incidence of staff ‘acting’ in other duties at another prison – and by the same token of having staff come from other prisons to ‘act’ at Karnet. With a few exceptions, the senior management team and the operational staff have remained relatively intact, and this stability is reflected in the positive atmosphere inherent in the prison<sup>60</sup>.
- 4.8 Reference has been made in Chapter one to the need for a different emphasis on training – away from security and restraints and towards the development of skills in writing reports and effectively participating in case management and assessment. A positive initiative by the Department is that staff training will soon commence in Reasoning and Rehabilitation programs for prisoners, and that officers will participate in the Interpersonal Skills Training program. This training provides important skills for any correctional setting.

<sup>59</sup> Excluding income; if income is included, on-site costs would be negative.

<sup>60</sup> The Karnet staff were not specifically selected for their ability to work in an open prison setting preparing prisoners for release, in the way that Riverbank officers were initially handpicked for their empathy with a programs and rehabilitative environment. However, they have responded well to the challenges presented by working in such an environment. Unfortunately, there were three officers who were identified by prisoners and colleagues alike as being detrimental to the harmonious functioning of the prison. These officers create problems disproportionate to their numbers. If Karnet is to fulfil its potential in training and management, plans need to be developed for these staff to ensure that they fulfil their obligations to the Ministry and the prisoners.

## MAKING THE PRISON WORK FOR PRISONERS

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- 4.9 Staff complained that they are diverted increasingly from what they see as their key role of working with prisoners and assisting them in managing their sentence plans into data management and compliance roles<sup>61</sup>.

### STAFF PRACTICES/IMPLEMENTING POLICY

- 4.10 There is a discernible gap between the formal rules and the actual way that staff manage prisoners. The Local and Standing Orders at Karnet are out of date and require review. Many of them do not reflect contemporary policy or practice at the prison. At the time of the Inspection, we were advised that the Ministry is re-writing the Standing Orders and Director General's Rules, and once these were complete then the Local Orders would be re-written. While circumventing inappropriate rules is, in many instances, a logical response to the fact that they are outmoded, it obviously is a less than ideal way of coping with unnecessary rigidity.
- 4.11 In practice, the prison's operational management did not appear to be adversely affected by its non-compliance with many of the Local or Standing Orders. In most instances, where Orders were not adhered to it was to the benefit of prisoners. One example of this was where staff would allow the number of visitors per prisoner to be greater than the number stated in Local Orders. At a resettlement prison, such flexibility of rule application is good practice, and is encouraged to suit the local population and conditions.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KARNET AND HEAD OFFICE

- 4.12 This issue has run through much of this Report. As with many prisons, particularly the non-Metropolitan ones<sup>62</sup>, staff feel alienated from the central controlling agency. Numerous examples of distrust were cited; particularly those arising from externally made decisions which impact negatively on Karnet's operations. In particular, the budget is perceived to be unrealistic and the Head Office Human Resource section is seen as a controlling and unsupportive mechanism, restricting the capacity to operate with flexibility.
- 4.13 Another example cited by the prison staff to illustrate the conflicting roles and goals of Head Office and Karnet, concerned the involvement of a local tertiary institution in the vocational training of prisoners and the development of the prison's oval. Head Office (Education and Vocational Services Unit) and Karnet Prison management wanted to utilise the services of different tertiary institutions. The arguments put forward by the

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<sup>61</sup> Like officers at every prison we have visited, there were complaints that the TOMS system is too demanding in its inputs and too unhelpful in its outputs. In the officers' views, insult was added to injury by the fact that the Departmental computer system – CONCEPT – seems still to be extremely unreliable in calculating pay and leave entitlements. This complaint too is system-wide. The Department of Justice has stated that there is an ongoing process to improve and update TOMS that will make the system more user-friendly.

<sup>62</sup> Karnet falls within the Metropolitan Prisons portfolio of the Department. This seems anomalous.

prison were cogent as to why they should exercise local control over this decision, including improved employment prospects for prisoners and the grassing of the oval. Head Office, on the other hand, emphasised that the preferred provider they had in mind could furnish the Department with a training program that was better for the prison system as a whole<sup>63</sup>. The critical issue is that, irrespective of the merits of either argument, a major problem exists when Head Office and local service providers cannot match their respective needs and the means of achieving the best services and results for prisoners.

- 4.14 Another issue, already mentioned above, is the increasing demand that Head Office is placing upon individual prisons for information and statistics for quality control and strategic planning purposes. This information is not seen by the prisons as critical or relevant for their local management, and creates a further drain on resources and staff without more resources coming from Head Office to compensate. The critical issue for staff is that time is being consumed for purposes which impinge directly upon time better spent on prisoner correction or welfare. If the information collected is of such importance, they say, then Head Office needs to provide the resources to collect it and convince local staff of its importance.

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<sup>63</sup> Of course, Head Office prevailed, and there is still no useable oval.

# Chapter 5

## REALISING THE POTENTIAL

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- 5.1 At an operational level, Karnet carries out its role effectively. Prisoners progress through the system in an orderly manner and are released to freedom. At the next level – conceptualising the future – there is, however, a degree of inertia at both corporate and local levels.
- 5.2 The Department now has an excellent opportunity to take forward an effective prison facility, which has in many respects exceeded its potential, and capitalise on its achievements. If this is to happen, decisions need to be made as to the role that Karnet will fill in the future total prison service. These decisions will need to be supported by appropriate capital appropriations. The lack of appropriately directed and properly assessed capital investment in the facility is one of the major features of the Karnet Inspection; this is perplexing given the significant returns the prison system gets from Karnet’s primary production. Investment needs to be targeted to meet the current and future needs of prisoners.
- 5.3 The Department needs to determine how programs are going to be structured into the sentence process, as this will determine the type and number of programs that will be required in minimum-security facilities.
- 5.4 The prison is well accepted in the region and has sound links into its community. These could readily be strengthened and extended. However, there is a degree of insularity, which limits the scope of external involvement. A new mindset based on the prison not being a static facility, but rather an entity that can reach out into the community and be flexible in its involvement, will encourage external agencies to want to become involved with the prison. In this regard, Karnet is ideally situated to contribute to the Department’s emerging work camp strategy. It is on the fringe of the south-western agricultural region; there are major land-care projects such as the Bibbulman Track; and, the rehabilitation of salt-degraded land within commuting distance. There are also several local communities in the vicinity that could utilise semi-skilled prisoners on small-scale development projects. If the work camp option were developed, it would seem appropriate to link prospective work camp activities to work within the prison so that prisoners could develop ‘career paths’ rather than participate in discrete work activities.
- 5.5 Partnerships with government and non-government agencies should be explored to provide secure access to long-term work, income and resources. The Superintendent should be given the responsibility of becoming involved with external agencies that can contribute to Karnet’s future development.
- 5.6 The most significant feature of Karnet was the positive interaction between staff, prisoners and visitors. This has assisted in creating an atmosphere of confidence and achievement that, as a number of prisoners remarked, enhanced their self-esteem. This general feeling of ‘we can do it’ is one that is very difficult to manufacture and when present it should be nurtured. Whilst there are some deficits in the practices and management at a local level, the major problems with the prison relate to interaction between Head Office and Karnet. The prison is delivering a good dividend for the

Department, yet the prison administration lacks the decision-making authority and the control over resources appropriate to manage such a complex operation the optimum way.

- 5.7 For both the short and medium terms, the prison farm concept is appropriate and realistic. Karnet is almost self-sustaining, and because of this, it seems to be an ideal prison to pilot the Department's strategy of devolving authority to local management by way of 'service level agreements'. Such agreements were conceptualised as a way of encouraging service improvements at the local level by devolving responsibility down the line to the place where those services are actually delivered. As an organisational theory, it recognises that central bureaucracies are usually too rigid to deal with disparate problems that arise on the ground, that they tend to have a 'one size fits all' approach to problem-solving, that their accountability is too diffuse, and that properly-structured devolved responsibility within an overall organisational framework is likely to be both cost-effective and efficient. Karnet is an ideal prison to pilot these ideas, because it is low-risk, both financially and in terms of correctional management.
- 5.8 If the Department is truly committed to this management approach, Karnet is the place to start. It is a prison with options; it has demonstrated the capacity to successfully manage its allotted tasks. The next steps are the critical ones, which must be backed by capital investment. There is significant scope for expansion of the prison's correctional and primary production activities, while still ensuring these roles remain complementary.

# Recommendations

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- 1 Arrangements must be made to renew the lease of the Karnet Prison Farm forthwith. The new lease should be of a sufficiently long period to justify capital investment in the prison and the farm.
- 2 A total farm plan, along the lines of the expert report by the Department of Agriculture, must be developed. The Department of Justice must make a long-term commitment to implementing and maintaining this plan.
- 3 Effluent management arrangements that conform to applicable environmental standards must be developed and implemented as soon as possible.
- 4 Unit 1 accommodation should be replaced with new accommodation as soon as possible, and the existing building gutted and converted into a new area for programs and related activities.
- 5 Unless inconsistent with system-wide prison population reduction strategies and projections, additional capacity of a further 60 beds should be added, so that total capacity is about 240.
- 6 In the event that both Recommendations 4 and 5 are accepted, a substantial proportion of the new accommodation should be self-care.
- 7 Work camp possibilities should be explored and implemented. In addition, Section 94 overnight work arrangements should be further developed.
- 8 A substitute program for the discontinued STAC program should be made available to prisoners at Karnet.
- 9 The Department should clarify Karnet's role as a provider of rehabilitation programs at either a primary or supplementary level.
- 10 Quality control measures should be improved with regard to the delivery of health services.
- 11 Staff should be offered in-service training that is more appropriate to their role at a minimum-security prison.
- 12 An effort should be made to recruit more female and Aboriginal officers to the staff, as vacancies occur.
- 13 A dedicated staff member should be appointed to deal with prisoner assessments and the implementation of Individual Management Plans.
- 14 Record keeping in relation to case management and related matters should be improved, to bring it up to Departmental standard.
- 15 The FCMT presence on site should be increased.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- 16 Visitors should be able to book their visits to prisoners, but in any case, a Local Order should be promulgated specifically authorising approval for unbooked visits in circumstances that do not involve a security risk.
- 17 The system for ensuring that sex offenders cannot have inappropriate contact with young children during visits should be reviewed and strengthened.
- 18 The Arunta phone system contract should be renegotiated, and if more favourable terms cannot be secured, then an alternative provider should be sought.
- 19 The Department should actively and constructively explore the possibility of making Karnet the first prison in the system to be accorded a Service Level Agreement. Such an agreement should take account of matters identified in the Report, including:
  - The need for a ring-fenced budget set at a figure that reflects the true contribution of the farm outputs to Departmental expenditure;
  - The need for and benefit of capital investment in farming and related activities;
  - The desirability of increasing accommodation capacity; and
  - The benefit to the Department of piloting a process whereby responsibility for major aspects of management is devolved from Head Office to the field.

This should be done on a trial basis with a view to extending appropriately adapted arrangements to other prisons.

# Appendix 1

## THE KARNET INSPECTION TEAM

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<b>Professor Richard Harding</b>	Inspector of Custodial Services
<b>Robert Stacey</b>	Director of Operations
<b>Peter Upton-Davis</b>	Senior Inspections Officer
<b>Andy Fitzgerald</b>	Inspections Officer
<b>Natalie Gibson</b>	Inspections Officer
<b>Gareth Morris</b>	Inspections Officer
<b>Angela Rabbitt</b>	Inspections Officer
<b>Dr Mark Salmon</b>	Department of Health
<b>Dr Greg Sawyer</b>	Department of Agriculture
<b>Dr B McIntyre</b>	Department of Agriculture
<b>Mr P Eckersley</b>	Department of Agriculture
<b>Mr I Bell</b>	Department of Agriculture

# Appendix 2

## REVIEW OF KARNET PRISON AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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Prepared by

Dr G. J. Sawyer (Department of Agriculture, Western Australia)

Assisted by:

Dr B. McIntyre

Mr P. Eckersley

Mr I. Bell

from the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

### 1 BACKGROUND

The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services was established to bring independent external scrutiny to the standards and operational practices relating to custodial services. As part of this mandate, the farming operations at Karnet Prison Farm were examined for “fitness for purpose” in addressing the four cornerstones designated by the Ministry of Justice in their Strategic Plan, being: Custody, Care and Wellbeing, Rehabilitation and Reparation. The key purpose in examining the agricultural operations relates to the last two cornerstones, particularly systems, resource use, financial viability and best practices.

The review was undertaken with the following knowledge:

- Karnet was established as a male minimum-security prison farm in 1963 on 416 hectares of hilly land in the Keysbrook State Forest. The lease on this site is due to expire in 2003;
- The farm serves as the principal supplier of fresh food (meat, smallgoods, milk, eggs and vegetables) for the Western Australian prison system. If this food supply is adversely affected or disrupted, ramifications are felt throughout the entire custodial system;
- The prison farm concept provides a unique set of challenges that are sometimes contradicting. A key result is that the four cornerstones are not in harmony, in that the reparation factor can dominate at the expense of the other three;
- About 50% (87) of the Prison muster is directly employed in primary production, with the abattoir employing the most prisoners.

### 2 METHODOLOGY

Following initial Liaison Officer visits, Inspection Team questionnaires and Office requests for historical information, the agricultural team visited Karnet on two days: Monday 30 April and Thursday 3 May. Information was gathered by interview, inspection of the farm and facilities, and by observation of work practices and processes in the abattoir, dairy and processing plant, poultry facilities, vegetable gardens and year-round production (hot house) facilities. Further information was gathered by written correspondence from the farm manager, Mr Peter Jones.

The scope of the review did not include inspection of the farm machinery and mechanical workshops to examine appropriate capitalisation, lease versus ownership issues, maintenance schedules, machinery life and so on.

### 3 CONSULTANCY REPORT

#### 3.1 General

Approximately 300 hectares of the total 416-hectare farm are used, with 235 hectares arable. The farm is reasonably productive given the nature of the location and the gravely, lateritic soils, which make cultivation difficult and tend to “lock up” some applied fertiliser (especially phosphorus). There is no scheme water, but given the high rainfall, a year-round flow through a running brook, and considerable storage capacity in a large dam and two dragline dams, water supply should not be an issue. However, it needs to be better planned, and capital rationing has compromised utilisation.

Using the Prison labour force (about 50% of prisoners) in the operation of the prison farm is very successful and positive in terms of the work ethic it encourages. There are positives in terms of skilling prisoners for farm (intensive) or processing work (especially the abattoir and dairy work) and the provision of meaningful employment. Both staff and many prisoners were very committed to the productivity of farm activities and worked hard towards production targets. The flipside of this (as acknowledged earlier) is the tension this can create between reparation through the farm work and the other cornerstones of the Department of Justice doctrine. Staff and prisoners need to share in and acknowledge the four elements of the vision, that is, as a part of the whole and not a competition. There needs to be work done on behalf of management to improve understanding and ownership of all elements of the doctrine. In terms of process, a structured day and planning ahead, taking all elements into account, may help to redress this.

#### 3.2 Planning

There was no evidence of Karnet having a comprehensive farm plan, but in correspondence with the farm manager, I am informed that this is an intention of management. The review team supports this and sees it as a crucial step in optimising production and the utilisation of the site.

The key issue is to gain the full value of summer moist country (estimated at 70-80 ha) to grow productive ryegrass-clover pastures supported by some irrigation from shandyng effluent with stored water. This in turn will offset the considerable feed costs for the dairy herd (see comments below). Lack of resources has prevented better utilisation of dairy effluent, chemical effluent (ex dairy) and stormwater.

Incorporated in the overall farm plan should be environmental management standards and an analysis of farming systems appropriate to the site, with associated best management practices. An example of this is to take the emphasis off cropping and sow more land to permanent pastures. The Department of Agriculture and some private consultants have skills to assist in this process.

Karnet is in the process of re-fencing some paddocks, which will render them more effective for pasture management and rotational grazing of the dairy herd. Again

fencing layout should be carried out according to an overall farm plan. This would incorporate planned movements of slaughter animals that are run on the farm for varying periods.

### 3.3 **Abattoir Operations**

In the 1999/2000 year, the abattoir turned over a total of \$1,744,359 (70% of the value of production from Karnet) with average sales of \$4.50/kg of beef, sheep meat, pork and smallgoods. This figure is likely to exceed \$1.8 million in the current financial year.

The abattoir throughput of approximately 1200 cattle, 7,500 sheep and 7,500 pig forequarters (purchased) is modest by commercial standards, but it does not operate as a commercial unit in terms of hours of operation, labour input or degree of mechanisation. The abattoir and smallgoods factory employs about 40 prisoners under the supervision of four staff and is an effective avenue for constructive activity and training (see further comments below).

Data on the meat yield from beef, sheep and pork carcasses show that it is comparable (if not slightly higher) with commercial abattoirs, considering the weight of trimmings were not included.

The most significant issue from the review was an apparent anomaly in the costing/pricing mechanism used to account for abattoir inputs and outputs, that is, the value of production. Wholesale prices set in 1988 are used for all produce shipped from the abattoir, yet at least 75% of cattle and all other stock (2000/01 year) are sourced at prevailing market prices. Even the stock transferred internally is valued at market price. It is likely that the true value of production (wholesale prices) is above \$3.0 million and notional profit, or true value of the enterprise to the taxpayer, is actually around \$2.0 million. This situation has probably arisen from the progressive replacement of lower priced stock sourced internally from Wooroloo and Pardelup, with stock sourced on the open market.

A positive initiative at the abattoir is the availability to prisoners of AQIS training to Certificate Level 4. Currently, about one third of prisoners employed at the abattoir complex are participating, with 48 having spent at least some time on the course. It is an Australia-wide accredited program, and so far seven prisoners have gained employment through the program. This is a commendable effort and should be encouraged in other sectors of the farm's operations.

Despite obvious risks associated with boning operations, the use of knives and manual handling in the abattoir complex, the incidence of injuries was very low and not considered an Occupational Health and Safety issue.

There are several limitations in the general abattoir set-up that influence its future capacity and throughput. The ratio of supervisory staff to prisoners is reasonably high and if further throughput was required, at least one extra staff member is likely to be

required. The raceway for cattle leading to the killing chute needs to be curved, not straight, and clad with inner sheeting with less use of weldmesh. Cold shortening of beef carcasses is likely to be a problem which can be addressed by an electrical stimulation machine – approximate cost \$2,000-\$3,000 to install. The kill would need to be managed and the chiller filled regularly (up to 50% increase) until its size was a limiter.

### 3.4 Dairy Operations

Milk produced by the dairy herd at Karnet (100-135 cows milked depending on the season) is pasteurised and packaged for distribution to the whole of the prison population throughout Western Australia. All daily requirements (at least 600 ml per person) are met by this system and since deregulation of the dairy industry, some surplus milk has been sold to local processors. Macro level production figures for the dairy herd show that production (range in monthly averages of 23.4 – 29.4 litres/cow) and milk quality measures are within acceptable limits. There has been a steady increase in annual milk production from approximately 650,000 litres in 1996/97 (5,672 litres per calved cow) to 850,000 litres in 1999/00, in response to state-wide prison demand.

In 1998 a thorough review of Karnet Dairy Farm performance was conducted and published in the Allen Report. Using the Dairy Farm Performance Program for 1996/97, the review found that the Karnet dairy was a profitable and efficient operation (profit determined as savings to the taxpayer) at \$120,000 for the financial year, or 29 cents/litre of milk produced with a Government supply contract price of 92 cents/litre assumed as sale price. A similar analysis was not attempted for this review, as macro data on production, costs of inputs and the like were of a similar order (proportionally) in 1999/2000 and the current financial year, and production per cow was comparable to similar herds in the area.

Supplementary feed costs have increased from approximately \$90,000 in 1996/97 to \$110,000 in 2000/01, i.e., a 22% increase, but with a 200,000 litre (30%) increase in production. This data indicates that the herd is reasonably well managed, is healthy and in good condition.

It was pleasing to note that the herd is routinely checked and serviced under the Murdoch Herd Health Program, and no technology gaps were apparent on Inspection of the herd, milking procedures and perusal of production performance.

The Allen Report (1998) indicated that the quantity of pasture utilised per hectare for the dairy (approximately 120 hectares) was low compared to district average. This would still appear to be the case and should be improved, but there are special considerations for Karnet. The potential for some of the grazing area on Karnet is currently not as high as on other farms in the district, and better utilisation of pasture by higher stocking rates has, until recently, not been an option, because the extra milk could not be utilised profitably. In addition, the recent season has been one of the driest on record and the current fencing arrangements on the farm do not allow for the

most efficient grazing (strip grazing) for the dairy herd. Improved fencing layout should be incorporated in the overall farm plan to allow more controlled grazing of the dairy herd.

Effluent disposal from the dairy operations is currently not a problem, but it should be upgraded and shifted if the milking shed is upgraded. The new system should utilise storm water runoff from roofs of buildings and chemical/cleaning agent effluent. With the use of a trafficable sump and settling pit for solids removal, the nutrient-enriched effluent could be profitably used on horticultural land or pastures. Mr Ian Bell (Department of Agriculture) is available to give advice on these matters.

The processing side of the dairy is due to be upgraded, including the installation of a separator, homogeniser, and storage vat and an upgrade to the milking shed will follow. The current shed barely copes with the peak number of milking cows, which is approaching 140 hours – long hours in milking time. If the numbers of cows are to be increased further, then the operation of the milking shed will become a major limiting factor and cows will be standing waiting to be milked, walking to and from the dairy for too long. This limits grazing and feeding and ultimately production potential, especially if they are off water in hot weather. It is anticipated additions to the milking shed, with a new milking machine (24 units) will be required, sufficient to milk up to 250 cows in a reasonable time (2.0 hours). The anticipated cost is \$135,000 - \$155,000.

With a larger dairy herd the increased supply of milk could be utilised within the prison system as yoghurt and flavoured milks, or for the production of a soft cheese such as Feta. This would provide further alternatives in constructive activities for prisoners and offset the cost of purchasing these products for the prison population. The additional equipment required is not considered to be cost-prohibitive.

Accredited certificate courses in dairy husbandry/processing technology similar to the AQIS course offered in the abattoir system should be considered for prisoners working in the dairy. This would provide more recognition for the long hours currently worked by prisoners in the dairy operations.

### **3.5 Egg Production**

When reviewed previously (Allen Report, 1998), productivity from the egg production unit in terms of feed cost and eggs per bird was considered below industry standards. Since that time improvements in cage repair, use and analysis of production statistics, show that egg production has increased by 30% and is approaching 60,000 dozen eggs annually from 2,500 layers (or 288 eggs per bird). Production is adequate to supply the needs of all Western Australian prisons based on four eggs per prisoner per week or 208 per year. This is now comparable to industry standards.

As reported in the 1998 Report, rearing mortality of replacement day-old pullets is low at about 2%, and laying mortality was also well contained. There appeared to be no major animal health or welfare issues concerned with the egg production unit. It provides constructive activity for two prisoners.

Returns from the egg production unit run at approximately \$120,000 per year, and with expenditure running at \$60,000 per year, this provides a gross margin of approximately \$60,000 per year. This is comparable to industry standards.

### 3.6 Horticulture

Since the Allen Report (1998), which outlined vegetable production at several of the major prisons, Karnet Prison farm has assumed a role only second to Casuarina in vegetable production. Four years of data show that the value of production for Karnet (though variable) runs at approximately 33% (\$82,000) of that of Casuarina (\$250,000). Canning Vale Prison supplies the seedlings, and planning/discussion is coordinated between prisons to facilitate continuity of supply and improve knowledge and skills in vegetable production.

Vegetables at Karnet are grown on north and western facing slopes on acreage close to the main complex of buildings, in generally gravely soils. There are hothouse facilities producing tomatoes and cucumbers. Vegetable production is well organised and best industry agronomic practices are generally followed. Attention is given to ensuring appropriate rotations are followed and there is a good knowledge of the main pests and diseases affecting the crops grown and methods of control.

Crops include brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower) supplied 8-10 months of the year, capsicums (8 months), sweetcorn (4-5 months) and the hothouse crops of cucumber and tomatoes (year-round). Prices received for these crops reflect seasonal variations on the open market and income earned from the enterprise generally fluctuates between \$1,200 and \$2,500 per month. Total inputs to the enterprise run at approximately \$40,000 per year. As concluded by Mr. I. McPharlin in the Allen Report (1998), there is nothing in these figures to suggest that these costs are excessive, though no attempt was made to undertake a complete cost of production analysis.

Vegetable production of the kind described at Karnet, designed to supply the prison system's needs, is an ideal prison enterprise and useful constructive activity. It cannot be strictly compared to commercial enterprises because of the scale of production and the constraints of having to supply a finite need within the prison system, not an opportunistic domestic or export market.

Comment was made regarding the time sometimes taken in hot weather for minor processing and transport of vegetable produce, with subsequent deterioration in quality. Provision of a cool-store facility should be considered to maximise the quality of the outputs from the vegetable enterprise.



#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

Karnet Prison Farm's agricultural operations generally meet the objectives of:

a continuous supply of meat, smallgoods, milk, vegetables and eggs to prison kitchens for the WA prison population;

providing constructive activities and related training/skilling of prisoners; and

using the land resource to provide a buffer zone between minimum-security prisoners and the community.

The agricultural operations are run efficiently and, considering the diversity of enterprises and the nature of the site, do surprisingly well at meeting best practice for those industries. Some improvements can be made to overall efficiency and there are prospects for expansion of some enterprises relating primarily to effective farm planning. This necessitates a whole of farm plan incorporating the use of the summer moist country, environmental management standards, effluent disposal, appropriate fencing strategies and irrigation planning, better utilisation of more productive pastures and incorporation of areas for vegetable rotations.

From a business perspective, there appear to be anomalies in the pricing of outputs (especially of abattoir produce) compared to sourcing inputs on the open/commercial market. In general, this has the effect of under-valuing the production from Karnet in terms of value to the taxpayers of Western Australia.

The major positive of the agricultural operations at Karnet is the commitment by staff and prisoners to the productivity of farm activities and the work ethic it encourages. The AQIS accredited training provided at the abattoir is a further enhancement. Balanced against this must be consideration of the other cornerstones of the Ministry of Justice doctrine, especially program attendance to assist with rehabilitation. Management need to improve the understanding and ownership of the elements of a successful prison system, for both staff and prisoners at Karnet.

5 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Allen Report (1998) listed 12 recommendations plus major recommendations for the future structure and management of primary industries across the prison system. While circumstances have changed, necessitating some change in their application, it is pleasing to note that Karnet Prison Farm has, where possible, applied the Report's recommendations. A number of recommendations from this review team follow which will further enhance the systems, resource use, financial viability and best practices used at Karnet.

**Recommendation 1**

Management to improve the understanding, ownership and application of the four cornerstones of the Ministry of Justice Strategic Plan, especially the balance between rehabilitation programs and reparation work.

**Recommendation 2**

Consideration is given to improved planning and a structured day approach to help redress the imbalance.

**Recommendation 3**

A whole farm plan to be produced incorporating:

- Full and appropriate use of the summer-moist country for dairy cows.
- Sowing summer-moist country to improved ryegrass-clover pastures.
- Environmental management standards and best management practices.
- Refencing to enhance pasture management, management of "springing" (heavily pregnant) dairy cows and the movements of slaughter animals.
- Expanded and integrated effluent disposal system.
- Improved irrigation reticulation and provision.

**Recommendation 4**

Address the anomaly of costing/pricing mechanisms for the abattoir operation, as it currently undervalues the true value. While this is the major anomaly in this system at Karnet, a complete review of business systems and costing/pricing mechanisms of this nature may be warranted (see also Allen 1998).

**Recommendation 5**

Abattoir amendments suggested include, curved and iron-sheet clad raceway and purchase of an electrical stimulation machine for use on recently slaughtered animals.

**Recommendation 6**

Continued servicing of the dairy herd by the Murdoch Herd Health Program and consider use of the Dairy Farm Performance program (Department of Agriculture) on a semi-regular basis (every 2-3 years).

**Recommendation 7**

Improve utilisation of farm-grown pasture (improved in summer-moist country) by controlled grazing, better fencing/water arrangements etc.

**Recommendation 8**

Upgrade the milking shed in size, using 24 units and a new milking machine.

**Recommendation 9**

Shift and upgrade the effluent disposal system for the renovated dairy, utilising storm water runoff and chemical/cleaning agent effluent all combined. Use this effluent on pastures or horticultural plots.

**Recommendation 10**

Investigate using the extra milk now produced for flavoured milks and yoghurt production for the prison system.

**Recommendation 11**

Introduce the opportunity of accredited certificate courses for the prisoners who work in the dairy and poultry enterprises similar to the opportunities at the abattoir.

**Recommendation 12**

Continue the egg production enterprise. It is worthwhile, provides constructive activity and meets commercial standards.

**Recommendation 13**

Continue the growing of vegetable crops at Karnet and have the acreage set aside as part of the whole farm plan. This is an ideal Prison enterprise and could be expanded, depending on demand.

**Recommendation 14**

Investigate the feasibility of installing a cold-store facility to preserve the quality of produce and assist with levelling out fluctuations in supply.

# Appendix 3

## REVIEW OF KARNET PRISON FARM HEALTH SERVICE

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Prepared by  
Dr Mark Salmon (Department of Health)

### 1 LEADERSHIP

The health service at Karnet Prison Farm appeared to be professionally led within the Prison organisational structure, with an appropriate focus on the care and well being of prisoners. The health service had a good relationship with the custodial service, with fairly clear lines of responsibility and ad hoc, informal communication channels. There was a lack of more regular formal interaction between the custodial and health services at a senior management level and there appeared to be no formal processes to encourage communication at that level.

The Medical Director, Prison Health Services (PHS), based at Head Office was identified as the source of strategic planning and policy development. The focus of day-to-day operational management was identified as the Nurse Manager, who is based on the prison site. While planning on a local level is good, upon examination it was found that the Prison lacks strategic planning for identification of future needs and demands on the health service, alternative or more effective options for models of care, and estimates of future recurrent and capital resource requirements.

The written policies, procedures and practices were well documented in the form of the Department of Justice Health Services Branch Policy and Procedure Manual and the Karnet Prison Farm Local and Standing Orders. Whilst these resources were available and known to staff, it was apparent that policies and procedures were not necessarily aligned with actual practice. However, where the practices were incongruent, the intent was to improve care of the prisoner and reflect local conditions.

It was identified that some significant policies had not been updated since 1995. These policies included:

- Hepatitis C
- General Medication Policy
- Anti-depressants
- Psychotropic drugs
- Procedure for Medical Transfer to Graylands Hospital
- Prisoner Release to Freedom

There was a basic system of staff development, including non-structured orientation and compulsory attendance at courses for CPR, Mental Health, Diabetics, Asthma, Risk Assessment, Phlebotomy, and Infection Control.

A basic system of clinical governance was in existence. The Nurse Manager stated that all health staff had their qualifications checked on recruitment, but local records were not sighted. Only health staff are permitted to make health decisions, although a serious issue arose as to who should make those decisions at times when health staff were not on-site.

## 2 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The health facility was basic and clean but was outdated and would be unlikely to meet the licensing requirements expected of a private health facility. The layout of the clinic did not provide sufficient safety measures for staff, or privacy for prisoners during consultations. This was exacerbated by the fact that the clinic building is utilised for non-health related programs and recreation services.

The infection control standards for the clinic were poor. There were no designated systems for disposal of body fluids, for example urine specimens were disposed of in the clinic sink instead of an appropriate disposal unit such as a sluice. There were no designated 'clean' and 'dirty' work areas that are fundamental in minimising the spread of infection. An appropriate system for disposal of sharps was in place.

Generally, prisoners with intellectual or physical disabilities were not specifically catered for, with deficiencies including a lack of ramps to the clinic area and the absence of disabled toilets. Aged prisoners were not specifically catered for in terms of health care services, although it was accepted that prisoners in this age group at this Prison were generally independent in terms of the physical and mental activities of daily living.

Medical equipment was basic, but in most cases was available and in working order. There was, however, some equipment that should be available that was not. An example of this is a defibrillator that is vital in a life-threatening situation and should be available in all prisons, especially at one such as Karnet where the nearest hospital is approximately an hour away. It was noted that the required monitoring and recording system was not set up for the vaccination fridge (this requires a fridge thermometer and recording chart). It is important that vaccines and other medication such as insulin are stored at a certain temperature to prevent deterioration of the medication. This is a basic requirement and should be addressed as soon as possible. The pharmacist was reported as having approved the set-up of the pharmacy storage cupboard, despite no evidence of a temperature monitoring and recording system.

A medication parade was observed during the Inspection. The prisoners were administered their medication through a grille with the clinic door locked which seemed out of context and inappropriate in a minimum-security prison setting.

## 3 CONTINUUM OF CARE

The health service was built on experienced staff committed to providing a good health service. There was no evidence that health professionals were used for custodial functions.

The scope of health services on-site included seven day nursing coverage from 7.00am - 8.00pm Monday to Friday, and 8.30am - 6.30pm weekends and public holidays. A medical officer attended Tuesday and Thursday mornings for three and a half hours. A local general practitioner was rostered for on call after hours service. In the event of an after hours call, the doctor would usually advise that the prisoner be taken to the

nearest hospital for treatment. Arrangements have been made with Armadale and Fremantle hospitals to provide 24-hour emergency care and tertiary hospitals for specialist consultation.

A psychologist visits the Prison weekly and a psychiatrist fortnightly. The dental unit at Hakea Prison provides dental treatment once a fortnight, but there are long waiting lists to attend the surgery. Other allied health services are available at intervals at other prison locations. Examples of this include physiotherapy, which is available at Hakea on a weekly basis and optical services monthly at Casuarina. Prisoners also have to travel to Casuarina for podiatry appointments. Of concern are the sometimes lengthy travel times for these off-site services, particularly in cases where appropriate methods of transport were not provided in consideration of the medical condition of the prisoner. The need for emergency access to these services also does not seem to have been considered.

On-site nursing coverage is quite reasonable, with extended hours appropriate to its isolated location. Medical on-site coverage is standard for this type and size of prison. In practice, however, with the on-call doctor during the day being the Medical Director Prison Health Services (PHS) based at Head Office, this daytime on-call cover is not always readily available. On-call after-hours nursing and medical is in practice minimal, which is almost certainly a function of its isolated location and is a cause for some concern.

The reception and assessment process is well organised and appeared to be complete in all cases that were checked. All admissions are notified in advance either by computer or fax. Preliminary health screening and “at risk” assessments are conducted by a nurse on the day of reception. Appropriate alerts are marked on medical files. Care is well organised with reasonable wait times for clinics, a system of triage and appointment system for the medical officer or health service staff is in place. Medical referral for specialist services is arranged as requested. Individual care plans are developed for prisoners and appropriate systems for treatment, follow-up and recalls were implemented.

There is a medication system that works well incorporating:

- Prescribing;
- Storage;
- Clinical judgement;
- Timely dosette administration;
- Controlling of dependency issues;
- Regular review of long term medication (by the pharmacist and medical practitioner); and,
- The provision of several days supply of medications on discharge.

There is a patient transfer system, which includes pre-release discharge planning, the making of appropriate appointments with a GP, copies of results transferred to the appropriate facility, and a spelling out of the next step on specific discharging requirements. Some shortcomings were noted, however, including that discharge forms were not available as part of the standard medical record documentation (although discharge letters were often said to be written on non-letterhead stationary at the request of the prisoners).

#### **4 MEDICAL RECORDS**

There is a well-organised system of health information management, including medical records. There are standardised health files that were comprehensive, sequential and legible. The storage cupboard is secure but overcrowded, with additional storage space having been ordered. Prisoners are said to have access to their own health file, but on a view only basis. There is evidence that on release or transfer of a prisoner, the medical record is processed and tracked in a timely manner.

It was demonstrated that only health professionals could access complete computerised health record details through the TOMS program, although other staff could access a summary page with general health details.

#### **5 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

No mechanism is in place at Karnet to monitor the standard of health services being delivered. This is a serious shortcoming in relation to quality assurance. All medical centres should have a structured risk management/quality assurance program as a matter of priority. An appropriate prisoner survey and grievance system in relation to the health service would also be an important step forward.

Due partly to this deficiency in quality assurance practices, there was no evidence to ensure that the health service was responding to the cultural needs of prisoners. The Aboriginal Medical Service was not available to service Aboriginal prisoners, as it is at other prison locations.

Proper evidence was seen, however, of an appropriate system of recording that Schedule 8 drugs were stored appropriately and a register of dispersal completed.

#### **6 HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION**

A proactive health education program was not evident at Karnet Prison. Generally, health education was conducted on a one on one basis that related to a specific health condition for the individual prisoner concerned. A shortcoming identified in relation to Environmental Health is a lack of a smoke-free environment within the Prison buildings, and particularly in the cells.

Required vaccinations programs were available as necessary, and records kept of prisoners who had received shots.

# Appendix 4

## RESPONSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

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### **Recommendation 1**

Arrangements must be made to renew the lease of the Karnet Prison Farm forthwith. The new lease should be of a sufficiently long period to justify capital investment in the Prison and the Farm.

*Response:*

Agreed – in progress prior to inspection (detail contained in main response).

### **Recommendation 2**

A Total Farm Plan, along the lines of the expert report by the Department of Agriculture must be developed. The Department of Justice must make a long-term commitment to implementing and maintaining this Plan.

*Response:*

Agreed.

### **Recommendation 3**

Effluent management arrangements that conform to applicable environmental standards must be developed and implemented as soon as possible.

*Response:*

Agreed – in progress prior to inspection (detail contained in main response).

### **Recommendation 4**

Unit 1 accommodation should be replaced with new accommodation as soon as possible, and the existing building gutted and converted into a new area for programs and related activities.

*Response:*

Agreed – funds provisionally allocated for this purpose prior to inspection. Business case to be developed to secure funding.

### **Recommendation 5**

Unless inconsistent with system-wide prison population reduction strategies and projections, additional capacity of a further 60 beds should be added, so that total capacity is about 240.

*Response:*

With current population projections this is not viable, however may be an option in the longer term.



RESPONSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE REPORT

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**Recommendation 6**

In the event that both Recommendations 4 and 5 are accepted, a substantial proportion of the new accommodation should be self-care.

*Response:*

Agreed. To be developed as part of the business case in #4 above.

**Recommendation 7**

Work-camp possibilities should be explored and implemented. In addition, Section 94 overnight work arrangements should be further developed.

*Response:*

There are no plans for a work camp at Karnet, however, the Section 94 overnight arrangements are being reviewed for expansion.

**Recommendation 8**

A substitute program for the discontinued STAC program should be made available to prisoners at Karnet.

*Response:*

Agreed – in progress. The proposed CALM program will be introduced to Karnet after a pilot program. The MASU program is already available.

**Recommendation 9**

The Department should clarify Karnet's role as a provider of rehabilitation programs at either a primary or supplementary level.

*Response:*

Karnet will need to deliver programs at both levels. Prisoners can transfer to Karnet directly from Hakea with an IMP requiring (primary) program participation. They can also transfer from medium security prisons having completed programs but perhaps still requiring further (supplementary) programs to promote relapse prevention.

**Recommendation 10**

Quality control measures should be improved with regard to the delivery of health services.

*Response:*

Quality control measures are in place (see main response). No further action proposed.

RESPONSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE REPORT

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**Recommendation 11**

Staff should be offered in-service training that is more appropriate to their role as a minimum-security prison.

*Response:*

Agreed – in progress. Two Karnet officers have completed training to deliver the Reasoning and Rehabilitation program to prisoners. Metropolitan staff training in relation to ISTP will commence February 2002.

**Recommendation 12**

An effort should be made to recruit female and more Aboriginal officers to the staff, as vacancies occur.

*Response:*

Agreed. Has been a priority in recent schools, with good results (see body of response). We expect an excess of officers due to muster reductions and so prison officer recruitment will cease for approximately 12-18 months. When it resumes, the recruitment of female and Aboriginal officers will again be a priority.

**Recommendation 13**

A dedicated staff member should be appointed to deal with prisoner assessments and the implementation of Individual Management Plans.

*Response:*

Will be considered as part of the review of Karnet Prison Farm management structure.

**Recommendation 14**

Record-keeping in relation to case management and related matters should be improved, to bring it up to Departmental standard.

*Response:*

Agreed. Case Management training of approximately 10 officers will deliver some improvements. Superintendent to address Unit files and ARMS files (see main response)

**Recommendation 15**

The FCMT presence on-site should be increased.

*Response:*

Agree, however limited funding exists at this stage.

## RESPONSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

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### **Recommendation 16**

Visitors should be able to book their visits to prisoners, but in any case, a Local Order should be promulgated specifically authorising approval for unbooked visits in circumstances that do not involve a security risk.

*Response:*

Agree to review this matter (see main response).

### **Recommendation 17**

The system for ensuring that sex offenders cannot have inappropriate contact with young children during visits should be reviewed and strengthened.

*Response:*

Agree to review current arrangements with a view to strengthening system.

### **Recommendation 18**

The Arunta phone system should be re-negotiated, and if more favourable terms cannot be achieved then an alternative provider should be sought.

*Response:*

Agreed – in progress prior to inspection (see main response).

### **Recommendation 19**

The Department should actively and constructively explore the possibility of making Karnet the first prison in the system to be accorded a Service Level Agreement. Such an agreement should take account of matters identified in this Report including:

- The need for a ring-fenced budget set at a figure that reflects the true contribution of the Farm outputs to the Departmental expenditure;
- The need for and benefit of capital investment in farming and related activities;
- The desirability of increasing accommodation capacity; and
- The benefit to the Department of piloting a process whereby responsibility for major aspects of management is devolved from Head Office to the field.

This should be done on a trial basis with a view to extending appropriately adapted arrangements to other prisons.

*Response:*

The Department will actively pursue a model of understanding with individual prisons, which specifies agreed outcomes and performance requirements. This arrangement may take the form of Service Level Agreements, however is still to be determined at this stage.







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