

MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON 12TH JUNE 2012

Report No. 77 – Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison

In releasing his report of an inspection of Broome Regional Prison conducted in September 2011, the Inspector of Custodial Services, Neil Morgan, noted that there have been a number of improvements at the prison but that it faces an uncertain future:

‘In the last five years, around \$11 million has been invested in Broome’s physical infrastructure. There have also been improvements to the general culture, management and accountability of the prison. However, it remains small and overcrowded. And progress is fragile because of uncertainty about the prison’s future.’

The report comments that Broome’s future is inextricably linked to both the West Kimberley Prison in Derby (‘Derby’) which is due to open later this year, and the Wyndham Work Camp which opened in August 2010. Mr Morgan said:

‘Derby and Wyndham have involved very significant levels of public expenditure. To repay this investment, it is essential for there to be good planning and a clear sense of direction for custodial services across the Kimberley. Unfortunately, although Derby was scheduled to open in only nine months, we found that Department of Corrective Services planning and communication had been very poor. Broome staff were in the dark about the future of their prison and this was having a detrimental impact on morale and confidence. And too many questions regarding Derby were poorly identified or unaddressed.’

Mr Morgan said that his concerns were raised with key parties at the time and that there has been some progress in the interim. However, it is of concern that many matters are still evolving at Derby, that the Wyndham Work Camp has been operating well under capacity, and that no formal announcement has yet been made about the future of Broome.

At the time of the inspection, Mr Morgan suggested a number of options for Broome prison over the short to medium term. One of these was that it should house a combination of prisoners appearing in the Broome court, local men rated minimum security, and a larger cohort of minimum security rated Indonesian prisoners.

‘I understand’ he said, ‘that this is one of the main options currently being considered by the Minister. Although it is important for an announcement to be made at the earliest opportunity, it is even more important to undertake a proper cost-benefit analysis and not to rush a decision to compensate for belated Departmental planning.’

Neil Morgan

12 June 2012

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

Neil Morgan will be available for comment from 12 noon on Tuesday 12th June and can be contacted on 0427 426 471.

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