



REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF  
WOOROLOO PRISON FARM

80

AUGUST 2012  
REPORT

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OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

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

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# The Inspector's Overview

## WOOROLOO PRISON FARM: DIFFICULT TRANSITION BUT GENUINE OPPORTUNITY

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### CONTEXT: PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS

This is the report of an announced inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm ('Wooroloo'), conducted in late March 2012. It is the fourth occasion on which this Office has reported to Parliament and the public on the prison's performance. The first two inspections, conducted in 2002 and 2006, found Wooroloo to be one of the state's best performing prisons.<sup>i</sup> However, the 2009 inspection concluded that while there were areas of good practice, its overall performance and sense of direction had significantly declined.<sup>ii</sup> It was against this backdrop that the 2012 inspection was conducted.

In 2009, the reasons for Wooroloo's decline were far from straightforward but included several related ingredients. Some involved developments over which the prison itself had little direct control but which required a clear sense of direction from the Department of Corrective Services' head office coupled with strong and careful local management. The prison was having to transition, in less than eight years, from a small unfenced facility housing around 160 prisoners to a 360-bed prison behind a substantial perimeter fence. These changes were leading to considerable uncertainty as to the prison's exact role and future direction, a situation which was compounded by fragility in senior management positions, divisions amongst some staff and declining staff/prisoner relationships.

### 2012: TIME TO RE-FOCUS AFTER A PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY

In 2009 we believed there was reason to be cautiously optimistic about Wooroloo's future. There were signs that the management situation would be stabilised, staff were certainly keen to see progress, and there was a positive official response to the inspection. In the period from 2009 to 2012, the prison has seen some significant infrastructure improvements and has continued to do well in a number of specific areas of activity.<sup>iii</sup> Unfortunately, however, despite some noticeable progress during 2011 and early 2012, the underlying cultural, relationship and directional issues have not yet been adequately addressed. The limited progress has caused understandable frustration to staff and the issues must be addressed if Wooroloo is to maximise its undoubted opportunities.

Fortunately, the time is right for improvement. In late 2011, a very experienced substantive Superintendent was appointed and an experienced senior management team is now largely in place. In addition, the prison has now been operating at or close to full capacity for over two years, so that some of the 'fear of the unknown' that was evident in 2009 should have passed. The inspection therefore provided an opportunity for reflection and a potential catalyst for action. At the exit debrief which I presented to the prison on 30 March 2012, there was a high measure of agreement with our core findings and proposals. The Department of Corrective Services' responses to the formal

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i See: Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 17 (October 2002) and OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007).

ii OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009).

iii See below.

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recommendations in this report also reflect an acceptance of the challenges and a commitment to change.<sup>iv</sup>

One of the more important recommendations is Recommendation Five which states: ‘With staff consultation and input, develop a strategic plan for Wooroloo Prison Farm outlining the prison’s vision, role, priorities, culture and values.’ The Department has supported this recommendation and there are several reasons why it is important, not only at Wooroloo but also at other prisons. At Wooroloo itself, a frank, consultative discussion of issues such as vision, culture and values should contribute to addressing some of the internal issues relating to morale and communication.

Implementation of the recommendation also requires the Department’s Head Office to assist in articulating Wooroloo’s position in the system as a whole. The Department’s overriding philosophy is ‘Making a Positive Difference’ and to some extent this is about how staff go about their work on a daily basis within a prison environment. However, it should also involve the development at every prison of: (i) a guiding philosophy that articulates what ‘making a positive difference’ means in terms of vision, practice and goals at that facility; and (ii) what can reasonably be expected in terms of improved correctional outcomes, and how are these outcomes to be evaluated? At present, out of all the state’s prisons, only Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women has a detailed and publicly articulated guiding philosophy of this sort.<sup>v</sup>

### INFRASTRUCTURE

Prior to becoming a prison farm in 1972, Wooroloo was a sanatorium. Many of its buildings are heritage listed and this imposes some restrictions on development at the site and some requirements with respect to the nature of any restoration and refurbishment activity. However, on balance, these limitations have been a positive thing. Some impressive renovation and restoration work has been undertaken, and Wooroloo is testimony to the fact that prisons do not necessarily require purpose-built cells: the most recently renovated units provide some of the best prisoner accommodation and staff work spaces in the state. A new health centre, reception centre and education and program rooms also provide excellent facilities and working conditions. Ideally, however, renovation work needs to be undertaken on a number of other heritage-listed buildings. They are deteriorating and will become increasingly expensive to fix as time goes by.

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iv The first five recommendations in the report are all supported. They include ensuring a fully substantive senior management team; improved anti-bullying strategies, processes and training; improving clarity and consistency of communication; and the provision of better training opportunities for senior officers. Specific commitments are also made with respect to anti-bullying training and training for senior officers in October 2012.

v See [www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/\\_files/.../boronia-philosophy.pdf](http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/.../boronia-philosophy.pdf). Although Boronia does have a clear guiding philosophy, there has been no rigorous evaluation of its success in achieving its goal of ‘the reduced rate of reoffending’: see OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 79 (July 2012).

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Another positive development has been the opening in February 2012 of a new work camp at Dowerin, which is managed from Wooroloo. This is a purpose-built facility with accommodation and facilities which are far superior to those at its predecessor camps at Kellerberrin and Wyalkatchem.<sup>vi</sup>

### REACHING THE NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL MEN

Two of the most obvious features of the cohort of prisoners held at Wooroloo are the relatively low number of Aboriginal prisoners and the relatively high number of foreign national and non-English speaking prisoners.<sup>vii</sup>

The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics snapshot of the nation's prisons confirms that Western Australia has by far the highest per capita incarceration rate of Aboriginal people in the country.<sup>viii</sup> Department of Corrective Services' statistics also show the total number of Aboriginal prisoners to be at unprecedented levels. On 9 August 2012, there were 1942 Aboriginal prisoners out of a total of 4936.<sup>ix</sup> It is also universally acknowledged that Aboriginal people, as a cohort, have very high re-entry needs. In the recent report of an announced inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, I drew attention to the small and declining number of Aboriginal women accessing its excellent facilities and well-resourced re-entry services, and to the lack of central acknowledgment and planning around this issue.<sup>x</sup>

Unfortunately, the same picture emerged at Wooroloo. In 2009, Wooroloo held around 260 prisoners, 60 of whom (23 %) were Aboriginal. During 2011 and 2012 Wooroloo's population was around 360 but generally only 40 to 50 Aboriginal prisoners (11 to 14 %) have been there. If the state is to maximise the opportunities for prisoner rehabilitation and for reduced recidivism amongst core target groups, there needs to be better understanding of the trends and a sharper strategic focus on the needs of this group.

### PRISONER SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Like all prisons, Wooroloo faces budgetary constraints and these are unlikely to ease in the coming years. In essence, this report shows that it does a good job within those constraints. Health services are good. Education and training opportunities are also good, but there are waiting lists for some courses. Unfortunately, however, far too many prisoners are either unemployed or under-employed. This does not accord with Wooroloo's intended role and philosophy, and must be a key focus of both the prison and the Department over the coming years.<sup>xi</sup>

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- vi The role and work of the new Dowerin work camp will be further examined, alongside other work camps, in a future report by this Office.
- vii The number of foreign national prisoners is increasing and Recommendation 9 of this report urges the Department to finalise and implement policies to guide the management of such prisoners. The Department has supported this and says it is an existing initiative. However, the development of a policy has now been in train for well over two years.
- viii In Western Australia, around one in 32 Aboriginal adults is currently in prison. The next highest rate is found in South Australia (one in 45): see Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Prisoners in Australia 2011*, Table 3.3: [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/7B05CD44A0E2FC8ACA25795F000DBD0F/\\$File/45170\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/7B05CD44A0E2FC8ACA25795F000DBD0F/$File/45170_2011.pdf)
- ix [http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/\\_files/about-us/statistics-publications/statistics/2012/cnt120809.pdf](http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/about-us/statistics-publications/statistics/2012/cnt120809.pdf)
- x OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 79 (July 2012).
- xi See Recommendations 15 and 16.

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Wooroloo plays a major role as a 're-entry' facility and generally does a good job in terms of practical skill development and community outreach. A good example of this is driver training. It may sound a small thing to many people in the general community, but there was no mistaking the pride with which prisoners told us that they had acquired licences and this achievement had boosted both their self-esteem and their post-release prospects. The arrangements for visits and for recreation, including organised external games, are also real highlights at Wooroloo.

Neil Morgan

13 August 2012



# Fact Page

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## NAME OF FACILITY

Wooroloo Prison Farm

## LOCATION

55 kilometres north-east of Perth.

The traditional owners of the land are the Noongar people.

## ROLE OF FACILITY

Minimum security prison for adult males

## BRIEF HISTORY

Wooroloo Prison Farm was opened in 1914 as a sanatorium for patients with tuberculosis and leprosy. In the 1960s, the institution became a general hospital for the surrounding district. The hospital closed in 1970 and the Department of Corrective Services took over the site in 1972. The prison buildings are listed on the State Register of Heritage Places. Construction of a perimeter fence was completed at Wooroloo in 2007.

## LAST INSPECTION

19-24 April 2009

## DESIGN CAPACITY OF PRISON<sup>xii</sup>

323

## NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD AT TIME OF INSPECTION

356

## DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Unit 1 63 semi-self-care beds

Unit 2A 40 standard beds

Unit 2B 24 self-care beds

Unit 2C 25 semi-self-care beds

Unit 3 110 standard beds

Unit 4A 76 standard beds

Unit 4B 11 self-care beds

Unit 4C 11 self-care beds

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xii During the 2009 inspection, the design capacity of Wooroloo Prison Farm as stated by the Department of Corrective Services was 249. Since then, the prison has opened two new units with a total of 74 additional beds. New design capacity has therefore been calculated as 323.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 The fourth announced inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm ('Wooroloo') was conducted by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services ('the Office') in March 2012. Wooroloo is a minimum security facility for adult males. For most prisoners housed there, Wooroloo will be their final place of incarceration prior to re-entering the community. As such, Wooroloo is a 're-entry prison' and its primary role should therefore be to provide prisoners with the best possible preparation for release to reduce their likelihood of re-offending. This is a key outcome for the Department of Corrective Services ('the Department') as reflected in its strategic plan.<sup>1</sup>

## CONTEXT OF THE INSPECTION

- 1.2 Because Wooroloo has been inspected four times since 2002, the Office has accumulated a historical record of findings about the prison. This has provided a valuable insight into the evolution of the prison over the years. It is important to reflect upon this in considering the current situation and the challenges ahead.
- 1.3 The first inspection in 2002 concluded that Wooroloo was a well-performing facility, displaying 'confidence and competence'. Specific strengths of the prison included good case management; excellent visiting arrangements; a reasonably effective anti-bullying policy; robust education services; a strengthening commitment to offender programs; and prisoner employment opportunities.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 By the time of the second inspection in 2006, Wooroloo had built on its strengths and was found to be operating at a particularly high standard. In fact, the Inspector classed Wooroloo as 'the best male adult prison in the state'.<sup>3</sup> Some of the key findings that contributed to this positive assessment included that management had a clear understanding of their processes and objectives; a strong sense of fairness was evident in the prison's dealings with staff and prisoners; there was very good interaction between staff and prisoners; and 'everything about the regime' pointed to Wooroloo successfully fulfilling its role as a re-entry prison.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.5 Unfortunately, the third inspection in 2009 identified a significant decline in performance at Wooroloo. The most evident symptom was a marked degradation of the relationship between prison officers and prisoners. The inspection team identified a number of factors that had contributed to this decline in performance including severe shortages of custodial staff; long-term instability in the senior management team; a significant increase in prisoner numbers; the impact of the new perimeter fence; and ambivalence about the prison's role as a pre-release facility.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Department of Corrective Services (DCS), *Strategic Plan 2011–2014* (March 2012).

2 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 17 (October 2002) iii.

3 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) iii.

4 Ibid.

5 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 5–17.

## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.6 At the conclusion of the 2009 inspection, the Office was hopeful that Wooroloo would recover from this decline in performance. The return of the substantive superintendent had brought some stability to senior management and an appetite to return the prison to its former high standards.
- 1.7 However, the 2012 inspection found that the prison had been unable to make much progress and performance had deteriorated further in certain times. Many of the challenges that faced the prison in 2009 had not been resolved and new challenges had arisen.
- 1.8 The prison had undergone another significant capacity increase and held 360 prisoners compared to 270 at the time of the 2009 inspection. This brought with it a number of problems, including that there was no longer enough meaningful employment for all prisoners. Instability in the senior management team also continued to have a damaging impact on the operation of the prison. There was a lack of interaction between officers and prisoners and poor communication between staff at all levels. Although areas of excellent practice remain, Wooroloo is failing to reach its full potential.
- 1.9 As a re-entry prison, Wooroloo is vital to the Department's key objectives of reducing re-offending and improving community safety. If Wooroloo does not fulfil its role, then the Department's ability to deliver these outcomes is weakened.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.10 Chapter 2 of this report discusses the issues and challenges facing Wooroloo in terms of management and staffing and its role within the wider prison system. Chapter 3 deals with aspects of the prisoner's experience at Wooroloo, both good and bad. Chapter 4 explores Wooroloo's ability to fulfil its role as a re-entry prison.

## METHODOLOGY

- 1.11 The Wooroloo inspection followed the standard methodology of the Office. Prior to the on-site inspection, surveys were distributed to both prisoners and staff. Response rates were lower than desired (16% of prisoners and 23% of staff) but the surveys were nevertheless valuable for identifying issues within the prison. Furthermore, the survey results were tested during on-site inspection activities and affirmed by the observations and evidence gathered by the inspection team.
- 1.12 Community consultation activities prior to the inspection included a meeting with the various agencies and organisations that deliver services inside the prison. The Dowerin Shire Council was consulted in relation to the Wheatbelt Work Camp.
- 1.13 The on-site inspection itself was conducted over six days in March 2012, and included formal and informal meetings with management, staff and prisoners. The inspection team comprised nine members (including one expert advisor from the Drug and Alcohol Office).
- 1.14 The Inspector delivered an exit debrief to staff on the final day of the inspection. All staff members were invited to the Inspector's presentation during which he outlined the preliminary findings of the inspection. A member of the inspection team also delivered an exit debrief to a representative group of prisoners.

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6 DCS, *Strategic Plan 2011–2014* (March 2012).

# Chapter 2

## THE ROLE AND DIRECTION OF THE PRISON

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- 2.1 For any prison, a clearly-defined role and strategic direction is crucial to optimum performance. In 2006, this was seen as a strength of Wooroloo – staff and management understood that the prison was a minimum security re-entry facility and this was reflected in all aspects of operations.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.2 Since 2006, it is arguable that the prison has lost its way. The Western Australian prison system has been under enormous pressure in that time, expanding from around 3,500 prisoners statewide to more than 4,900 (an increase of more than 40%).<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the Department has been heavily focused on increasing beds, and other key objectives (such as reducing re-offending) have become secondary, in practice if not in policy. This has been reflected at Wooroloo and as a result the prison's role within the system is less clear. The situation has not been helped by long-term instability in the senior management team, which has deprived the prison of consistent leadership during a period of substantial change.

### PRISON EXPANSION AND POPULATION PROFILE

- 2.3 The most significant development at Wooroloo since the 2009 inspection has been a major increase in bed capacity. Following refurbishment of unused buildings within the prison, two new units were opened: Unit 1 provided an additional 63 beds and Unit 4C provided an additional 11 beds. In addition, Wooroloo now has up to 40 rooms containing two beds each. Prior to 2009 most rooms at Wooroloo housed only one prisoner. In total, Wooroloo's capacity has increased by 33 per cent, from 270 in 2009 to 360 in 2012.

#### Aboriginal Prisoner Numbers

- 2.4 While Wooroloo's capacity has increased significantly over the past three years, both the number and proportion of Aboriginal prisoners held at the prison has fallen. During the 2009 inspection, Wooroloo housed 63 Aboriginal prisoners out of a total population of 269 (23%). Since then, the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners at Wooroloo has decreased steadily, dropping below 13 per cent for much of 2011 with a low of 11 per cent in July of that year. At the time of the current inspection the prison housed 51 Aboriginal prisoners out of a total population of 365 (14%).<sup>9</sup> This means that while the number of non-Aboriginal prisoners at Wooroloo has increased by 52 per cent, the number of Aboriginal prisoners has decreased by 19 per cent. In comparison, the proportion of Aboriginal male prisoners in the Western Australian prison system has remained constant between 39 and 40 per cent of the total male prisoner population.<sup>10</sup>

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7 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) iii.

8 Figures drawn from the Department of Corrective Services Total Offender Management Solution (TOMS) database, *Offender Population – State* (2 April 2006 and 25 March 2012).

9 DCS, *TOMS Count Facility – Historical – Wooroloo Prison Farm* (19 April 2009 and 25 March 2012).

10 DCS, *Weekly Offender Statistics* (23 April 2009 and 29 March 2012).

- 2.5 For many years now, the Office has expressed concern about the low number of Aboriginal prisoners at minimum security facilities like Karnet Prison Farm and Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women.<sup>11</sup> It is unfortunate that Wooroloo is now following these two facilities. Minimum security facilities have historically provided prisoners with better opportunities in terms of constructive work, education and re-entry assistance. Aboriginal prisoners are known to have particularly high needs in these areas. All the evidence indicates that Aboriginal offenders face significant socio-economic disadvantage and display far higher rates of recidivism when compared with non-Aboriginal offenders.<sup>12</sup> As such, Aboriginal prisoners have complex re-entry needs and would benefit from greater access to the opportunities offered at Wooroloo and other minimum security environments.
- 2.6 The Office must therefore reiterate the importance of progressing greater numbers of Aboriginal prisoners to minimum security. This is by no means a simple task and there is no easy solution. The fact that Aboriginal prisoners typically have higher rates of offending and longer criminal records makes it more difficult for them to meet the requirements for minimum security classification. Yet it is these very attributes that mean Aboriginal prisoners have greater need of rehabilitation and re-entry support. Aboriginal recidivism rates represent a major challenge for the prison system. The Department's figures indicate that Aboriginal prisoner recidivism is around 52 per cent as compared with 34 per cent for non-Aboriginal prisoners.<sup>13</sup> One way to address this disparity would be to ensure that more Aboriginal prisoners have access to the type of services available in minimum security re-entry prisons.
- 2.7 There was little awareness both within the Department and within the prison of the steady drop in Aboriginal prisoner numbers at Wooroloo. More importantly, there is no evidence of proactive initiatives within the Department to examine causes and potential solutions. The Department's apparent indifference to this matter is concerning.

#### Complexity of the Prisoner Group

- 2.8 Ever since the perimeter fence was completed in 2007, Wooroloo staff have suggested that the prison is being used to house younger prisoners with serious violent offending histories. They complain that the prisoner group is generally more volatile and difficult to manage. Associated with this is a strong perception that some prisoners at Wooroloo are either unsuitable for minimum security or are not yet ready for it. These views are partly supported by analysis of the prison population.

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- 11 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 47 (October 2007) 21; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Karnet Prison Farm*, Report No. 67 (July 2010) 29–30; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 62 (November 2009) 3–4; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 79 (July 2012) 7.
- 12 See for example Willis M & Moore J, *Reintegration of Indigenous Prisoners* (Australian Capital Territory: Australian Institute of Criminology, 2008).
- 13 DCS, *Recidivism Rates – Wooroloo Prison Farm – Prison Exits 2 Years Prior to Period 01 Dec 2010 to 30 Nov 2011*. The rate of return to prison is the percentage of the prisoners discharged from custody following a sentenced episode, who return within two years of their release/discharge for a subsequent sentenced episode. The rate of return excludes exits from and returns to fine default only sentences, and excludes returns solely on account of suspension of an early release order. However, it includes returns to prison for breach of parole order conditions where the order has been cancelled.

- 2.9 A small number of prisoners at Wooroloo were serving long-term or indefinite sentences, and there were even three prisoners being held under the *Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996*. This would have been highly unlikely prior to the erection of the fence. The average age of prisoners at Wooroloo is just over 36 years old, which indicates that the prisoner group is not especially young. At the time of the inspection there were around 60 prisoners (about 17% of the total population) with two years or more remaining of their sentence.
- 2.10 Violent offenders made up 30 per cent of the population, which was a significant increase on figures from previous inspections. In 2009, violent offenders made up 11 per cent of the population and in 2006 they made up only 6 per cent. The increase at Wooroloo is reflective of statewide trends. The proportion of violent offenders in the Western Australian prison system has more than doubled from 17 per cent in 2006 to 35 per cent in 2012.<sup>14</sup>
- 2.11 Wooroloo was also accommodating a substantial number of prisoners convicted of drug offences. Prison management reported that the proportion of drug offenders in the prison was around 29 per cent. This presents its own problems in terms of prisoner behaviour and the potential for trafficking within the prison. Again, this reflects the fact that the profile of the prisoner population is changing statewide. This is a challenge for the system that Wooroloo cannot reasonably expect to avoid.
- 2.12 There is also a significant cohort of foreign prisoners at Wooroloo – a total of 102 at the time of the inspection with 58 of these from a non-English speaking background.<sup>15</sup> This group adds an extra dimension of cultural complexity to the prison. The challenges and implications associated with this are discussed further in Chapter 3.
- 2.13 The increase in both size and complexity of Wooroloo’s prisoner population has been a real challenge for the prison. Unfortunately it has taken place during a time of fractured leadership.

## MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

### Senior Management Team

- 2.14 Management instability has been the biggest and most persistent issue at Wooroloo for many years. It pervades the prison, affecting almost every aspect of operations and resulting in a facility that is not fulfilling its potential.
- 2.15 During the 2006 inspection, every position on the senior management team was filled in an acting capacity. Although the prison was found to be performing well, this was identified as a risk.<sup>16</sup> By 2009, the long-term absence of the substantive Superintendent and associated instability in other senior management roles were identified as key contributing factors to the prison’s decline in performance.<sup>17</sup> At the time of the 2009 inspection, the return of the substantive Superintendent to the prison had given cause for some optimism. It was hoped that strong and stable leadership could steer the prison back towards the high standards it once achieved.

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14 DCS, *TOMS Current Violent Offenders – State* (25 March 2012; 16 April 2009; 2 April 2006).

15 DCS, *TOMS Ethnicity and Nationality Historical – Facility – Wooroloo Prison Farm* (25 March 2012).

16 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) 36.

17 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 10–11.

- 2.16 However, during the following three years, the situation grew considerably worse. The substantive Superintendent was unfortunately taken ill a few months after the 2009 inspection. A combination of long-term leave, retirement and secondment from other senior management positions once again thrust the prison into a long succession of acting arrangements that has not yet been entirely resolved. Of the five positions on the senior management team, only the Security Manager has remained stable. All other positions have had between four and six occupants since 2009.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.17 This has been extremely damaging for the prison. Most of the deficiencies identified in the 2009 inspection could be linked to the lack of consistent leadership. Staff throughout the prison complained that every time a new manager arrived, it was necessary to adapt and establish working relationships all over again. Priorities inevitably shifted and staff complained that they were receiving inconsistent directions from management. Some positive progress was achieved in 2011 with one Acting Superintendent providing stable leadership for most of that year. Staff were more confident that certain issues and conflicts within the prison would be dealt with and morale improved.
- 2.18 By the time of the 2012 inspection, there had been some further progress in stabilising the senior management team. A substantive Superintendent was appointed in November 2011 and a substantive Business Manager was appointed in September 2011. This left only two positions on the management team without substantive occupants – the Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Management and the Assistant Superintendent Prison Services. Both positions were vacant so there was no impediment to recruitment of permanent occupants. After so many years of instability, the importance of establishing a permanent senior management team cannot be overstated. This must form the solid foundation upon which Wooroloo’s performance can be reconstructed.

*Recommendation 1*

*Make substantive appointments to the remaining vacant positions on the senior management team at Wooroloo Prison Farm.*

**Bullying and Conflict Between Custodial Staff**

- 2.19 The custodial staffing group was a serious concern for the Office. Prior to and during the inspection, custodial staff presented as a disaffected group with low morale. There were alarming levels of personal conflict and allegations of bullying between officers. The Inspector observed in his exit debrief that ‘gossip, innuendo and factionalism appear to be feeding a negative culture’.<sup>19</sup> These issues have been festering at Wooroloo for many years now and the failure to address them is simply another legacy of the lack of stable leadership.

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18 The senior management team at Wooroloo consists of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Prisoner Management, Assistant Superintendent Prison Services, Security Manager and Business Manager.

19 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Exit Debrief – Wooroloo Prison Farm* (30 March 2012).

- 2.20 At head office level, the Department had recognised the problem and had taken some steps to investigate and resolve the issues. A compliance review in 2010 found an absence of anti-bullying awareness training or meetings for staff and no records demonstrating the management of bullying incidents. The review recommended the inclusion of further information regarding anti-bullying strategies in Wooroloo's business plan.<sup>20</sup> In 2011, at the instigation of the Wooroloo management team at the time, the Department's Internal Investigation Unit had undertaken a comprehensive investigation of a long list of bullying allegations and made a number of recommendations. However, these were mainly process-focused rather than strategic recommendations and at the time of the inspection there was no evidence of progress.
- 2.21 There were some within the prison who resented the intervention of head office and expressed the view that these issues should be handled by the prison internally. The Office agrees with the principle that, as far as possible, issues should be resolved at the lowest appropriate level rather than be referred to a higher authority. However, it is essential for accountability and transparency to be maintained. Given that Wooroloo's recent history contains so many allegations of bullying, it will not always be appropriate for issues to be dealt with internally. Many of the allegations need to be handled with the support and expertise of head office.
- 2.22 Determining the validity of bullying allegations can be difficult. In a hierarchical workforce such as a prison, the line between bullying and giving an order can become blurred. It is worth noting that there were some generational and gender differences by level within the custodial workforce at Wooroloo: the senior officer group comprises mostly older men (there is only one female senior officer), while the prison officer cohort is younger and of mixed gender. The challenges to an older male workforce of managing younger men and women cannot be under-estimated. Sometimes the problem may lie in the manner in which the message is delivered rather than the message itself.
- 2.23 In any event, a problem exists at Wooroloo and it has not been adequately addressed. Staff lack confidence in the grievance system, and although an anti-bullying committee exists, staff view it as ineffective. For example, it was reported that the committee considered forming a register of all bullying behaviour but this was not pursued because of uncertainties about the legal position on privacy. Action against bullying appears inconsistent and is characterised by a lack of confidence and competence in dealing with conflict at an early stage. It is argued that a greater people management capability would allow matters to be resolved more quickly, with greater satisfaction for all parties and with reduced risks to productivity and litigation. This is an area requiring guidance from human resources specialists and strong support from management.

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20 DCS, *Operational Compliance Follow-up Review Wooroloo Prison Farm* (February 2010) 27.



- 2.24 Because the origins of many bullying allegations lie in personal differences and workplace disagreements, it is inevitable that a human resources response will not please all parties. However, natural justice and good human resources practice requires clarity about processes and clearly documented efforts to resolve grievances at an early stage. More than just addressing bullying, this will support the development of an anti-bullying culture.

*Recommendation 2*

*Improve anti-bullying strategies at Wooroloo Prison Farm with robust and transparent processes and mechanisms, and comprehensive training and education for all staff.*

**Communication**

- 2.25 In 2009, one of the key sources of frustration highlighted to the inspection team by a wide range of staff was the absence of a coherent communication strategy at the prison. There were rarely any meetings involving all staff, and some staffing groups thought that they were not being effectively represented at management meetings. At the unit level, prison officers felt that unit meetings were tokenistic and simply a means of delivering orders rather than a genuine information-sharing experience.<sup>21</sup> The prison responded to the recommendations of this Office by developing and implementing a communication plan in November 2009.<sup>22</sup> This comprehensively laid out all meetings that should take place within the prison, stating timeframes and responsible persons.
- 2.26 Although the communication plan was still in place at the current inspection, it was failing as a result of the inconsistent delivery of messages and the frequent reversal of decisions, sometimes before the original resolution had been announced.
- 2.27 Staff described a system of regular meetings between senior management and the senior officer group, followed by verbal briefings to prison officers. However, the communication of information was clearly falling down at the senior officer level. The difference in style and emphasis between different senior officers meant that the audience interpreted key messages differently. During the inspection, the senior officer group presented as strong individuals but not a consistent and coordinated team. Differences in practice and approach were evident even during the inspection team's limited time in the prison.
- 2.28 Prison officers indicated that they would welcome direct briefings from the Superintendent to receive management's unedited views. It is notable that a quarterly meeting with all staff in the prison is included in the communication plan but seems to have fallen out of practice. More effective communication from management is essential to unify staff in pursuit of clear objectives.

*Recommendation 3*

*Improve communication within the prison by implementing well-defined processes to ensure that all staff receive clear and consistent information.*

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21 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 11–12.  
22 DCS, *Wooroloo Prison Farm Communication Plan* (2 November 2009).

### Training

- 2.29 The training officer demonstrated comprehensive efforts to improve the number of staff compliant with mandatory training requirements and has worked to ensure an improved integrity of training records since his appointment in 2011. These records have been used to prioritise approaches to staff for training.
- 2.30 However, there are considerable obstacles to ensuring that staff meet mandatory training requirements because of the lack of a regular training session for staff. At most prisons there is a weekly lockdown during which mandatory training is delivered and staff can be required to attend. As Wooroloo has no lockdown, the training officer is required to arrange training sessions on an ad hoc basis and involvement depends on the availability and motivation of the individual officer. The result is that the training officer spends his time delivering the same training module over and over again to small groups of officers, sometimes as few as two per session.
- 2.31 This method of training is a poor use of resources. It does not encourage staff participation and does not send the message that training is an important part of staff development. It also severely limits the breadth of training that can be delivered as it takes long periods of time for the training officer to deliver the same amount of training that could be achieved in two weeks of group training at other facilities.
- 2.32 The deficits are compounded by the fact that training records are not integrated into staff rostering systems. This means there is no certainty that the officers on duty at a particular time have mandatory training qualifications, exposing prisoners and staff to risk.
- 2.33 Given Wooroloo's growing prisoner population, its history of fractured leadership and reports of difficulties in communication between staff, it is noteworthy that no structured program exists to provide staff in key leadership positions with the people skills to manage these challenges and deliver a high performance environment.
- 2.34 The Corrective Services Academy offers several courses aimed at Senior Officers and other supervisors.<sup>23</sup> Ideally, all Senior Officers at Wooroloo should have completed Supervisors Course Module 1 and Module 2. Furthermore, the Transition to Supervision course would be a valuable starting point for any officers acting in or aspiring to Senior Officer positions. Unfortunately, very few officers at Wooroloo had participated in any supervisors training. Making officers available for five-day or ten-day courses will not be possible without some cost to the prison but this is an entirely worthwhile and necessary investment in staff. It is critical to the future performance of the prison.

#### *Recommendation 4*

*Provide senior officers and acting senior officers with the opportunity to participate in relevant supervisors training offered by the Corrective Services Academy.*

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23 DCS, *Corrective Services Academy Courses 2012* (2012) 38–41.

## PLANNING AND DIRECTION

- 2.35 Perhaps most fundamentally, the long-term instability in the senior management team at Wooroloo has deprived the prison of strategic focus and direction. In 2009, the Office observed that ‘chronic instability within the senior management team undermined the prison’s ability to articulate its own goals’.<sup>24</sup> This remained the case in 2012. There had been a loss of focus on the prison’s role as a re-entry prison with both staff and prisoners suggesting that the minimum security philosophy had been diluted.
- 2.36 At the time of the inspection, the Department had only recently published its strategic plan and, in common with many other prisons, Wooroloo had delayed the development of its local business plan until this had occurred.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, in April 2012 the prison was still managing according to the 2010–2011 plan. While it might be argued that business had not fundamentally changed in 10 months, the lack of a cohesive set of planning documents that articulate Wooroloo’s unique challenges, opportunities and direction was needlessly delaying action.
- 2.37 Requests for funding for non-core farm or prison business are addressed through ad hoc requests in the budget cycle, with unsuccessful requests rolled over. As a result there is no dedicated budget for renovating and maintaining the heritage estate. This contributes to the (literally) crumbling infrastructure, with heritage buildings becoming dilapidated and having little hope of restoration. Restrictions on maintenance and restoration of heritage buildings add additional costs and considerations for management. There was much uncertainty regarding the practical implications of these limitations, resulting in a general aversion to using the prisoner workforce for maintenance and renovation. This is short sighted: while some of the restoration will require specialist trades, a good deal of the work would involve lower skill activities that could be planned and costed for strategic planning purposes so long as adequate supervision can be provided.
- 2.38 A more strategic approach to the achievement of required outcomes would have focused management attention on completing supporting tasks. For example, many views were heard regarding the long term failure to fill at least six Vocational Support Officer ('VSO') positions. While there were differing explanations as to the reasons for the delay (including industrial relations, the labour market, public sector recruitment rules, and head office human resources and budget decisions), the arguments missed the point that positions sat empty while prisoners were under-employed and the buildings decayed. The purpose of strategic planning is to set goals and develop a plan to achieve them.<sup>26</sup> In an environment where progress towards strategic plan priorities was the core of management oversight, it is likely that this recruitment impasse would have received a higher priority.

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24 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 11.

25 DCS, *Strategic Plan 2011–2014* (March 2012).

26 UK Government Small Business Service, ‘Strategic Planning’ [www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=1079687246&type=RESOURCES](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=1079687246&type=RESOURCES) (accessed 6 April 2012).

2.39 The delays in the Department's publication of its strategic plan may have encouraged apathy towards planning at the prison level. A comprehensive approach to planning, including a strategic vision, financial plan and management plans will ensure that the prison delivers its requirements and that the efforts of staff at all levels are aligned to corporate goals. Clear direction is essential to the development of leadership capability at all levels of the workforce. This is an opportunity to engage key staff groups, in particular the senior officer group in order to develop shared values and priorities. The only existing example of such a document is the Guiding Philosophy of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, which is publicly available on the Department's website.<sup>27</sup> As a re-entry prison, Wooroloo should have similar aims and objectives to Boronia and should have similarly well-defined values and principles.

*Recommendation 5*

*With staff consultation and input, develop a strategic plan for Wooroloo Prison Farm outlining the prison's vision, role, priorities, culture and values.*

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27 DCS, Boronia's Guiding Philosophy, [www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/prisons/prison-locations/boronia.aspx](http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/prisons/prison-locations/boronia.aspx)

# Chapter 3

## LIVING AT WOOROLOO

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- 3.1 Most prisoners will need to progress through higher security prisons before being transferred to Wooroloo. They earn their minimum security classification through good behaviour and participation in rehabilitative programs. Minimum security is therefore something to which most prisoners aspire. When prisoners arrive at Wooroloo from a medium or maximum security prison, they expect to be entering a more privileged environment. However, during the inspection, many prisoners complained that coming to Wooroloo felt like a regression rather than a progression. Factors such as the atmosphere of the prison, the standard of accommodation, and the food and canteen products available were found to have a big influence on prisoners' perceptions of the prison. Wooroloo continues to deliver good services in some areas and aspects of the regime represent excellent practice. However, there are a number of other areas that are viewed very poorly by prisoners and contribute to a sense of frustration amongst the prisoner group.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY

- 3.2 The security team at Wooroloo consists of the Security Manager, two senior officers and one prosecutor/security coordinator. Like most prisons, Wooroloo is facing an increasing procedural compliance burden and the security team is increasingly desk-bound. In spite of the growing workload, the budget for security at Wooroloo was cut from \$43,000 in 2010–11 to \$10,000 in 2011–12. This level of resourcing makes it challenging for the security team to operate effectively. The entire budget was exhausted by January 2012 and the security team must now justify any further expenditure on essential items.
- 3.3 Positively, perceptions of personal safety were high at Wooroloo. In the pre-inspection surveys, 85 per cent of prisoners and 91 per cent of staff felt safe most of the time. On the other hand, the inspection revealed that many in the prison believed that the security presence was intrusive and excessive.

#### Minimum Security Atmosphere

- 3.4 There was a strong perception among both staff and prisoners that Wooroloo had lost its minimum security atmosphere and philosophy. The Office has previously observed that the completion of the secure perimeter fence in 2007 had a negative impact on the overall atmosphere of the prison. This was explored in some depth in the 2009 inspection report:

A wide range of staff, prisoners, external service providers and visitors felt that the fence had been detrimental to the traditionally positive and relaxed atmosphere of the prison. There was a feeling that Wooroloo is now a secure prison and no longer a truly minimum security facility. In a sense, these perceptions become self-fulfilling because the way that people feel about a prison will naturally influence the general atmosphere of the place.<sup>28</sup>

These observations appear to have been borne out. However, it is not only the fence that has impacted on Wooroloo's atmosphere. Staff and prisoners complain that the past three years has seen an increasing emphasis on security within the prison. Prisoners protest that the freedoms they have earned as minimum security prisoners are being eroded and state that the prison feels more like a high security environment (disparagingly referring to Wooroloo as 'mini-max').

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28 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 7–8.

- 3.5 For their part, staff complain about the proliferation of paperwork related to searches, population counts, incident reports, risk assessments and other security functions. They claim that this increased workload impacts on other aspects of their job, perhaps most notably on their interaction with prisoners.

#### Interaction Between Officers and Prisoners

- 3.6 In a minimum security facility where physical barriers and controls are limited, the importance of dynamic security is heightened. Dynamic security relies on good intelligence gathering and fundamentally on good interaction between staff and prisoners. As such, positive relationships between staff and prisoners are not only about generating a good atmosphere, but also maintaining a safe and secure environment.
- 3.7 At Wooroloo, the level and standard of interaction was disappointing. The inspection team observed some examples of good interaction and there are clearly some very positive relationships between officers and prisoners. However, there was far too little interaction occurring. Officers were more likely to be found congregated in unit offices than engaging with prisoners.
- 3.8 Unfortunately, prisoners were well aware of the bad feeling that exists between some officers, and some prisoners told the inspection team that they had witnessed officers disagreeing with each other or undermining each other. The inconsistency and lack of clarity discussed above in Chapter 2 is also straining the relationship between staff and prisoners and leading to perceptions that some prisoners are favoured over others.
- 3.9 It was equally concerning that the Office heard a high number of complaints about disrespectful language used by officers to prisoners. The inspection team heard that it is not uncommon for prisoners enquiring at unit offices to be told to go away in no uncertain terms (complete with expletives). These allegations came not just from the prisoner group but also from other sources inside and outside the prison.
- 3.10 This is entirely unacceptable conduct and further reinforces the prison's need for a strong statement of values as recommended in Chapter 2. Prison officers in any prison should be modelling acceptable community standard behaviour at all times, but this is even more important in a re-entry prison like Wooroloo.

#### Emphasis on Security

- 3.11 In a minimum security facility, it is important to avoid adopting a risk-averse approach to security. Risk must be thoroughly assessed and managed, but any attempt to eliminate risk ignores the philosophy of minimum security. Balance must be struck between maintaining a safe and secure environment and placing the appropriate level of trust in prisoners. The Department's assessment and classification system is aimed at managing risk so that minimum security can offer better opportunities for rehabilitation and re-entry. Giving prisoners a higher degree of freedom and personal responsibility is a key element of preparing them for their return to the community.

- 3.12 A wide range of staff and prisoners claimed that the balance was wrong at Wooroloo and too much emphasis was being placed on security. The Office suggests that this may be another legacy of the lack of consistent leadership at Wooroloo over the past three years. Without stable management, the focus on re-entry and other aspects of the minimum security philosophy has been less defined. In the absence of any clear direction otherwise, security has tended to take precedence over other considerations.
- 3.13 Two separate escape incidents in December 2011 and January 2012 exposed procedural flaws at Wooroloo, which were promptly addressed. However, these incidents attracted scrutiny from head office and led to further tightening of security throughout the prison. The inspection team heard that security was used as justification for limiting various activities, processes and privileges such as the range of personal items prisoners were permitted to keep; the equipment and materials allowed to be brought into the prison for official purposes (such as programs and education); the activities prisoners were permitted to engage in outside of the prison; and the prisoners who were approved to participate in activities outside of the prison. It is of course appropriate that security be considered in relation to all these things, but it should not override all other considerations. It was common to hear that security concerns were making it difficult to achieve anything.
- 3.14 Perhaps the most obvious example of the increased security emphasis at Wooroloo was the requirement for prisoners to obtain a security clearance in order to work in the industries area. It has always been the case that prisoners must obtain a clearance under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) before participating in any activity (including work) outside the prison grounds. While the Wooroloo industries area is outside the perimeter fence, it is still on the prison grounds so a section 95 clearance is not required. Instead, the prison has imposed an entirely separate security clearance process. As a result, many prisoners at Wooroloo were not approved to work in the industries area despite being classified as minimum security. There was a shortage of work inside the prison but the security clearance process meant that the industries workshops were not always full. Even if a prisoner has obtained a section 95 clearance (which allows them to work in the community), this does not allow them to work in the industries area which is only metres outside the prison fence.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.15 It is hard to justify such strict procedures when dealing with minimum security prisoners. Five years ago, the perimeter fence did not exist and any prisoner classified minimum security and transferred to Wooroloo was deemed suitable to live in an open environment. Three years ago, during the 2009 inspection, there was no requirement for a security clearance prior to entering the industries area. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Wooroloo has become a higher security facility.

*Recommendation 6*

*Review the various risk assessment procedures at Wooroloo Prison Farm with a view to improving and streamlining prisoner access to the industries area.*

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29 See Chapter 4 for further discussion of issues surrounding prisoner employment.

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ACCOMMODATION

- 3.16 Wooroloo operates a hierarchical accommodation system with three levels: standard, semi-self-care and self-care. There are 226 standard beds including 30 or 40 double-ups (two prisoners sharing one room). There are 88 semi-self-care beds and 46 self-care beds. The semi-self-care and self-care accommodation is generally of a good standard and the most recently refurbished accommodation in the prison (including the semi-self-care Unit 1 and the self-care Unit 4C) is among the best prisoner accommodation in the state.
- 3.17 In contrast, the standard accommodation is basic and dilapidated in parts, especially Unit 3. Unfortunately, Unit 3 is the place most prisoners will first be housed at Wooroloo. Many prisoners arriving at Wooroloo have come from a self-care unit at Acacia Prison or Casuarina Prison and for them it is a big step down to find themselves sharing a room in the most basic conditions. Positively, at the time of the inspection, management had started refitting a number of rooms in the standard accommodation units to serve as kitchens. Each kitchen was to be equipped with a refrigerator, microwave, kettle and toaster, which will provide prisoners with the opportunity to make themselves light meals.
- 3.18 There had been some concerns within the prison that the process of progressing prisoners through the hierarchy of accommodation was not consistent. There were perceptions that some prisoners were progressed immediately to self-care or semi-self-care, while other prisoners suffered lengthy waits. This had resulted in allegations of favouritism. In an attempt to address these concerns, management had recently introduced a new local order that set out a transparent and consultative process for progressing and regressing prisoners.<sup>30</sup> The Office strongly supports this initiative.



*Unit 1 was opened in 2010 and has a capacity of 63 prisoners.*

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30 DCS, *Wooroloo Prison Farm Local Order 1.12 Hierarchy of Management Regimes* (February 2012).



## LIVING AT WOOROLOO

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*An outdoor area in Unit 1 with the prison's perimeter fence in the background.*



*One of the kitchenette and dining rooms in Unit 1.  
There are nine dining rooms in unit 1, each catering to six or seven prisoners.*

## FOOD

- 3.19 Results from the pre-inspection prisoner survey indicated that only 17 per cent of respondents were ‘mostly happy’ with food quality and only 28 per cent were ‘mostly happy’ with food quantity. Although food is always a point of contention for prisoners, the Office has rarely encountered such low satisfaction levels. The majority of comments received from prisoners on site during the inspection itself affirmed the survey results, although criticism was balanced by some positive views.
- 3.20 Prisoners at Wooroloo received their meals in different ways according to their place in the hierarchical accommodation system. Prisoners in standard accommodation ate meals in the two main dining rooms. For prisoners in semi-self-care, meals were delivered on trolleys and eaten in the smaller dining rooms in their units. Self-care prisoners cooked their own meals and were consequently much more satisfied.
- 3.21 Since Wooroloo’s capacity increased to 360, the prison has been forced to institute two sittings for meals in the main dining rooms because there is simply not enough space to seat everyone at once. Each sitting runs for half an hour. Because of the restricted time, the first sitting cannot allow for prisoners to stay behind for second helpings so the sittings are revolved on a weekly basis to give each unit equal access to second helpings. This means that standard accommodation prisoners can only have second helpings on every alternate week. One prisoner suggested that this meant prisoners ‘go hungry every second week’. Prisoners in the semi-self-care accommodation pointed out that meals are delivered to their units with one serving per prisoner so they are never given the opportunity to have a second helping.

## PRISONER PURCHASES

- 3.22 The pre-inspection prisoner survey found only 19 per cent of respondents were ‘mostly happy’ with the canteen service. This represented a significant drop from the previous inspection when 54 per cent of prisoners had reported feeling ‘mostly happy’. The survey findings were reinforced by the comments of prisoners during the on-site inspection.
- 3.23 Canteen staffing levels did not increase when the prison population expanded. Instead, an attempt was made to manage the canteen officer’s workload by reducing the range of products available in the canteen. The range is also limited by lack of storage space, especially refrigerated storage space. Consequently, the products offered at Wooroloo compare poorly with good practice in other minimum security facilities. For example, where the Wooroloo canteen holds 38 different food items for sales, Bunbury’s Pre-release Unit canteen holds 52.<sup>31</sup> At nearby Acacia Prison, prisoners are able to buy meat packs from the canteen and cook these on the barbeques in the blocks. For Wooroloo prisoners, there was a perceived injustice in the fact that such a privilege was available in medium security at Acacia Prison but not in minimum security at Wooroloo. Unfortunately, the lack of refrigerator space in the Wooroloo canteen precluded the possibility of offering meat products for sale. Despite the cultural diversity of the Wooroloo population there was a notable absence of culturally appropriate food in the canteen.

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31 DCS, *Wooroloo Canteen Price List* (1 December 2011); DCS, *Bunbury Pre-release Unit Pricelist* (April/May 2011).

- 3.24 In the re-entry environment, best practice for canteen operations is represented by Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women and Bunbury Pre-release Unit. These canteens operate like small supermarkets, giving prisoners the opportunity to participate in a more normalised shopping experience. They are also linked closely to life skills education and the promotion of healthy food choices. The Wooroloo canteen is clearly a long way below this standard; but as a minimum security re-entry prison there is no reason why Wooroloo should not aspire to provide a similar service.

*Recommendation 7*

*Provide infrastructure and resources to upgrade the canteen at Wooroloo Prison Farm into a facility similar to those at Bunbury Pre-release Unit and Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women.*

**PRISONERS SUPPORTING EACH OTHER**

- 3.25 The peer support team at Wooroloo consists of 12 prisoners managed by the Prison Support Officer. The team contained a good representation of prisoners from different units throughout the prison, and from different ethnic and cultural groups. All prisoners on the peer support team (plus some others) had undertaken Gatekeeper training on suicide awareness and prevention as well as Mental Health First Aid training in June 2011, although turnover within the team meant that not all current members had completed the training.
- 3.26 The peer support team was operating effectively, and the inspection team was impressed by the high level of support that members of the team were providing to one particularly vulnerable prisoner who was being held under the *Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused Act) 1996*. The peer support members provided assistance to this prisoner in most aspects of daily life and had been instrumental in getting him involved in activities within the prison. Prison staff acknowledged the efforts of the peer support members but the universal view of staff and prisoners was that there should be more formal support provided for such prisoners.
- 3.27 During the previous inspection, an identified gap was the absence of peer support team involvement in the reception process.<sup>32</sup> This has now been addressed. Three peer support members work in the reception centre and welcome new prisoners to the prison. This involves providing them with a welcome kit containing a plastic mug, toiletries and an orientation booklet. The peer support members talk with the new prisoner about what to expect and answer any questions. They then take the new prisoner to the laundry to receive a clothing pack and give them a brief tour of the prison on the way to their accommodation in Unit 3, which is the orientation unit.
- 3.28 The peer support team and the Prison Support Officer, who was relatively new to the position, enjoyed good support from local management. However, there was a perception that when issues were raised with management, responses were often delayed or sometimes not provided at all. In addition, the poor relationship between officers and prisoners is reflected in interactions between officers and the peer support team. As in many prisons, the peer support team at Wooroloo has taken on a role of communicating

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32 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 34.

the concerns of the prisoner group to management. Strictly speaking, this is not the role of the peer support team. Prisoners suggested that Wooroloo should establish a separate representative forum for prisoners. This model has been successful at Acacia Prison, Albany Regional Prison and Hakea Prison, providing prisoner representation, improving staff and prisoner relations, and allowing the peer support team to focus on prisoner care and self-harm prevention.

*Recommendation 8*

*Establish a representative forum for prisoners at Wooroloo Prison Farm similar to those operating at Acacia Prison, Albany Regional Prison and Hakea Prison.*

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

3.29 At the time of the inspection, there were 102 foreign national prisoners at Wooroloo with 58 of these from a non-English speaking background.<sup>33</sup> This group represented a wide range of cultures and added an extra dimension of complexity to the prison. As far back as 2010, the Office identified a need for the Department to develop and implement standards for the management of foreign national prisoners.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, this recommendation has not yet been addressed. The lack of policy around treatment of foreign national prisoners was most recently discussed at length in the Office's inspection report on Albany Regional Prison, which again recommended that the Department should 'develop and implement policies and processes to ensure the appropriate and consistent treatment of foreign national prisoners'.<sup>35</sup> In the overview to that report, the Inspector noted that 'more comprehensive system-wide policies are needed to promote, support and embed good practice'.<sup>36</sup> The Department's response stated simply that '[w]ork is under way to review and enhance policies and procedures as highlighted by the Inspector'.<sup>37</sup> For the Office, this response is frustrating given that the Department committed to produce such policies more than two years ago.<sup>38</sup> At Wooroloo, the lack of policy in this area has led to inconsistent practices and inadequate services for foreign national prisoners.

*Recommendation 9*

*Finalise and implement the Department of Corrective Services' policy on foreign national prisoners as a matter of urgency.*

33 DCS, *TOMS Ethnicity and Nationality Historical – Facility – Wooroloo Prison Farm* (25 March 2012).

34 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Hakea Prison*, Report No. 63 (April 2010) Recommendation 15: 'The Department must develop and implement clear standards with regard to the management of foreign nationals within the Western Australian prison system'.

35 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 78 (June 2012) 39–46.

36 *Ibid.*, vi.

37 *Ibid.*, 89.

38 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Hakea Prison*, Report No. 63 (April 2010) 81.

- 3.30 Foreign national prisoners expressed concern at their ability to maintain contact with family and friends. The Department provides two free 10 minute telephone calls per week to all prisoners who are isolated from their families (whether intrastate, interstate or international calls). However, foreign national prisoners felt this was insufficient and pointed out how hard it was for prisoners to cover the expense of international telephone calls. It was particularly difficult for prisoners in lower paid jobs to afford the telephone calls that they wanted to make.
- 3.31 For those from a non-English speaking background, and especially for the older prisoners whose English was usually poorer, language was sometimes a barrier. Prisoners were generally satisfied with the interpreter services available over the telephone. However, it was clear that day-to-day interactions with staff were largely reliant on other prisoners acting as interpreters. Foreign national prisoners were concerned that they were sometimes punished for not following instructions that they had been unable to understand.
- 3.32 Foreign national prisoners were disappointed that they were not allowed to have music in their own languages. Muslim prisoners were particularly unhappy that all audio recordings of the Koran had been prohibited. The verbal form of the Koran is important for religious services and prayers. All attempts to obtain an approved audio copy of the Koran at Wooroloo had been denied on security grounds. Music and audio recordings in languages other than English are available in higher security prisons around the state so it is difficult to understand why these things are not available in the minimum security environment at Wooroloo.
- 3.33 Muslim prisoners at Wooroloo told the inspection team that they had previously been permitted to use the prayer room between 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm on Fridays for communal prayer. Friday midday and afternoon are traditional communal prayer times in the Muslim faith. Wooroloo management advised that this practice was never officially sanctioned. Prayer times are unrestricted on weekends but on weekdays prayer has always been permitted only after 3.30 pm. Following a recent request from prisoners, permission was given for prisoners to pray at their workplaces in the middle of the day. However, prisoners lamented the lack of opportunity to pray together as a group.
- 3.34 Muslim prisoners are given the option of vegetarian food if there is any doubt about the presence of inappropriate meat. The prison formerly provided produce from a Muslim halal food shop but this practice had ceased. Prisoners complained that access to cultural foods was limited during Ramadan and there was no opportunity to cook and eat communally in the evening. In previous years, there was good access to alternative foods and cooking and eating communally was allowed.



*The exterior of the prayer room.*



*The interior of the prayer room set up for an Islamic prayer session.  
A maximum of four prisoners can be accommodated at any one time.*

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## EXTERNAL CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATION

- 3.35 In the pre-inspection prisoner survey, a high percentage of respondents indicated that they were happy with their ability to maintain contact with family through telephone calls, visits and mail.<sup>39</sup> Sixty-six per cent of prisoners were also happy with the respect shown to their visitors by prison staff. The high approval ratings were consistent with those given by prisoners prior to the 2009 inspection.
- 3.36 The prison provides morning and afternoon visits sessions on weekends, and there is a bus service available from Midland bus station. Visits sessions were well attended during the inspection, and the quality of the visit experience at Wooroloo was viewed by prisoners as one of the most positive elements of the prison.
- 3.37 The visits area consists of an internal area, a covered patio, and an outdoor area, each of which is large and well set out. The outdoors area is particularly pleasant, being well shaded by large trees, with visiting tables set at sufficient distance to allow private conversations, and sufficient grassed area for children. Peer support prisoners provide tea and coffee for visitors. There is a children's play area inside, and a staff member to supervise and engage with children during visits. This care of children allows prisoners to conduct their discussions without needing to supervise children.
- 3.38 Outcare have a table at the front of the visitors centre, and an office with access from the verandah or from inside. This enables visitors to hold discussions with Outcare staff in privacy, while ensuring that the service is highly visible to visitors.
- 3.39 External service provider Good Beginnings organised family days in October 2011 and April 2012, and contributed to the Christmas family day. Food and drinks were provided and there were activities for children such as an animal farm and face painting. These were clearly excellent events and should be held regularly. It was slightly concerning that the family days appeared to be largely initiated by an external organisation rather than the prison itself. Maintaining meaningful family contact is vital to prisoners' reintegration and these family events are an effective way to encourage contact. Family days like this are run three times a year in medium security at Acacia Prison, along with a range of other smaller family events throughout the year. Family events like this should be able to run at least as regularly in minimum security and should be a specific focus for local management.

### *Recommendation 10*

*Establish family events as a more regular fixture on the Wooroloo Prison Farm calendar.*

- 3.40 Although the visits system is generally a success at Wooroloo, only a small proportion of surveyed prisoners reported satisfaction with video link visits; this may reflect the small number of prisoners who use the service. Wooroloo lacks a Skype facility for social visits, and should follow the example of other Western Australian prisons in introducing this option. Experience from other prisons has shown this is useful for prisoners whose social

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39 Eighty-six per cent were happy with telephone calls, 80 per cent were happy with visits, and 77 per cent were happy with mail.

contacts are remote, including foreign national prisoners. As Wooroloo has been holding consistently large numbers of foreign national prisoners, such a service is appropriate.

- 3.41 Skype had only recently been introduced at Wooroloo through the Good Beginnings program. At the time of the inspection, there were six prisoners participating. One prisoner had previously been involved in Skype visits at Hakea Prison and Acacia Prison but found that the service was not available when he arrived at Wooroloo. He was justifiably confused about why such a service was available in maximum and medium security prisons but not in a minimum security prison. Skype represents a cheap and simple way for prisoners to maintain contact with family and friends and should be a priority in a re-entry minimum security facility like Wooroloo. Using Skype as part of the Good Beginnings program is an encouraging first step, but there is potential for the service to have a much wider scope.

*Recommendation 11*

*Expand the use of Skype (or similar technology) to include social visits and other visits.*

**RECREATION**

- 3.42 The survey responses to the pre-inspection prisoner survey indicated that recreation was still viewed as one of the positive features of life at Wooroloo. The survey for the 2009 inspection had indicated that prisoners thought recreation was the best thing about Wooroloo and in 2012 it was ranked as the second best thing. The inspection revealed a positive recreation program hampered by prison overcrowding and deteriorating infrastructure.
- 3.43 There are two recreation officers at Wooroloo, but one has been on extended periods of sick leave in recent times (including during the inspection). The vacant position has been filled by five or six different acting officers at different times. As a result, the remaining permanent recreation officer has lacked support.
- 3.44 The recreation officers are unable to cover all of the hours of recreation activity. The recreation officers' shifts are from 7.00 am to 5.00 pm. This does not cover the evening hours in which sport is played, but the prison will not allow the officers to work late because of overtime restrictions. The inspection team witnessed one consequence of this one evening when 50 or 60 prisoners were using the oval for mixed purposes without supervision. The recreation officers also have limited time to supervise prisoners in the gymnasium to ensure safe use of weights and other exercise equipment.
- 3.45 At the time of the inspection, approximately 100 out of 370 prisoners were participating in external team sports including soccer, football and cricket. The most impressive feature of recreation at Wooroloo is the V Swans program.
- 3.46 V Swans is an ongoing developmental program run in partnership with the Western Australian Amateur Football League as part of the Swan Districts Football Club's New Horizons program. The V Swans department set up the New Horizons program for Wooroloo prisoners to deliver a number of objectives including teaching football skills, workplace skills, developing self-esteem, teaching the importance of goal setting and aspirations, teamwork, leadership and education.



- 3.47 In 2011, 45 prisoners participated in Certificate I training with 38 completing. The prison has a five-year contract with the West Australian Amateur Football League for this program. The Recreation Officer has also been able to train prisoners in Certificate I and II in Community Sport and Recreation.
- 3.48 One of the benefits of Wooroloo's external recreation is the facilitation of social visits in a community context. Wooroloo team members are given sport-specific uniforms, and thereby do not present as prisoners. This pro-social approach aids prisoner reintegration.
- 3.49 Prison-based recreation is also well supported at Wooroloo. The prison oval is used for a variety of sports including soccer, football, cricket, touch-rugby, volleyball and softball. There are internal competitions for soccer, football and cricket.
- 3.50 All prisoners have access to the oval each day, and are now able to use it in the evening following the installation of light towers. The oval also has a walking track around the perimeter. The inspection team observed the prisoners' use of the oval throughout the on-site inspection, and it appeared to be well-used for football and soccer, and prisoners walking and running around the perimeter track. Prisoners frequently use the covered court in the recreation centre for various activities including boxing training and basketball. There are also many passive recreational activities available at Wooroloo including music, bocce, pool, darts, card games and board games. Bingo is held in the visits centre once a month and quiz nights once every three months.
- 3.51 The main gymnasium is crowded with equipment, much of which is aged and in poor condition. The gymnasium is insufficient for the size of the prisoner population and gym equipment is deteriorating because of overuse. There are two smaller satellite gyms and isometric equipment in the units.
- 3.52 The recreation hall is unsafe and needs repair. Prisoner bands would make use of the hall if it were available, and this would enable prisoner and community musical events and competitions to be held. The hall was previously used for badminton, and could also be used for film screenings and other communal events.
- 3.53 The covered court's netting is deteriorating and does not provide sufficient coverage. One consequence is that soccer cannot be played because the court's lights are sometimes smashed by the ball. The lighting in the squash courts is not easily accessible, and the squash court interior roofs are rusting. The tennis courts are built on top of a water tank and are not being used because of fears that they are at risk of collapsing.



*Equipment in the main gymnasium wears out quickly because of high usage.*



*The heritage-listed Recreation Hall is in poor repair and cannot be used because the damaged ceiling presents a safety risk.*

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**ABORIGINAL PRISONERS**

- 3.54 As has been discussed above, the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners at Wooroloo had dropped by nine per cent since 2009.<sup>40</sup> There was further evidence to suggest that Aboriginal prisoners were experiencing significant disadvantage at Wooroloo.
- 3.55 Aboriginal prisoners were poorly represented in the higher paid employment at Wooroloo. The proportion of non-Aboriginal prisoners being paid the highest gratuities (Levels 1 and 2) at Wooroloo was approximately 50 per cent greater than the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners at those gratuity levels. The work camp (which provides the highest payments) was entirely populated with non-Aboriginal prisoners, and no Aboriginal prisoners were involved in the Prisoner Employment Program. At the time of the inspection 42 per cent of Aboriginal prisoners were engaged in unit work, typically the most meaningless and undemanding form of employment in any prison. By comparison, only about 17 per cent of non-Aboriginal prisoners were engaged in unit work.
- 3.56 At the time of the inspection, 70 per cent of Aboriginal prisoners were accommodated in the prison's most basic accommodation. There were only two Aboriginal prisoners in self-care and eight in semi-self-care. The previous inspection report had noted that 'there was no evidence that Aboriginal prisoners were experiencing disadvantage, and indeed they were proportionately represented in all areas of the prison'.<sup>41</sup> The prison had previously maintained a file for monitoring Aboriginal accommodation progression and provided a dedicated pod in self-care accommodation for Aboriginal prisoner groups. This form of group placement had facilitated positive elder peer influence, and elder prisoners had provided cooking lessons and other guidance to younger prisoners.
- 3.57 This practice had been discontinued because of concerns that it denied equitable treatment for all prisoner groups. Having a dedicated Aboriginal pod was viewed as being a discriminatory provision. This reasoning runs counter to that of the Department's *Substantive Equality Policy* (2008).<sup>42</sup> The policy has a particular focus on equality for Indigenous prisoners, and defines substantive equality as being 'about treating people differently in order to cater for their needs to achieve equal outcomes'.<sup>43</sup> The provision of dedicated Aboriginal pods and placing a particular focus on progressing Aboriginal prisoners fit within this policy framework.
- 3.58 Aboriginal prisoners were generally disappointed that there was not more recognition of their culture in the prison. They were particularly keen to see a Noongar language course in the prison. The frequency of traditional cook ups had been reduced from once a week to once a month, largely because the previous kangaroo meat supplier had gone out of business. The new supplier was more expensive and provided only diced meat which was less favoured by the prisoners. Prisoners were enthusiastic about the inclusive nature of the cook-up events, reporting that prisoners from different ethnic backgrounds attended in good numbers (up to 60 per event).

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40 See Chapter 2.

41 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 36.

42 DCS, *Substantive Equality Policy* (2008). The policy is based on the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission's policy framework. The Department's policy references the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (WA), s 95(5) of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) and the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth).

43 DCS, *Substantive Equality Policy* (2008).

*Recommendation 12*

*Introduce strategies to ensure that Aboriginal prisoners are proportionately represented in higher levels of accommodation and higher paid employment at Wooroloo Prison Farm (in line with the Department of Corrective Services' Substantive Equality Policy).*

**HEALTH SERVICES**

- 3.59 The health centre building at Wooroloo is still relatively new (it was completed in early 2008) and has been well maintained. Health staff were generally appreciative of the clean and modern environment and were aware that their working conditions were superior to those in many other prison health centres in Western Australia. However, the centre is overcrowded on the busiest days and it can be difficult to provide clinic rooms for all nurses, doctors and specialists. This was recognised as a problem during the 2009 inspection and the prisoner population at Wooroloo has increased by 33 per cent since that time.<sup>44</sup>
- 3.60 The centre was designed to include a dental surgery but the allocated room had not been fitted out with the necessary equipment. As a result, Wooroloo prisoners have very limited access to dental services. Once a week, four prisoners are transported to Casuarina Prison to attend the dentist there. However, the demand for dental services at Wooroloo significantly exceeds the number of places provided each week; at the time of the inspection there were approximately 70 prisoners on the dental waiting list. Health services staff are required to manage prisoners on the waiting list with a focus on pain relief. Those with acute pain are prioritised but it is inevitable that many prisoners will be forced to live with dental pain for some months and may be subject to tooth extraction as a result of the delay in accessing dental services. Unsurprisingly, the pre-inspection prisoner survey indicated that only 11 per cent of prisoners were happy with their access to dental care. Prisoners were similarly critical of dental services in conversation with team members during the inspection.
- 3.61 Satisfaction with other health services was considerably higher, although results were still not particularly positive. The survey revealed that 57 per cent of respondents were happy with their access to general health services and 54 per cent felt that the quality of health services provided was 'mostly good'. Despite these equivocal results, the Office found that health services at Wooroloo were performing well. There are certainly pressure points, such as dental services, but in general the centre is delivering a good standard of care.
- 3.62 The health centre is open from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm during the week and 8.00 am to 4.30 pm on weekends. Requests for appointments are usually met within 24 hours and almost always within 48 hours. A general practitioner provides services for two full days each week and a variety of specialists visit the prison on a regular basis. A psychiatrist attends the prison for one full day per fortnight and the prison has a full-time co-morbidity nurse. Wooroloo uses its own staff to transport prisoners to external medical appointments so is not reliant upon the Department's contracted private transport provider, Serco. The prison has the capacity to facilitate up to three external appointments each day. Prisoners are not restrained in any way while on medical escort which is entirely appropriate for minimum security.

44 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 32.

- 3.63 There have been some good health initiatives at Wooroloo, including free influenza and Hepatitis B vaccination programs, as well as some specific health promotion strategies. The Health In Prison/Health Outta Prison (HIP HOP) Offender Blood Borne Virus Education Program is delivered to all offenders on entry to and release from prison and covers the transmission risks and means of prevention for viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C. At Wooroloo, the program is delivered to all prisoners within three months of their earliest release date. HepatitisWA attends the prison each week to deliver the two-hour program to groups of six to 12 prisoners.<sup>45</sup>
- 3.64 The Pit Stop Men's Health Program Day was also held at Wooroloo in November 2011. A large proportion of the prisoner population attended a selection of different health stalls to have their individual health status and needs assessed. Health areas covered included asthma and smoking; blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections; mental health; drug and alcohol use; nutrition and weight management; and blood pressure. Information was provided by external community health agencies in conjunction with nursing staff from the prison and two health promotion volunteers from Curtin University.
- 3.65 Staff in the health centre presented as enthusiastic and professional, and importantly they worked as a committed and unified team. In the lead-up to the inspection, it was alarming to hear that this team was under threat of significant funding cuts. The full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing level had been reduced from 5.8 to 1.99 with little warning or explanation. The intervention of Wooroloo senior management secured sufficient funding to maintain staffing levels until 30 June 2012 but the situation beyond that date remains unclear. Health staff and prison management were united in declaring that the centre could not function with so few staff; indeed, it seems patently inadequate for a facility housing 360 prisoners. Even in 2009, with only 270 prisoners at Wooroloo, the nursing FTE was 3.80, which is almost twice that now proposed. The ongoing uncertainty is highly disruptive to what was previously a stable and settled workforce.

*Recommendation 13*

*Ensure that health staffing levels at Wooroloo Prison Farm are not reduced.*

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<sup>45</sup> HepatitisWA is a non-government community-based organisation and is the peak body in Western Australia for Viral Hepatitis education and information. It currently holds a five-year contract with the Department for delivery of this education program at every metropolitan prison site.

# Chapter 4

## THE ROLE OF A RE-ENTRY PRISON

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- 4.1 Wooroloo has a specific role to prepare prisoners for their release into the community. Certainly a positive atmosphere will contribute to this, but there are also specific service requirements aimed at assisting prisoners to reintegrate into society. This chapter examines whether Wooroloo as a re-entry prison has been able to maintain sufficient focus on these services in light of population expansion and budgetary pressures.

### INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGEMENT

- 4.2 Ideally, a case management system should involve regular and meaningful contact between prisoners and their designated case managers. Particularly in a re-entry prison, the case manager should be a source of information and assistance for the prisoner and play a significant role in preparing the prisoner for release. Unfortunately, the reality is that case management in Western Australian prisons rarely involves anything more than tracking a prisoner's progress against the requirements of their Individual Management Plan (IMP). This is no different at Wooroloo.
- 4.3 Each prison officer is assigned a case load of two or three prisoners. The case manager's role is essentially to write contact reports at scheduled times discussing the prisoner's progress against their IMP. The case manager will typically have limited background knowledge about the prisoner and will rarely be able to help with issues arising. For example, there is nothing a case manager can do to obtain a timely program booking if this is identified as missing. The quality of contact between case managers and prisoners was highly variable and dependent on the commitment of the officer involved. Some prisoners had trouble remembering their last case management contact because it is often six months or more between contacts; some reported a perfunctory meeting in which the officer confirmed that nothing had changed; others described contacts with officers who were supportive and genuinely interested in helping them.
- 4.4 The case management role is not explicitly about personal or welfare support to a prisoner. It does not include an assessment of communication skills, attitudes or other life skills and provides no assistance with parole planning or preparation for release. The Report into the Review of Assessment and Classification within the Department of Corrective Services published by the Office in 2008 included a community Re-Integration Needs Assessment tool (IRINA) to provide a basis for enhancing release preparation in prison and aftercare in the community through the Department's case management system. IRINA addresses six need domains of offending behaviour: employment, accommodation, family and community, alcohol, substance and solvent abuse and additional re-integration needs. In its response to the Review, the Department initiated a series of projects, one of which piloted some different models based on the tool developed in the Review.<sup>46</sup>

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46 DCS, *Assessment and Classification Project 2 Reintegration Needs Assessment: Final Evaluation Report*, Strategic and Executive Services (June 2010).

- 4.5 A business case to implement the proposed community reintegration needs assessment/ case management model was subsequently developed, but in June 2011 the Department deferred implementation because issues were being overtaken by a much broader Integrated Offender Management (IOM) reform project. This reform project was itself subsequently put on hold by departmental restructuring announced in late 2011. The new structure was only determined in March 2012 and is still being implemented. Such delays are regrettable and detrimental to progress.

#### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 4.6 Education is a potentially powerful rehabilitative tool and important to the re-entry prison environment. The Department collects a range of statistics which support the positive impact that education can have on a prisoner's rehabilitation. The figures essentially indicate that prisoners who engage in education are less likely to return to the corrective services system, and that those who do return are more likely to have committed a less serious offence than previously.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the rate of return to prison decreases as the number of courses a prisoner participates in increases. For example, prisoners who have not participated in a vocational education and training program have a rate of return of 55 per cent. Prisoners who have participated in one to four programs have a rate of return of 48 per cent. Prisoners who have participated in five or more programs have a rate of return of 33 per cent.<sup>48</sup> These results are reflected for a range of accredited education and training, adult basic education, traineeships and tertiary education.
- 4.7 The lower rate of return cannot be entirely attributed to education and training, and may say as much about the characteristics of prisoners who engage in education as it does about the education itself. Nevertheless, these results are striking and underline the value that education and training has within the prison system.
- 4.8 Education was being delivered well at Wooroloo, but the service was regrettably limited by resources. There had been no increase in funding when the prison population expanded so the education centre was trying to provide services to a larger number of prisoners with no additional resources. As a consequence, there is significant unmet demand for education and training at Wooroloo. This represents a lost opportunity for the prison system.
- 4.9 An average of 30 per cent of the total prisoner population at Wooroloo was enrolled in accredited education and training at any one time over a 12-month period.<sup>49</sup> The education centre offered a good range of adult basic education, including the Hands On Learning Program, which teaches basic literacy and numeracy through practical application. In this case, the program was facilitated via a cooking class. Specific prisoner cohorts are catered for by an English as a Second Language class and an Indigenous Education class.

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47 DCS, *Education and Vocational Training Performance Indicators* (17 February 2012). Rate of return is calculated as the number of prison exits after a non-fine-default sentence during the two-year period prior to 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011 and the number of returns under a new sentence within two years to prisons, community corrections and corrective services. Returns are excluded where the only offence is fine default or breach/suspension of early release order.

48 Ibid, 4.

49 DCS, *Education and Vocational Prisoner Training at Wooroloo Prison Farm Overview* (March 2012). Figures are for the period 1 December 2010 to 30 November 2011.

An average of 46 per cent of the Aboriginal prisoner population participated in education and training in 2010–11, and the centre had set a target of 50 per cent for 2011–12.<sup>50</sup>

The education centre employs four peer tutors from within the prisoner group and two of these are Aboriginal men. These Aboriginal peer tutors have been quite effective at attracting and encouraging other Aboriginal prisoners to engage in education.

- 4.10 Unit completion rates are impressively high at about 75 per cent with most of the non-completions being attributed to prisoners being released to freedom. The proportion of units that are not completed is actually only 13 per cent.
- 4.11 There has been a substantial increase in the delivery of traineeships, which is a strong positive for the prison. There are now traineeships linked to most industries and workplaces in the prison. During the inspection, there were 25 trainees at Wooroloo in areas including furniture making, laundry operations, transport and warehousing, engineering fabrication, asset maintenance, horticulture, hospitality, and sport and recreation. This is a testament to the collaborative efforts of education staff and VSOs who train and supervise prisoners in their workshops and places of employment.
- 4.12 A particularly positive development had been the introduction in 2011 of a full certificate course in surface extraction, which was provided in partnership with a private registered training organisation and targeted skills relevant to the mining industry. The first course was extremely successful with 40 prisoners completing the certificate. The prison was eager to continue this course on an ongoing basis, but at the time of the inspection the availability of funding for 2012 was uncertain.
- 4.13 While the increase in traineeships was a great improvement, this was countered by a significant decrease in the education centre's capacity to facilitate external studies. This is an issue that has arisen throughout the prison system and was discussed in some detail in the recent report on Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women.<sup>51</sup> Some of that discussion is reproduced below in the Wooroloo context.
- 4.14 The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) funds a certain amount of training for prisoners throughout Western Australia. This is capped at a specified number of allocated student contact hours per year. Some years ago, State Training Providers (formerly known as TAFE institutions) adopted a practice of excluding any prisoner studying as an external student from this cap. DTWD only recently became aware of this and determined that this practice was not in compliance with policy. Since then, compliance has been enforced which means that external studies are now counted towards the total number of allocated student contact hours. As a result, access to DTWD-funded training has been reduced by at least 10 per cent. This will have a significant impact on certain categories of prisoners including those studying higher certificates and those undertaking any study as external students. This change applies to all prison delivery across the state.

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50 DCS, *EVTU Operational Level Agreement for financial year 2011/2012 (Wooroloo Prison)* 3.

51 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 79 (July 2012) 26–27.



- 4.15 Prisoners will now be expected to pay full fee-for-service charges for any enrolments above the allocated hours, as if they were non-residents of Western Australia. This means that instead of the concession rate of approximately \$500 per year, they will now be required to pay more than \$4000 in fees. As prisoners have very minimal income and are often from low socio-economic groups, fee-for-service is not a realistic option unless the Department of Corrective Services purchases the places on their behalf. The Wooroloo education centre was investigating the possibility of enrolling prisoners as external students with eastern states training providers because this would be less expensive than using a local provider. This is an illustration of the perversity of the situation.
- 4.16 For Wooroloo, the cuts have resulted in all external studies (about 20 students) being put on hold and drastically reduced delivery of training within the prison. Short vocational courses which had previously been extremely popular and successful at Wooroloo cannot be provided as frequently. Demand is not being met, with waiting lists of more than 100 prisoners for courses such as forklift training, skid steer loader training and senior first aid training.

*Recommendation 14*

*The Department of Training and Workforce Development should, consistent with previous practice, ensure that prisoners engaging in external studies are given access to training equivalent to other members of the Western Australian community.*

**INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYMENT**

- 4.17 Wooroloo has traditionally had a very strong focus on prisoner employment. At the time of the 2009 inspection, the prison was consistently maintaining an employment rate of over 95 per cent. However, the Office noted that it would be a challenge to maintain this level of employment as the prison expanded.<sup>52</sup>
- 4.18 In 2012, although the prison ostensibly maintained full prisoner employment, the real picture was very different. By prison management's own admission, there were large numbers of prisoners under-employed, working in menial and undemanding jobs which occupied them for only one or two hours a day, sometimes less. This was most evident in the high number of prisoners employed as unit cleaners. During the inspection there were more than 70 prisoners employed as unit cleaners (around 20% of the total population) and 40 of these were in Unit 3, the entry-level standard accommodation. Unit work is notorious for requiring very little effort from prisoners, and typically involves no more than mopping or sweeping a specified area of the unit. This cannot sensibly be seen as valuable work experience and does not prepare prisoners for employment in the community.
- 4.19 The high number of unit workers was the result of a deliberate decision by management. Shortly before the inspection, Wooroloo management had decided to turn any prisoners who were unemployed into unit workers. They reasoned that it was better to nominally designate prisoners as unit workers and give them some work to do (however minimal)

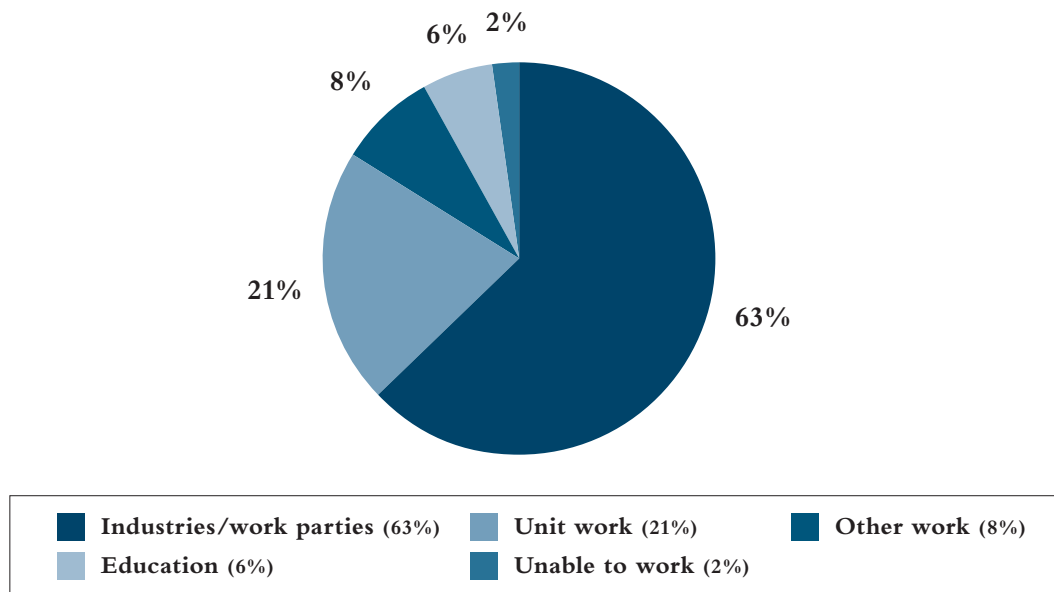
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52 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 24–25.

than have them unemployed. This is a reasonable argument, but it cannot distract from the fact that there is a fundamental shortage of meaningful employment at Wooroloo.

- 4.20 While the number of positions is restricted, the positions available cover an extensive range of work opportunities including: cabinet making, gardening, catering, laundry, maintenance, metal work and mechanics, timber industries, and farm work. A considerable amount of work in the community is also undertaken by prisoners who have been approved for work release under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981*(WA), and also by prisoners at the Wheatbelt Work Camp. However, the industrial workshops and various work parties were only able to employ 63 per cent of the prisoner population. There was a clear need to expand employment opportunities to provide prisoners with relevant and realistic work experience to increase their employability upon release.

*Prisoner Employment at Wooroloo Prison Farm as at 25 March 2012*



- 4.21 Positively, the section 95 program at Wooroloo had added a third team since the last inspection and a fourth team was being set up. However, Wooroloo’s ability to further increase employment options was hindered by its failure to fill a number of VSO positions. As part of an ongoing industrial dispute with the Western Australian Prison Officers’ Union, Wooroloo was promised up to nine additional VSO positions. This was intended to provide more prisoner employment and occupy prisoners outside of their units during the day. This in turn would allow prison officer numbers in the units to be reduced. The Department approved a trial of this proposal but only provided sufficient funding to employ the additional VSOs for six months. Not surprisingly, in a competitive job market, the prison found it difficult to attract any suitably qualified applicants to take up a six-month contract. There were several unsuccessful recruitment processes and at the time of the inspection this situation had been ongoing for two years. Consequently, Wooroloo has been unable to expand its industries.

- 4.22 Prisoner employment is crucial to Wooroloo's functioning both as a re-entry prison and as a minimum security prison. Providing work experience and employability skills are key components of assisting prisoners with a successful return to the community. And keeping prisoners meaningfully occupied is an important aspect of prisoner management in a minimum security environment.

*Recommendation 15*

*Ensure meaningful employment is available for all prisoners at Wooroloo Prison Farm.*

- 4.23 Notwithstanding the shortage of jobs, the VSO group deserves credit for their efforts over the past three years. As noted above in the section on education and training, the number of traineeships being delivered in the industries area and other workplaces has increased dramatically. It was noteworthy that prisoners were very positive about their relationships with VSOs, particularly in comparison to their relationship with prison officers. In the pre-inspection prisoner survey, 89 per cent of respondents indicated that they got along well with VSOs. The VSOs have also continued to accept more prisoners into the workshops and work parties without receiving any extra resources. However, the mounting pressure is a threat to the goodwill of the VSO group and they are becoming increasingly disaffected.
- 4.24 Much like three years ago, VSOs complain that they have lacked effective leadership and representation as a result of the high turnover in the Business Manager role. Since the last inspection, however, the Industries Coordinator position has been introduced and this has given the VSOs an advocate at management level. The Industries Coordinator has given the area some valuable direction with the result that activity in the workshops tends to be more purposeful and is aligned with a variety of external contracts. It was therefore concerning that the Industries Coordinator is not a permanent position and funding was only guaranteed until January 2013. Wooroloo needs to substantially expand its industries area and it will be crucial to retain this coordinating role. If the position was lost at this point it would be a backwards step.

*Recommendation 16*

*Establish the Industries Coordinator as a permanent position at Wooroloo Prison Farm.*

- 4.25 Given the recognised shortage of jobs in the prison, it was unexpected to find that the VSOs were often struggling to fill their workshops. This was because prisoners required a security clearance before they were allowed to take up employment in the industries area. Although the industries area is outside the perimeter fence, it is still on the prison grounds and there was no distinction prior to the erection of the fence. The fact that minimum security prisoners now need clearance to move outside the fence simply reinforces the impression that Wooroloo is no longer a truly minimum security prison. In comparison, there is no such requirement at Karnet Prison Farm, which has a similar set up with the industrial workshops outside of the fence.

**OFFENDER PROGRAMS**

4.26 Four core offender programs were provided at Wooroloo during 2011.

Program Category	Program Name	No. in 2011	Participants
Medium intensity cognitive skills	Think First	4	37
High intensity addictions	Pathways	8	94
Medium intensity violence	Medium Intensity Violence Program	2	21
High intensity violence	Violent Offender Treatment Program	2	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>175</b>

4.27 An even more ambitious program schedule for 230 participants was planned for 2012, including provision of a new program, the Stopping Family Violence Program. However, this program was ultimately cancelled due to lack of eligible participants.

4.28 The Think First program continues to be delivered by a single prison officer, supported and coordinated by a unit based at Casuarina Prison. Other offender programs at Wooroloo are now managed by a Program Delivery Manager based at Midland, who also has responsibility for program delivery at Bandyup Women’s Prison and in community settings in the northern and eastern suburbs of the Perth metropolitan area. This unit includes a clinical supervisor and nine senior programs officers sharing eight positions. The manager also has a capacity to engage external facilitation from contracted agencies whose facilitators are appropriately qualified and trained to deliver certain programs. As a whole, these programs appear well managed, and facilitator capacity, training, clinical supervision, governance and evaluation is much improved since the last inspection.

4.29 Despite the impressive number of programs, there was a level of discontent among prisoners about programs. This was not so much about the quality of the programs, or the personal value they placed in programs, but the result of a number of other factors. Some complained they were not given the opportunity to do all the programs they were assessed as requiring, or that programs were scheduled to finish (or even start) after their Earliest Eligibility Date for Parole (EED). There were also complaints that newer prisoners had places in programs at the expense of others closer to, or past their EEDs. A number complained that despite completing their required programs, the treatment assessment reports were not ready in time for the Prisoners Review Board hearing, which usually caused an adjournment and a delay to any decision on their release.

4.30 The main reason for discontent about programs, however, was that while emphasis was placed on completion of offender programs for those wanting parole, the Prisoners Review Board did not appear to give much credit for their participation when making determinations about parole. A review of parole decisions by the Prisoners Review Board for 117 prisoners at Wooroloo on 20 November 2011 who had passed their EED was

interesting in this regard. Of the 103 cases in which prisoners were denied parole, ‘unmet treatment needs’ or ‘unaddressed offending behaviour’ was cited in 44 per cent of cases. This meant that in the Board’s opinion, the prisoner had not undertaken sufficient programs to reduce their risk of reoffending. Usually, this reflected the fact that, according to treatment assessors, the prisoner may have benefited from a program that could not be provided prior to their EED. However, in some cases, the Board made additional statements about the program needs of prisoners. In 25 per cent of cases, the Board stated that prisoners had made ‘insufficient gains’ in the programs they had undertaken, although it was not always clear that this referred to programs completed during their current term of imprisonment, nor whether this was the view of the facilitators of the program or the Board.

- 4.31 In reality, the time available for prisoners to undertake programs is very short. The EED is calculated at 50 per cent of their sentence up to four years in length, and for the last two years of their sentence for sentences over four years. The majority (54%) of prisoners at Wooroloo have sentences of three years or less, meaning their effective total time in custody is less than three years. Many of these prisoners would have spent some months at Hakea on remand or under assessment following their sentence, so the time available to undertake programs is very short indeed. The following table provides more information.

*Length of Sentence (Wooroloo) as at 23 March 2012*

Sentence Length	Number	Per Cent
Up to 1 year	72	19.5%
1 to 2 years	74	20.0%
2 to 3 years	55	14.9%
3 to 4 years	52	14.0%
4 to 5 years	38	10.3%
Over 5 years	79	21.3%

- 4.32 A scan of prisoner IMPs at Wooroloo suggested that many were assessed as requiring two or more programs, often including an intensive program despite having sentence lengths well under four years. The problem may be compounded as a result of a decision by the Department to replace the Violent Offender Treatment Program with a High Intensity Violence Program purchased from a New Zealand provider. Preparations are well advanced with a number of facilitators and clinical supervisors receiving training. It is due to be trialled at Casuarina in mid-2012 before being deployed to all sites.
- 4.33 This new program brings new risks that will need careful management. In particular, it is significantly longer – at nine months compared to six months – and will require two qualified clinicians to facilitate, rather than one clinician plus a prison officer. A 12-month commitment will be required by staff to meet preparatory and reporting requirements, including pre- and post-program testing. The increased length of the program will

exacerbate scheduling and access issues for prisoners and suggests that the threshold for prisoners requiring an intensive program will have to be raised. The Medium Intensity Violence Program or a family violence program may well prove more appropriate for rather more prisoners, although this will require discussion between the Department and the Board as to the Board's expectations.

#### PREPARING PRISONERS FOR RELEASE

- 4.34 Wooroloo has a mature transitional management system. Each prisoner is exposed to the range of services on offer as part of their orientation process when the prisoner clerk representing the Transitional Manager makes a presentation to all new prisoners. The Transitional Manager is available most afternoons to address prisoner inquiries and makes referrals to a number of agencies to assist with prisoners' re-entry needs. The Transitional Manager also assists directly with a range of bureaucratic needs such as applying for a birth certificate or obtaining a Medicare Card.
- 4.35 Demand for the services of the Transitional Manager is high and prisoners said that a meeting can be difficult to secure.
- 4.36 The Transitional Manager has invested significant energy in two areas: establishing the Good Beginnings service at Wooroloo; and developing the driver training program in conjunction with Outcare.
- 4.37 Good Beginnings provides an excellent service to fathers in relation to their family issues. It was especially encouraging to see a Skype visit service finally in place just a fortnight before the inspection. The involvement of Good Beginnings in organising more regular family days has also been an important contribution to the life of the prison.
- 4.38 Driver training is provided using volunteers from Outcare, and tutors from education services. The inspection team encountered a number of prisoners who had completed or were having lessons through this program, including several Aboriginal prisoners. It made an enormous difference to their self-esteem and should enhance their employability.
- 4.39 The Transitional Manager role is valued by the prison and recognised as an essential component in prisoner rehabilitation. Yet the position was assisted only by a part-time prisoner clerk whose role was appropriately limited to tasks not involving confidential information relating to other prisoners. The Transitional Manager is also isolated from other aspects of prisoner management. There is no integration with the assessment and case management system nor is there any routine communication with prison-based report writers or corrections officers involved in preparing parole reports. The position itself reports to head office.
- 4.40 The failure to integrate assessments, transitional support, case management and community justice services is arguably a reason why a significant gap in service provision has been left unaddressed at Wooroloo. While prisoners are routinely issued a notice from report writers a fortnight before parole plans are due to be submitted to the Prisoners Review Board, there was nobody assigned the task of helping prisoners to prepare their parole plans, and no physical resources available to facilitate their preparations.

- 4.41 Strangely, peer support team members had been expressly prohibited from helping other prisoners with parole plans. No help was offered by case managers or by community corrections officers or report writers. There was no computer or printer available on which parole plans or other official correspondence could be prepared and printed. Prisoners in education had been warned off with the threat of charges if they used their access to such equipment to type and print such documents on behalf of other prisoners.
- 4.42 Given systemic overcrowding, it would seem to be in the interests of prison management to ensure that prisoners not be denied or delayed parole unnecessarily. It was encouraging to hear that a printer for prisoner use was being installed in the library during the inspection week and that the outdated computer there would soon be replaced. However, providing only a single printer and computer unreasonably limits access for the number of prisoners in Wooroloo, and those wanting to prepare parole plans would presumably have to compete with many other needs and priorities. More importantly, staff or carefully selected, trained and supervised prisoners should be identified to provide assistance to prisoners in preparing their parole plans.

*Recommendation 17*

*Provide assistance and equipment for prisoners to prepare parole plans.*

**PRISONER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (PEP)**

- 4.43 The Prisoner Employment Program had grown since the last inspection and now boasted 2.5 full-time equivalent positions, including one Employment Coordinator, one driver and one part-time clerical officer. An impressive number of applications were processed with some good results as shown in the following table.

***PEP Applications considered by Sentence Management  
(12 months to 30 November 2011)***

Activity Type	Approved	Not Approved
Paid Employment	19	6
Seeking Employment	31	9
Work Experience	7	3
Vocational Training	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>18</b>

- 4.44 Based on figures provided from the 2010–2011 financial year, Wooroloo accounted for approximately 22 per cent of the state’s PEP applications and 22 per cent of all approvals.

- 4.45 Approval criteria were tightened in late 2011, meaning that only prisoners with at least six months to serve are encouraged to apply. Any offender programs on their IMP must have been completed or be close to completion. After initial screening by the Employment Coordinator, each application is assessed locally by the assessments team and then forwarded to head office. This is an intensive and bureaucratic process designed to minimise risk to the Department. It was frustrating that the average time for approval had increased to more than two months.
- 4.46 The increased number of prisoners leaving Wooroloo on paid employment is laudable, but only a minority of those were prisoners undertaking work that was new to them. Most were returning to employers they had worked for before, or to businesses of family members or associates. A smaller number had the opportunity to work in a new field with a new employer or gain unpaid work experience. Late in 2011, around six prisoners were leaving the prison daily to attend employment or work experience, but there were only two at the time of the inspection.
- 4.47 Impressive numbers were involved in seeking employment off site, mainly through Employment Plus, a Salvation Army agency in Morley. This agency provides fortnightly workshops on job seeking skills and works with each prisoner individually to match them with potential vacancies. These prisoners are generally quite motivated and are offered a guarantee of employment within two weeks of release. Regrettably, the Commonwealth Government has recently reduced the assistance available to employers receiving ex-prisoners and to agencies like Employment Plus. The impact of this policy change is not yet clear.
- 4.48 The prison held an Employment Expo in October 2011 which attracted a number of employers and service providers, including specialist services for Aboriginal prisoners. It was an extremely successful event attended by up to 80 per cent of the prisoner population.

#### WHEATBELT WORK CAMP

- 4.49 The inspection included a visit to the newly opened Wheatbelt Work Camp in Dowerin. At the time of the last inspection, the work camp was located in Kellerberrin. The 2009 inspection report recognised that the Kellerberrin work camp provided benefits for prisoners in terms of rehabilitation and resocialisation, and stated that living at the work camp was an excellent way for prisoners to prepare for their release. The work camp had very strong support from the local community and the work carried out by prisoners was highly valued. However, the report expressed concern at poor maintenance of the work camp facilities and inadequate infrastructure in some areas. It was clear that many of these issues had not been addressed because of uncertainty about the future of the work camp.<sup>53</sup> Specific issues included:
- Roof leaks and ceiling damage in the prisoner accommodation unit.
  - Dormitory-style living arrangements for prisoners, with rooms separated by partitions rather than actually enclosed by walls and ceiling. This provided very little in the way of privacy or sound-proofing.

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53 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 38–40.



- Insufficient number of showers and toilets for prisoners.
  - No shower or toilet in officers' quarters.
  - Insufficient space in the gymnasium.
  - Inadequate facilities for family visits.
- 4.50 Within 12 months of the inspection, a significant amount of progress had been made, and living conditions for prisoners and staff at the work camp had improved. Developments included:
- Full enclosure of individual prisoners' rooms with walls and ceiling, plus installation of reverse-cycle air-conditioning unit and a small refrigerator in each room.
  - Installation of shower and toilet in officers' quarters, which made an additional shower and toilet available for prisoners in the ablutions block.
  - Transfer and expansion of the gymnasium into a much larger shed.
  - Construction of additional picnic tables and under-cover area for family visits.
- 4.51 Nevertheless, in 2010 the Department announced that a new work camp would be constructed in Dowerin, which is approximately 120 kilometres north-west of Kellerberrin and 115 kilometres north-east of Wooroloo. The Kellerberrin work camp continued to provide valuable services to prisoners and to the local community until its closure in October 2011.
- 4.52 The new Wheatbelt Work Camp in Dowerin was officially opened in February 2012 and had been operating for little more than one month at the time of the inspection.<sup>54</sup> During the inspection, the Shire of Dowerin indicated strong support for the work camp and indeed there was fierce competition between local communities for the right to host the new work camp.
- 4.53 The camp has a capacity of 20 prisoners but at the time of the inspection only 12 prisoners were being housed. This was because new staffing arrangements had not yet been made so only one officer was on duty at any given time. Since the inspection, a Senior Officer position has been established and the work camp has been filled to capacity. The camp is staffed by one Senior Officer and one prison officer at all times.
- 4.54 The relationship between prison officers and prisoners at the work camp is necessarily very different to that at a prison. The work camp operates with two officers supervising up to 20 prisoners, and prisoners generally have more freedom than they would in a prison. Prisoners must satisfy strict criteria before being authorised to transfer to the work camp, and are conscious that any lapse in behaviour will likely see this privilege revoked. The work camp officers, for their part, were aware that the success of the camp is highly dependent on positive and effective relationships with the prisoners. In stark contrast to the situation found at Wooroloo, work camp prisoners spoke very positively of their relationship with the officers.

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54 In the period between closure of the Kellerberrin work camp and opening of the Dowerin work camp, a temporary work camp was established in Wyalkatchem.

- 4.55 It was obvious that both prisoners and officers were keen for the new work camp to be successful. They observed that there was a lot of work that needed to be done around the camp, but were enthusiastic about having an opportunity to develop the camp in the way that they wanted.
- 4.56 The camp is located on the crest of a hill and has wonderful views of the surrounding countryside. However, its location exposes it to high winds and there was little protection available because the site was entirely bare of trees and vegetation. Work camp officers and prisoners had plans to plant trees and landscape gardens, and had consulted the Natural Resource Management Officer from the Shire of Dowerin for advice on which trees would be most effective as a windbreak.
- 4.57 The work camp facilities themselves are of a high standard. There is good office space and accommodation for officers; the kitchen is large and well-equipped; and the workshop is enormous. However, given that the camp was built-for-purpose, there were some notable omissions.
- 4.58 Prisoners' rooms are small but prisoners are not overly concerned about this because they are not generally confined to their rooms and have considerable freedom to move about the camp. Of some concern, however, is the fact that prisoners' rooms are not air-conditioned. The Wheatbelt region experiences extreme heat in summer and extreme cold in winter so the lack of climate control in the rooms is problematic. Prisoners pointed out that their former accommodation in Kellerberrin had included a reverse cycle air-conditioning unit in each room and they had expected their brand new accommodation to have the same.
- 4.59 The camp lacks any dedicated area for visits, which is a grievous oversight considering the long distances visitors are likely to have travelled in order to visit the camp. Visitors were allowed to sit with prisoners on the verandah outside their rooms, and this casual atmosphere was appreciated by prisoners. However, in inclement weather the only option would be to hold visits sessions in the dining room which would be crowded and provide little privacy.
- 4.60 Recreation facilities were very limited at the work camp. There was no gymnasium so the work camp officers and prisoners were planning to create one in part of the workshop building. There was no day room or communal area other than the dining room. There was a large concrete pad in the centre of the work camp that may be intended as some sort of recreation court. However, there are no lines on the court, no basketball ring or tennis net or any other indication of its exact purpose. It was not being used at the time of the inspection.
- 4.61 Access to other services at the work camp is very limited. For the most part, prisoners are required to return to Wooroloo Prison Farm for any particular needs. There is no capacity at the work camp to deliver medical services, education and training, rehabilitative programs or re-entry services. The Transitional Manager from Wooroloo attends the work camp on an occasional basis to inform prisoners of the services available to them, but most services could only be accessed by returning to the prison.

# Chapter 5

## CONCLUSION

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- 5.1 As a minimum security facility with a role in preparing prisoners for their release into the community, the Office expects a high standard of performance from Wooroloo. Historically, Wooroloo has been able to achieve high standards and at the second inspection of the prison in 2006 the Office believed that it set a benchmark for the rest of the prison system. It is therefore concerning that the last two inspections of Wooroloo have documented a significant deterioration in performance. It was especially disappointing that most of the issues identified as contributing factors to declining performance during the 2009 inspection had not been resolved by the time of this most recent inspection in 2012.
- 5.2 The most fundamental of these factors was the long-term instability in the senior management team. This issue was identified as a risk by the Office as far back as 2006 and was repeated in 2009.<sup>55</sup> The lack of permanent occupants in senior management positions has continued since then and the detriment to the operation of the prison has grown with every passing year. Without stable leadership over such a prolonged period, Wooroloo has been deprived of direction and purpose. Serious personal issues and conflict amongst custodial staff have not been addressed and instead have been allowed to persist and intensify.
- 5.3 The application of rules and policies within the prison has become characterised by a lack of clarity and consistency, which is frustrating for both prisoners and staff. Prisoners and staff share a perception that the minimum security atmosphere of the prison has been lost. In the absence of consistent guidance from management and with no clear strategic direction, there is certainly a risk that security considerations will receive greater emphasis than is appropriate in a minimum security facility.
- 5.4 It is no longer clear that preparing prisoners for release is the primary objective of the prison. Many features of the regime suggest that there is ambivalence about Wooroloo's role both within the prison and within the Department. Wooroloo was managing a substantially larger and increasingly complex prisoner population with little in the way of additional support services or infrastructure. This had severely undermined the prison's ability to deliver good outcomes in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration. Funding cuts and insufficient resources meant that Wooroloo was unable to meet prisoner demand for education. For the first time, this inspection found that Wooroloo was unable to provide meaningful employment for all prisoners with at least 20 per cent of the population effectively unemployed or under-employed. Perhaps more than any other factor, the lack of employment had damaged the philosophy of what was once seen as a 'working prison'.
- 5.5 A range of other smaller issues indicated that Wooroloo lacked a focus on preparing prisoners for release, and certainly illustrated that it does not have the same resources or infrastructure as facilities like Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women and the Bunbury Regional Prison Pre-release Unit. For example, the Wooroloo canteen compared poorly with the supermarket-style service provided at both of those facilities.

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55 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) 36; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 61 (September 2009) 10–11.

## CONCLUSION

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- 5.6 Overall, the inspection concluded that Wooroloo was not fulfilling its potential. The recommendations in this report are intended to provide Wooroloo with the tools and resources to regain its former level of strong performance. Long term, stable senior management will be critical to this and there had been some significant developments on this front even before the inspection, including the appointment of a very experienced substantive superintendent. Similarly, resolving conflict between custodial staff is essential because the operation of the prison is heavily dependent on this group.
- 5.7 Most importantly, Wooroloo needs to define and articulate its purpose and priorities, and refocus on strategic objectives. This task must be driven by the prison, but should also be supported by the Department. For the Department, Wooroloo operating to its potential is crucial to the key strategic outcome of reducing reoffending.

# Appendix 1

## THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<b>Staffing Issues</b> 1. Make substantive appointments to the remaining vacant positions on the senior management team at Wooroloo Prison Farm.	<b>Supported</b> Structure and appointments are implemented in line with whole of government/departmental policies with respect to FTE management. Only one position remains outstanding for permanent appointment.
<b>Staffing Issues</b> 2. Improve anti-bullying strategies at Wooroloo Prison Farm with robust and transparent processes and mechanisms, and comprehensive training and education for all staff.	<b>Supported</b> Strategies are being reviewed and relevant training is scheduled for October 2012.
<b>Staffing Issues</b> 3. Improve communication within the prison by implementing well-defined processes to ensure that all staff receive clear and consistent information.	<b>Supported in Principle</b> Minutes of all meetings are available via the shared drive. Additionally, minutes of Assistant Superintendent Prison Management/ Assistant Superintendent Operations meetings are always emailed to all staff for their edification. Wooroloo Prison's Communication Plan is available on the shared drive, which all staff can access. The prison will consider additional options to improve communication.
<b>Staffing Issues</b> 4. Provide senior officers and acting senior officers with the opportunity to participate in relevant supervisors training offered by the Corrective Services Academy.	<b>Supported</b> Training for senior officers is scheduled to occur in October 2012 and will include modules on supervision, people skills and communication. Additionally, Wooroloo Prison will undertake a training needs analysis for all senior officers to identify those who have not completed the Supervisors Course Module 1 and 2. Officers who have not met these requirements will be offered the opportunity for further training, subject to funding. Corporately, consideration will be given to deliver alternative methods of training.
<b>Staffing Issues</b> 5. With staff consultation and input, develop a strategic plan for Wooroloo Prison Farm outlining the prison's vision, role, priorities, culture and values.	<b>Supported</b> The Adult Custodial Business Plan is to be completed in October 2012. A Business Plan for Wooroloo Prison will be developed in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders.

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p><b>Custody and Security</b></p> <p>6. Review the various risk assessment procedures at Wooroloo Prison Farm with a view to improving and streamlining prisoner access to the industries area.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p> <p>The requirement for prisoners to be security cleared for external industries has been streamlined. Local Order 2.10 has been amended accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Care and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>7. Provide infrastructure and resources to upgrade the canteen at Wooroloo Prison Farm into a facility similar to those at Bunbury Pre-release Unit and Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women.</p>	<p><b>Not supported</b></p> <p>A sufficient and varied range of items are available at the prison for prisoner purchase. The process and frequency for purchases is adequate (weekly).</p>
<p><b>Care and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>8. Establish a representative forum for prisoners at Wooroloo Prison Farm similar to those operating at Acacia Prison, Albany Regional Prison and Hakea Prison.</p>	<p><b>Not supported</b></p> <p>All prisoners are afforded the opportunity to meet with staff at unit meetings and peer support meetings. The Assistant Superintendent Operations meets with prisoner representatives on a regular basis, including monthly peer support meetings, to discuss views and consider complaints and address issues. The peer support member also attends the Aboriginal Liaison Group Meeting.</p>
<p><b>Racism, Aboriginality and Equity</b></p> <p>9. Finalise and implement the Department of Corrective Services' policy on foreign national prisoners as a matter of urgency.</p>	<p><b>Supported – Existing Department Initiative</b></p> <p>The Department will develop a Foreign National Prisoners Policy with the intention to implement as soon as practicable.</p>
<p><b>Care and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>10. Establish family events as a more regular fixture on the Wooroloo Prison Farm calendar.</p>	<p><b>Supported – Existing Department Initiative</b></p> <p>It is acknowledged in the report these events are already happening and it is therefore considered there are sufficient family events conducted throughout the year (Good Beginnings three events, Anzac Day, NAIDOC week, and Christmas Tree). The prison has a family friendly visit centre which includes indoor and outdoor facilities. Toys and activities are available for children.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p><b>Care and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>11. Expand the use of Skype (or similar technology) to include social visits and other visits.</p>	<p><b>Supported – Existing Department Initiative</b></p> <p>Skype is available at Wooroloo Prison and is used by Good Beginnings staff for social visits and father/child contact. The use of Skype for social visits is currently being trialled at numerous prisons and when this is concluded recommendations will be provided in respect to its viability for broader use.</p>
<p><b>Racism, Aboriginality and Equity</b></p> <p>12. Introduce strategies to ensure that Aboriginal prisoners are proportionately represented in higher levels of accommodation and higher paid employment at Wooroloo Prison Farm (in line with the Department of Corrective Services' Substantive Equality Policy).</p>	<p><b>Supported – Existing Department Initiative</b></p> <p>A section of self-care accommodation has been introduced exclusively for occupancy by suitable Aboriginal prisoners. Aboriginal prisoners are encouraged to live in this area. Aboriginal prisoners are not excluded from occupying other self-care and semi self-care areas of the prison. It should be noted that Wooroloo Prison works on a hierarchical system which does not disadvantage prisoners whose suitability is demonstrated through behaviour, conduct and work ethic etc earning them the privilege of living in this environment.</p>
<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>13. Ensure that health staffing levels at Wooroloo Prison Farm are not reduced.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p> <p>There is no plan to reduce the approved FTE level for Wooroloo. Where there are operational requirements, staff from other centres have added to the Wooroloo staffing levels.</p>
<p><b>Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>14. The Department of Training and Workforce Development should, consistent with previous practice, ensure that prisoners engaging in external studies are given access to training equivalent to other members of the Western Australian community.</p>	<p><b>Supported in Part</b></p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) has stated that it is keen to work with the Department of Corrective Services to gain a clearer understanding of the total funded vocational education and training activity provided across the two Departments. Through this process a better appreciation may be gained of the total number of prisoners receiving training, the amount and value of this training and the nature of the courses delivered to assist in assessing the appropriateness of current delivery levels. An officer from the DTWD will contact the Department of Corrective Services to commence these consultations.</p>

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p><b>Reparation</b> 15. Ensure meaningful employment is available for all prisoners at Wooroloo Prison Farm.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b> The Department aspires to provide meaningful employment for all prisoners and this is balanced against the requirement of self sustainability as part of proper prison management.</p>
<p><b>Reparation</b> 16. Establish the Industries Coordinator as a permanent position at Wooroloo Prison Farm.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b> See Recommendation 1.</p>
<p><b>Rehabilitation</b> 17. Provide assistance and equipment for prisoners to prepare parole plans.</p>	<p><b>Supported – Existing Department Initiative</b> The prison does provide support to prisoners to prepare parole plans. Wooroloo Prison has sufficient computers and a printer available for prisoners to prepare and print parole plans. Re-entry staff, sentence planning, peer support, prisoners and staff are available to assist prisoners. Wooroloo will add this information to its prisoner orientation process identifying where the facility is located and who is available to assist.</p>



## Appendix 2

### SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2009 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No.	Recommendations By Type of Recommendation/Duration Report No. 61, Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm.	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than acceptable	Acceptable	More than acceptable	Excellent
1.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.		•			
2.	<b>Human Rights</b> The multiple occupancy of prisoners in cells not designed for that purpose should not be an accepted accommodation model for prisons in Western Australia. Where this is temporarily unavoidable, compensatory processes should be implemented to mitigate risk and disadvantage.	•				
3.	<b>Staffing Issues</b> The prison should establish a communication strategy to ensure regular, accurate and comprehensive communication of information both up and down the reporting lines for staff.		•			
4.	<b>Staffing Issues</b> The Department should ensure that all operational areas at Wooroloo Prison Farm are adequately resourced in anticipation of the proposed capacity increase.		•			
5.	<b>Staffing Issues</b> The Department should provide additional staffing on the senior management team at Wooroloo Prison Farm until such time as the prison returns to its previous high level of performance and is prepared for the proposed capacity increase.			•		
6.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The prison should maximise opportunities for prisoners to maintain contact with family and friends. For example, by increasing the number and availability of telephones, promoting the use of video visits, and other innovations.			•		

## Appendix 3

### THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Neil Morgan	Inspector
Andrew Harvey	Deputy Inspector
Christopher Davers	Acting Director Operations
Kieran Artelaris	Inspections & Research Officer
Jim Bryden	Inspections & Research Officer
Cliff Holdom	Inspections & Research Officer
Matt Merefield	Inspections & Research Officer
Joseph Wallam	Community Liaison Officer
Dace Tomsons	Expert Advisor, Drug & Alcohol Office

## Appendix 4

### KEY DATES

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Formal notification of announced inspection	18 November 2011
Pre-inspection community consultation	15 February 2012
Start of on-site phase	25 March 2012
Completion of on-site phase	30 March 2012
Inspection exit debrief	30 March 2012
Draft Report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	5 July 2012
Draft Report returned by the Department of Corrective Services	2 August 2012
Declaration of Prepared Report	13 August 2012



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